



# Democracy and Standards Committee

A meeting of the Democracy and Standards Committee will be held at the Holding Room, The Guildhall, St Giles Street, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Tuesday 12 September 2023 at 6.00 pm

## Agenda

1.	<b>Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members</b>
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.
3.	<b>Minutes</b> (Pages 5 - 10) To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2023.
4.	<b>Chair's Announcements</b> To receive communications from the Chair.
5.	<b>Community Governance Review</b> (Pages 11 - 24)
6.	<b>Proposed amendments to the Constitution</b> (Pages 25 - 30)
7.	<b>Statistics - Code of Conduct Arrangements- Six monthly update</b> (Pages 31 - 40) To provide an update on the number of complaints received and dealt with, in respect of the Code of Member Conduct
8.	<b>Councillor Development Programme 2023 -2025 - Progress report</b> (Pages 41 - 54) To consider the Councillor Development Programme

9.	<p><b>Review of Committee Work Programme (Pages 55 - 56)</b> To review and note the Committee Work Programme.</p>
10.	<p><b>Urgent Business</b> The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any items of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.</p>
11.	<p><b>Exclusion of Press and Public</b> In respect of the following items the Chairman may move the resolution set out below, on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information (information regarded as private for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972) would be disclosed to them: The Committee is requested to resolve: "That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that if the public were present it would be likely that exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act of the descriptions against each item would be disclosed to them"</p>

Catherine Whitehead  
Proper Officer  
4 September 2023

**Democracy and Standards Committee Members:**

Councillor Suresh Patel (Chair)

Councillor Andrew Grant (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Daniel Cribbin

Councillor Jonathan Harris

Councillor Nigel Hinch

Councillor Andrew Kilbride

Councillor Cecile Irving-Swift

Councillor Wendy Randall

Councillor Cathrine Russell

**Information about this Agenda**

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and the appointment of substitute Members should be notified to [democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk) prior to the start of the meeting.

### **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item

### **Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates**

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare that fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

### **Evacuation Procedure**

If a continuous fire alarm sounds you must evacuate the building via the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the assembly area as directed by Democratic Services staff and await further instructions.

### **Access to Meetings**

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named below, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting.

### **Mobile Phones**

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

### **Queries Regarding this Agenda**

If you have any queries about this agenda please contact Tracy Tiff / Marina Watkins, Democratic Services via the following:

Tel: 01604 837408 / 01327 302236

Email: [democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk)

Or by writing to:

West Northamptonshire Council  
One Angel Square  
Angel Street  
Northampton  
NN1 1ED

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## Democracy and Standards Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Democracy and Standards Committee held at The Holding Room, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Thursday 15 June 2023 at 6.00 pm.

### Present:

Councillor Suresh Patel (Chair)  
Councillor Andrew Grant (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Daniel Cribbin  
Councillor Jonathan Harris  
Councillor Nigel Hinch  
Councillor Andrew Kilbride  
Councillor Cecile Irving-Swift  
Councillor Wendy Randall  
Councillor Cathrine Russell

### Officers:

Catherine Whitehead, Director of Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer)  
Paul Hanson - Head of Democratic and Elections  
Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager  
Marina Watkins, Committee Officer

## 80. Declarations of Interest

None advised.

## 81. Minutes

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services advised that there was a need for the Committee to resolve to allow members who called in a planning application to attend the meeting remotely. This would allow the resolution to be included in the report to Council.

With regards to members calling-in planning applications, it was clarified that the Constitution had been changed some time ago to allow the application to be considered even if the member who called it in was not present. This was so that members of the public in attendance at the meeting were not inconvenienced. The Director of Legal and Democratic advised that once the agenda had been published with the application on it, it cannot be changed. The political groups were asked to ensure that any member calling-in an item should always submit a written representation in case they could not attend the meeting, or the remote connection failed.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the Minutes of the Democracy and Standards Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.
- ii) That the Constitution be amended to allow members who have called-in a planning application to attend the meeting remotely. They would not be permitted to vote in such circumstances.

**82. Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed Councillors Wendy Randall, Cathrine Russell and Nigel Hinch to the Committee.

The Chair advised that the next meeting of the Committee scheduled for the 21<sup>st</sup> would be moved to take place on the Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September to allow any reports to be submitted to the Council meeting at the end of the month.

**83. Review of Member Complaints Procedure**

The Director Legal and Democratic presented the report. Following the first sub-committee hearing it was apparent that the complaints process required review and clarity. The Committee was asked to suggest improvements and recommendations which would be included in a full review to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

Following a discussion, the following points were made:

- Members needed clarification of the process
- It needed to be highlighted that members could take a friend or colleague to the Hearing as support
- The expectations of the Investigating Officer needed to be clear
- Standards letters were important for clarity
- The Deputy Democratic Services Manager should be provided with a presentation in order to explain the process clearly to members
- The Independent Person decides how to conduct an investigation and who to call as witnesses. They required enough information to draw a conclusion
- The LGA (local Government Association) could provide support for members
- Consideration should be taken regarding purdah. An investigation would not generally be arranged during purdah as it could possibly be prejudicial.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Democracy and Standards Committee:

- a) Considered the issues highlighted by the report and discussed improvements as detailed above
- b) Agreed to receive a revised draft of the procedure at the next meeting

**84. Proposed amendments to the Constitution**

The Head of Democratic and Elections outlined the report, which detailed proposed changes to the section on 'authority to consult', requiring the Cabinet member to be consulted prior to certain public consultations taking place.

Changes would be made to the Planning Protocol in order to capture the changes regarding remote participation at planning committees.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Democracy and Standards Committee:

- a) Noted and approved the updates to the Constitution as set out in Section 5, and
- b) recommends the updates to Council for approval

**85. Register of Members' Interests**

The Deputy Democratic Services Manager outlined the report and reminded members of the process and importance of members ensuring that their interest forms were up to date. The Groups could raise the issue and encourage members to check that their interests were updated whenever there was a change.

In response to questions, the Director of Legal and Democratic advised that a case could be put to her requesting the non-disclosure of a partner's interests if there was good reason to do so.

The Director of Legal and Democratic advised that she would be happy to attend any group meetings to raise awareness. The responsibility for ensuring that interest forms were completed and up to date lay with the individual.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee noted that the process is followed for the operation of the Register of members Interests

**86. Councillor Development Programme 2023 -2025 - Progress report**

The Deputy Democratic Services Manager outlined the report. Councillor development was mostly focused on planning and scrutiny training during the current year. Cabinet had asked the Centre for Public Scrutiny to provide a suite of training which would take place over the coming months.

The LGA would be contacted with a view to providing training on chairing meetings and questioning technique.

The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee requested that training on audit was included in the programme, particularly with regards to the distinction between the role of audit and of scrutiny. The Director of Legal and Democratic undertook to discuss the matter with the Executive Director of Finance to assess what audit training would be beneficial for members.

Standards training for members would also be considered. Members were reminded that the members training section on Teams contained all past training sessions and presentations.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Democracy and Standards Committee:

- a) Noted the further progress undertaken on developing a Councillor Training Programme for 2023/24
- b) Considers other potential opportunities to deliver and promote learning and development opportunities for Councillors

**87. Annual Report of the Democracy and Standards Committee 2022/2023**

The Chair presented the Annual report which detailed the work of the Committee during 2022/23. The report would be submitted to the Council meeting in September.

**RESOLVED:**

The Annual report of the Democracy and Standards Committee be noted

**88. Review of Committee Work Programme**

Consideration was given to the Democracy and Standards Committee 2023-24 Work Programme.

The proposed changes to the hearing procedure would be included on the agenda for the September meeting.

It was noted that the Community Governance Review would fall under the remit of the Committee. It would commence in the Autumn and would take approximately one year to complete.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee Work Programme is noted.

**89. Urgent Business**

None advised.



The meeting closed at 7.07 pm

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL DEMOCRACY & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

12<sup>th</sup> September 2023

## Report by the Democracy and Standards Committee

Report Title	Community Governance Review of Parishes in the West Northamptonshire Area
Report Author	Paul Hanson, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services <a href="mailto:paul.hanson@westnorthants.gov.uk">paul.hanson@westnorthants.gov.uk</a>

### List of Approvers

Monitoring Officer	Catherine Whitehead	30/08/2023
Chief Finance Officer (S.151)	Martin Henry	
Communications Lead/Head of Communications	Becky Hutson	

### List of Appendices

Appendix 1: West Northamptonshire Community Governance Review Terms of Reference.

#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report invites the committee to review and agree terms of reference for a community governance review of parish arrangements within West Northamptonshire and recommend the adoption of the terms of reference to the Council.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the committee:
- a) Reviews the Terms of Reference for a community governance review of parishes in West Northamptonshire, as set out at Appendix 1 to this report and recommends the document to Council for approval.

- b) Considers whether to establish a task and finish group of this committee to provide democratic input and to oversee the operation of the review, subject to any formal decisions being taken by the committee or council as appropriate.
- c) Subject to b) above, considers the size, makeup and broad terms of reference for any tasks and finish group established.

### **3. Reason for Recommendations**

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- 3.1 The recommendations will help ensure community governance arrangements within West Northamptonshire are reflective of the identities and interests of communities and support efficient electoral processes.

### **4. Report Background**

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- 4.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the Act) devolved powers to local authorities to review parish arrangements within their respective areas and agree changes. The Act created the title of community governance reviews to cover such activity.
- 4.2 A community governance review provides an opportunity for authorities to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries and to remove any anomalous parish boundaries that exist. This can be the case where a boundary review has recently been undertaken, as is the case in West Northamptonshire, resulting in anomalies between council ward and parish boundaries. Statutory guidance issued by the Government emphasises the importance of undertaking reviews to address boundary anomalies when they arise.
- 4.3 A community governance review also enables the Council to consult on, and consider matters relating to, the governance arrangements of parish and town councils in West Northamptonshire. A review can consider:
  - a) Altering the existing boundary of a parish.
  - b) Creating, merging or abolishing parishes.
  - c) Changing the name of an existing parish.
  - d) The electoral arrangements for parishes (e.g. how many parish councillors are required and parish warding).
  - e) Grouping parishes under a common parish council, or de-grouping parishes.
  - f) The “style” of a parish (enabling an area to be known as a town, community, neighbourhood or village rather than a parish).
- 4.4 The need to address boundary anomalies arising from the recent boundary review, as well as addressing any issues raised by parish and town councils, are the principal reasons for conducting a review at this time.
- 4.5 When conducting the review, the Council must act in accordance with the requirements of the Act, the associated regulations and statutory guidance. The Council will need to consult and take account of any representations received in connection with the review. When undertaking the review, the Council must also have regard to the need to secure community governance arrangements that are effective and convenient and which reflect the identities and interests of

the community in the area under review. In summary, the review should seek to ensure community governance:

- a) reflects the identities and interests of the community in that area;
- b) is effective and convenient, and
- c) takes into account any non-parish, arrangements for the purposes of community representation or community engagement in the area (i.e., residents' associations).

4.6 The Council will be required to complete the review within 12 months of publishing the terms of reference (Appendix 1). Completion of the review is defined as the publication of the Council's final recommendations.

4.7 Officers working on the review have made provision for reasonable periods for consultation with local electors and other stakeholders for the consideration of evidence presented and for decision-making. The outline timetable for the review is set out below:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Start date</b>	<b>End date</b>
Pre-consultation with parish councils	July 2023	18 August 2023
Publication of Terms of Reference	29 September 2023	-
Research and information gathering, arranging local meetings if required	29 September 2023	28 November 2023
Initial consultation	28 November 2023	27 January 2024
Consideration of draft submissions received and preparation of draft recommendations	27 January 2024	26 April 2024
Draft recommendations published and consulted on	26 April 2024	25 July 2024
Consideration of consultation outcome	25 July 2024	24 Sept 2024
Council decision and publication of proposals	26 September 2024	-
Review of polling districts and places	30 September 2024	30 November 2024
Election with new arrangements in place	1 May 2025	-

## **5. Issues and Choices**

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5.1 The Council can choose to undertake a review at any time. However, the conclusion of the recent electoral review of the Council's own ward boundaries means it was cause difficulties in terms of electoral efficiency if a review were not undertaken prior to the next scheduled election for both parish and town councils and this authority, which will take place in May 2025.

5.2 The Council would be under a duty to carry out a community governance review if it received a valid community governance petition for the whole or part of the council's area. In accordance with the statutory guidance, the Council has sought to manage this by undertaking to conduct a review following the review of ward boundaries, which will allow the outcome of that review to be take into consideration.

5.3 Officers have elected to undertake initial consultation with parishes prior to the publication of the terms of reference for the review. This consultation, alongside the outcome of the recent boundary review, has served to inform the draft terms of reference in order to ensure any parish

councils who wish to be involved in the review are afforded the opportunity. Further details of the initial consultation are set out in Section 6 below.

- 5.4 The statutory guidance invites authorities to consider the benefits of undertaking a review of the whole of its area in one go. The Council has taken account of this by writing to all parishes in West Northamptonshire to invite expressions of interest.
- 5.5 Community Governance Reviews must be completed within 12 months, and the Council's proposed timeline follows this model. Due to the potential number of parish areas under review, it is suggested that the Council make the most of the 12 month allowance in order to conduct consultation and draw up recommendations.

## **6. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 There are no resources or financial implications arising directly from the proposals. While there will be costs associated with undertaking the review, such as those arising from consultation, these will be met from existing budgets.

### **6.2 Legal**

- 6.2.1 The powers and duties of the Council to conduct a community governance review flow from the Local Government and Public Involvement and Health Act 2007 and associated secondary legislation and statutory guidance. At the conclusion of the review, the Council will be required to publicise the outcome in accordance with this legislation.

### **6.3 Risk**

- 6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

### **6.4 Consultation and Communications**

- 6.4.1 The Council has made provision for periods of consultation within the review timetable. Consultation will be undertaken in line with the applicable statutory guidance.
- 6.4.2 Additionally, early consultation took place with parish and town councils within West Northamptonshire. This period of consultation, which ended on 18 August, was designed to inform the draft terms of reference and aid the Council with its preparations for the review.
- 6.4.3 The Council received 62 responses from Town and Parish Councils. A large majority of these were requests from parishes to be included within the terms of reference for the review but did not outline specific changes. Engagement with these parishes is continuing. The Committee should note that such expressions of interest may not necessarily lead to recommendations for changes. Four parishes specifically requested no changes, while eight outlined a preference for specific changes to boundaries or the number of councillors. Some of these overlap with areas already identified by the Council as requiring review following the review of boundaries.

**6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

6.5.1 None. A community governance review is a matter for the Council and, through delegation, the Standards and Democracy Committee.

**6.6 Climate Impact**

6.6.1 None.

**6.7 Community Impact**

6.7.1 The outcome of the review will have an impact on communities in West Northamptonshire. The Council will undertake consultation on this impact prior to making final recommendations.

**7. Background Papers**

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[Guidance on community governance reviews \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

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# Community Governance Review Terms of Reference

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. West Northamptonshire Council is carrying out a Community governance review (CGR) in accordance with Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
- 1.2. The Council is required to have regard to the guidance on Community Communities and Local Government. This guidance has been considered when drawing up these terms of reference.

## **2. What is a Community Governance Review (CGR)**

- 2.1. A CGR provides an opportunity to put in place strong, clearly defined boundaries, which reflect local identities and facilitate effective and convenient local government. It can take place for the whole or part of the District to consider one or more of the following:
  - 2.1.1. Creating, merging, altering or abolishing parishes;
  - 2.1.2. The naming of parishes and the style of new parishes;
  - 2.1.3. The electoral arrangements for parishes including:
    - 2.1.3.1. the ordinary year of election;
    - 2.1.3.2. the number of councillors to be elected; and
    - 2.1.3.3. the warding (if any) of the parish
  - 2.1.4. Grouping parishes under a common parish council or de-grouping parishes
- 2.2. The Council is required to ensure that community governance within the area under review will be:
  - 2.2.1. Reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area; and
  - 2.2.2. Is effective and convenient
- 2.3. In doing so, the community governance review is required to take into account:
  - 2.3.1. The impact of community governance arrangements on community cohesion; and
  - 2.3.2. The size, population and boundaries of a local community or parish

## **3. Legal Framework**

- 3.1. In undertaking the Review, the Council will be guided by;
  - 3.1.1. Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
  - 3.1.2. the relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1972
  - 3.1.3. Guidance on Community Governance Reviews issued in accordance with section 100(4) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 by the Department of Communities and Local

Government and the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010

3.2. The Council will also be guided by the following regulations on consequential matters arising from the review:

3.2.1. Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008

3.2.2. Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008

3.3. Section 81 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires the Council to publish its Terms of Reference in a Review.

#### **4. Reason for the review**

4.1. Following a review of West Northamptonshire Councils wards by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, a number of changes will be taking affect at the next review. Whilst the Commission did not carry out a review of the parish or town councils in the district, they did agree some changes which amended the warding arrangements of the parish/town councils of Northampton, Daventry, Kingsthorpe, Boughton & Hackleton.

4.2. The Council also wishes to undertake a CGR for those areas that we have had requests from Parish/ Town Councils due to population changes and shifts in 'natural settlements' caused by new development.

4.3. Government guidance states that it is good practice to conduct a full CGR at least every 10 to 15 years. The Council therefore wishes to review the changes outlined above to ensure that there is clarity and transparency to the areas that parish councils represent and that the electoral arrangements of parishes (the warding arrangements and the allocations of councillors) are appropriate, equitable and understood by their electorate.

#### **5. Who will undertake the review**

5.1. As the relevant principal authority, West Northamptonshire Council is responsible for conducting any CGR within its electoral area. The Council will oversee the review and produce draft and final recommendations; Full Council will approve the final recommendations before a Community Governance Order (Order) is made.

#### **6. Areas under review**

6.1. West Northamptonshire Council has resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review of the following parish council areas;

Byfield Parish Council
Easton Neston Parish Council
Everdon Parish Council
Grange Park Parish Council
Great Oxendon Parish Council
Greatworth & Halse Parish Council
Hardingstone Parish Council
Little Houghton Parish Council
Maidwell with Draughton Parish Council
Middleton Cheney Parish Council
Moulton Parish Council
Naseby Parish Council

Pitsford Parish Council
Weedon Bec Parish Council
Yardley Gobion Parish Council
Cold Ashby Parish Council
Eydon Parish Council
Farthinghoe Parish Council
Flore Parish Council
Guilsborough Parish Council
Hannington Parish Council
Newnham Parish Council
Overstone Parish Council
Preston Capes Parish Council
Thorpe Mandeville Parish Council
Lilbourne Parish Council
Kings Sutton Parish Council
Blisworth Parish Council
Boughton Parish Council
Church with Chapel Brampton Parish Council
Clipston Parish Council
Cogenhoe and Whiston Parish Council
Croughton Parish Council
Culworth Parish Council
Daventry Town Council
Hackleton Parish Council
Holcot Parish Council
Kingsthorpe Parish Council
Moreton Pinkney Parish Council
Naseby Parish Council
Northampton Town Council
Potterspury Parish Council
Quinton Parish Council
Roade Parish Council
Shutlanger Parish Council
Sibbertoft Parish Council
Silverstone Parish Council
Stoke Breurne Parish Council
Stowe Nine Churches Parish Council
Tiffield Parish Council
Towcester Town Council
Warkworth Parish Council
West Haddon Parish Council
Wootton Parish Council

6.2. It also covers the following Parish Meetings

Adstone Parish Meeting
Brockhall Parish Meeting
Clay Coton Parish Meeting
Cottesbrooke Parish Meeting
Dodford Parish Meeting
Thornby Parish Meeting

## 7. Consultation

- 7.1. The Council is required to consult the local government electors for the area under review and any other person or body who appears to have an interest in the review and to take the representations that are received into account. The Council will also identify any other person or body who it feels may have an interest in the review and write to them inviting them to submit their views at all stages of the consultation
- 7.2. Before making any recommendations or publishing final proposals, a full consultation process will form part of the review to take full account of the views of local people and other stakeholders. The council will comply with the statutory consultative requirements by:
- 7.2.1. consulting local government electors for the area under review;
- 7.2.2. consulting any other person or body (including a local authority) which appears to the Council to have an interest in the review;
- 7.2.3. taking into account any representations received in connection with the
- 7.3. The Council will publicise the review by displaying a notice at the Council Offices and on the Council's website. The Council will also write to all parish councils or any other community or resident groups of which the Council is aware, the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils, West Northamptonshire Council Councillors and the MP's covering the West Northamptonshire area.
- 7.4. Information about each stage of the review will be published on the Council's website with key documents available at West Northamptonshire Council offices

## 8. Indicative timetable for the Community Governance Review

### 8.1.

Detail	Dates
Commencement of CGR – Terms of Reference Published	29 September 2023
Initial consultation stage	28 November 2023 – 27 January 2024
Draft recommendations prepared	27 January 2024 – 26 April 2024
Draft recommendations published	26 April 2024
Consultation on draft recommendations	26 April 2024 – 26 July 2024
Final recommendations prepared	26 July 2024 – 23 – September 2024
Final Recommendations considered and approved by full Council	29 September 2024
Community Governance Order(s) made	October 2024 – November 2024
New community governance arrangements come into force	1 May 2025

- 8.2. Any Community Governance Order made following a CGR should, for administrative and financial reasons (for example setting up a new parish council and arranging for its first precept) take effect on the 1st April following the date on which the Order is made. Electoral arrangements will come into

force at the first elections to any new parish council following the making of the Order.

## **9. Electoral Forecast**

- 9.1. The Council has used the Register of Electors of August 2023 in providing the existing parish / parish ward electorate figures. These are presented in Annexe A
- 9.2. When the Council comes to consider electoral arrangements for the parish councils in its area, it is required to consider any change in the number or distribution of electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the Review starts.
- 9.3. When the Council comes to consider electoral arrangements for the parish councils in its area, it is required to consider any change in the number or distribution of electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the Review starts
- 9.4. Electorate forecasts have been prepared using information contained in the Local Plan to produce five-year forecasts, details of which are set out in Annexe A

## **10. The present structure of parish councils and their electoral arrangements**

- 10.1. As well as electorate information, Annexe A includes information regarding the following:
  - (a) Type of governance; e.g. parish/town council, joint council or parish meeting,
  - (b) Current number of parish councillors
  - (c) Ratio of current councillors to electorate,
  - (d) District Ward
  - (f) Current Parliamentary Constituency.

## **11. Consequential Matters**

- 11.1. When all the required consultation has been undertaken and the review completed the Council may make an Order to bring into effect any decision that it may make. If the Council decides to take no action then it will not be necessary to make an Order.
- 11.2. If an Order is made it may be necessary to cover certain consequential matters in that Order. These may include:
  - (a) the transfer and management or custody of any property
  - (b) the setting of a precept (council tax levy) for the new parish council
  - (c) provision with respect to the transfer of any functions, property, rights and liabilities
  - (d) Provision for the transfer of staff, compensation for loss of office, pensions and other staffing matters.
- 11.3. The Council will also take into account the requirements of the Local Government Finance (New Parishes) Regulations 2008 when calculating the budget requirement of any new parish councils when setting the council tax levy to be charged.

## **12. Representations**

12.1. West Northamptonshire Council welcomes representations during the specified consultation stages as set out in the timetable from any person or body who may wish to comment or make proposals on any aspect of the matters included in the Review.

12.2. Representations may be made in the following ways:

Online:

By Email: [electoralservices@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:electoralservices@westnorthants.gov.uk)

By Post: Electoral Services (CGR), West Northamptonshire Council, The Guildhall, St Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE.

Area	Parish Council/ Meeting	Parish Wards	Number of Parish Cllrs	Polling Districts	Current Ward(s)	Future Ward(s)	Current Parliamentary Constituency	Future Parliamentary Constituency	1 August Electorate	Ratio of Electors per Cllr	5 year Forecast	Forecast Ratio of Electors per Cllr
Boughton	<b>Boughton Parish Council</b>		11	As Below	Moulton	Moulton & Kingshorpe South	Daventry	Daventry	1855	168.6364	2676	243.2727
		Boughton Village & Buckton Fields	10	AML1	Moulton	Moulton	Daventry	Daventry	1648	164.8	2470	247
		Dixon Road	1	AML1	Moulton	Kingshorpe South	Daventry	Daventry	207	207	206	206
Cogenhoe & Whiston	<b>Cogenhoe &amp; Whiston Parish Council</b>		11	As Below	Hackleton & Grange Park	Cogenhoe & The Houghtons	Daventry	Daventry	1175	106.8182	1189	108.0909
		Cogenhoe	9	DHG3	Hackleton & Grange Park	Cogenhoe & The Houghtons	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	1132	125.7778	1142	126.8889
		Whiston	1	DHG4	Hackleton & Grange Park	Cogenhoe & The Houghtons	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	43	43	47	47
Daventry	<b>Daventry Town Council</b>		16	As Below	Braunston & Crick Daventry East & Daventry West	Daventry North East, Daventry North West & Daventry South	Daventry	Daventry	19770	1235.625	22856	1428.5
		Daventry North East	3	ADE4, ADE5, ADE3* ABC12, ABC13, ADW3*, ADW4, ADW5	Braunston & Crick & Daventry East	Daventry North East	Daventry	Daventry	3034	1011.333	4425	1475
		Daventry North West	3	ADW6, ADW7, ADW3*, ADW1, ADE2, ADE3*	Braunston & Crick	Daventry North West	Daventry	Daventry	3702	1234	4672	1557.333
		Daventry South	10	ADW1, ADE2, ADE3*	Daventry East & Daventry West	Daventry South	Daventry	Daventry	13034	1303.4	13759	1375.9
Fathinghoe	<b>Fathinghoe Parish Council</b>		7	DMC5, DMC6	Middleton Cheney	Middleton Cheney	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	332	51	357	51
		Farthinghoe	5	DMC5	Middleton Cheney	Middleton Cheney	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	282	60	300	60
		Stane	2	DMC6	Middleton Cheney	Middleton Cheney	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	50	28.5	57	28.5
Greatworth & Halse	<b>Greatworth &amp; Halse Parish Council</b>		9	DMC7, DMC8	Middleton Cheney	Rural South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	687	76.33333	731	81.22222
		Greatworth	7	DMC7	Middleton Cheney	Rural South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	589	84.14286	618	88.28571
		Halse	2	DMC8	Middleton Cheney	Rural South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	98	49	113	56.5
Hackleton	<b>Hackleton Parish Council</b>		11	As Below	Hackleton & Grange Park	Hackleton & Roade	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	2270	206.3636	2672	242.9091
		Hackleton & Piddington	6	DHG7*, DHG6	Hackleton & Grange Park	Hackleton & Roade	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	1507	251.1667	1511	251.8333
		Hackleton Urban	5	DHG7*	Hackleton & Grange Park	Hackleton & Roade	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	763	152.6	1161	232.2
Kingshorpe	<b>Kingshorpe Parish Council</b>		5	As Below	Kingshorpe North & Kingshorpe South	Kingshorpe North & Kingshorpe South	Kingshorpe North & Kingshorpe South	Northampton North	16963	3392.6	18143	3628.6
		Kingshorpe	3	BKN1, BKS1,	Kingshorpe North & Kingshorpe South	Kingshorpe North	Northampton North	Northampton North	3530	1176.667	3667	1222.333
		Obelisk East	1	BKS2, BKN2*	Kingshorpe South	Kingshorpe South	Northampton North	Northampton North	878	878	1373	1373
		Spring Park	3	BKN3, BKN4, BKN5	Kingshorpe North	Kingshorpe North	Northampton North	Northampton North	3819	1273	4006	1335.333
		St David's	4	BKS5, BKS4, BKS7, BKS3	Kingshorpe South	Kingshorpe South	Northampton North	Northampton North	4463	1115.75	4591	1147.75
		Sunnyside & Obelisk West	4	BKN2*, BKN6, BKN7	Kingshorpe North	Kingshorpe North	Northampton North	Northampton North	4273	1068.25	4506	1126.5
Maidwell with Draughton	<b>Maidwell with Draughton Parish Council</b>		7	ABX13, ABX7	Brixworth	Rural North East	Daventry	Daventry	270	38.57143	289	41.28571
		Maidwell	4	ABX13	Brixworth	Rural North East	Daventry	Daventry	219	54.75	229	57.25
		Draughton	3	ABX7	Brixworth	Rural North East	Daventry	Daventry	51	17	60	20
Northampton	<b>Northampton Town Council</b>		25	As Below	Wards Listed Below	Wards Listed Below	Northampton North & Northampton South	Northampton North & Northampton South	89928	3597.12	94793	3791.72
		Abington & Phippsville	2	BAP1, BAP2 BAP3, BAP4 BAP5, BAP6, BSG5*, CCT7*	Abington & Phippsville	Abington & Phippsville	Northampton North	Northampton North	8508	44964	9089	4544.5
		Billing Aquadrome	1	CRP7*	Riverside Park	Billing	Northampton South	Northampton South	942	942	1004	1004
		Blackthorne & Rectory Farm	2	BTV4*, BBR1, BBR2, BBR3, CBR9, CBR7, CBR8 BTV6, BTV2*,	Talavera, Billing & Rectory Farm	Blackthorne & Rectory Farm	Northampton South	Northampton South	7410	3705	7654	3827
		Briar Hill	1	CSF1, CSF2	Sixfields	Far Cotton, Delapre & Briar Hill	Northampton South	Northampton South	3036	3036	3096	3096
		Castle	3	CCT1, CCT2, CCT3, CCT4, CCT5, CCT6, CCT7*, CAP7, CDR8	Castle, Abington & Phippsville, Delapre & Rushmere	Castle	Northampton North	Northampton North	12762	4254	12789	4263
		Dallington Spencer	3	CDS1, CDS2, CDS3, CDS4, CDS5, CDS6, CDS7, CSF3, CSF4, CDE7*	Dallington Spencer & Sixfields	Dallington Spencer	Northampton North	Northampton North	12458	4152.667	13769	4589.667
		Headlands	4	BHD1, BHD2, BHD3, BHD4, BHD5, BHD6, BHD7, BHP3, BHP5*, BBP2*, BHP7	Headlands and Boothville & Parklands	Headlands	Northampton North	Northampton North	12096	3024	13852	3463
		Kingsley & Semilong	2	BSG1, BSG2, BSG3, BSG4, BSG5, CSG6, CSG7, BKS6*	Kingshorpe South & St George	Kingley & Semilong	Northampton North	Northampton North	8706	4353	8843	4421.5
		Moulton Leys	1	BBP1	Boothville & Parklands	Moulton	Northampton North	Northampton North	1830	1830	1959	1959
		Parklands	1	BBP2*, BHP4, BHP5*, BBP6	Boothville & Parklands	Parklands	Northampton North	Northampton North	3763	3763	3848	3848
		Queens Park	1	BKS6*, BKS8	Kingshorpe South	Kingshorpe South	Northampton North	Northampton North	2242	2242	2209	2209
		Talavera	2	BTV1, BTV2*, BTV3, BTV4*, BTV5	Talavera	Talavera	Northampton North	Northampton North	8146	4073	8207	4103.5

		Weston Favell & Abington Vale	CDR7, CRP2, CRP3, CRP4, CRP5, CRP6, CRP7*	Riverside Park and Delapre & Rushmere	Weston Favell & Abington Vale	Northampton South	Northampton South	8029	4014.5	8474	4237
Towcester	<b>Towcester Town Council</b>		16 As Below	Towcester & Roade	Towcester	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	8800	550	9762	610.125
		Mill Ward	6 DTR8, DTR9	Towcester & Roade	Towcester	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	2815	469.1667	2917	486.1667
		Brook Ward	10 DTR6, DTR7, DTR7B	Towcester & Roade	Towcester	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	5985	598.5	6845	684.5
Adstone	Adstone Parish Meeting		0 DSV2	Silverstone	Rural South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	87	N/A	90	N/A
Blisworth	Blisworth Parish Council		11 DBG9	Bugbrooke	Hackleton & Roade	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	1425	129.5455	1458	132.5455
Brockhall	Brockhall Parish Meeting		0 ALB4	Long Buckby	Campion	Daventry	Daventry	42	N/A	41	N/A
Byfield	Byfield Parish Council		9 AWW2	Woodford & Weedon	Woodford & Weedon	Daventry	South Northamptonshire	1028	114.2222	1038	115.3333
Church with Chapel Brampton	Church with Chapel Brampton Parish Council		9 AML2, AML3	Moulton	Long Buckby	Daventry	Daventry	621	69	669	74.33333
Clay Coton	Clay Coton Parish Meeting		0 ABC5	Braunston & Crick	Braunston & Crick	Daventry	Daventry	48	N/A	47	N/A
Clipston	Clipston Parish Council		8 ABX3	Brixworth	Rural North East	Daventry	Daventry	534	66.75	551	68.875
Cold Ashby	Cold Ashby Parish Council		7 ABX4	Brixworth	Naseby	Daventry	Daventry	232	33.14286	248	35.42857
Cold Higham	Cold Higham Parish Council		7 DSV9	Silverstone	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	255	36.42857	257	36.71429
Cottesbrooke	Cottesbrooke Parish Meeting		0 ABX5	Brixworth	Naseby	Daventry	Daventry	104	N/A	114	N/A
Croughton	Croughton Parish Council		9 DMC3	Middleton Cheney	Middleton Cheney	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	574	63.77778	577	64.11111
Culworth	Culworth Parish Council		7 DSV10	Silverstone	Rural South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	302	43.14286	318	45.42857
Dodford	Dodford Parish Meeting		0 AWW6	Woodford & Weedon	Woodford & Weedon	Daventry	Daventry	132	N/A	144	N/A
Easton Neston	Easton Neston Parish Meeting		0 DTR1	Towcester & Roade	Towcester	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	63	N/A	63	N/A
Everdon	Everdon Parish Council		8 AWW7	Woodford & Weedon	Woodford & Weedon	Daventry	Daventry	283	35.375	301	37.625
Eydon	Eydon Parish Council		7 DSV11	Silverstone	Rural South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	Daventry	342	48.85714	387	55.28571
Flore	Flore Parish Council		10 ALB6	Long Buckby	Campion	Daventry	Daventry	1105	110.5	1187	118.7
Grange Park	Grange Park Parish Council		12 DHG12	Hackleton & Grange Park	Nene Valley	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	2984	248.6667	3044	253.6667
Great Houghton	Great Houghton Parish Council		7 DNV7	Nene Valley	Cogenhoe & The Houghtons	South Northamptonshire	Northampton South	524	74.85714	619	88.42857
Great Oxenden	Great Oxenden Parish Council		8 ABX16	Brixworth	Rural North East	Daventry	Daventry	265	33.125	253	31.625
Gullsborough	Gullsborough Parish Council		9 ALB7	Long Buckby	Naseby	Daventry	Daventry	552	61.33333	564	62.66667
Hannington	Hannington Parish Council		7 AML4	Moulton	Rural North East	Daventry	Daventry	220	31.42857	238	34
Hardingstone	Hardingstone Parish Council		11 DNV1	Nene Valley	Nene Valley	Northampton South	Northampton South	1741	158.2727	1772	252
Helmdon	Helmdon Parish Council		9 DSV13	Silverstone	Rural South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	696	77.33333	737	81.88889
Holcot	Holcot Parish Council		8 AML7	Moulton	Rural North East	Daventry	Daventry	337	42.125	365	45.625
Kings Sutton	Kings Sutton Parish Council		11 DMC10	Middleton Cheney	Middleton Cheney	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	1749	159	1800	163.6364
Libourne	Libourne Parish Council		8 ABC8	Braunston & Crick	Braunston & Crick	Daventry	Daventry	354	44.25	340	42.5
Little Houghton	Little Houghton Parish Council		9 DHG9	Hackleton & Grange Park	Cogenhoe & The Houghtons	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	340	37.77778	347	38.55556
Middleton Cheney	Middleton Cheney Parish Council		12 DMC12	Middleton Cheney	Middleton Cheney	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	3057	254.75	3164	263.6667
Moreton Pinkney	Moreton Pinkney Parish Council		7 DSV16	Silverstone	Rural South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	322	46	346	49.42857
Moulton	Moulton Parish Council		9 AML8	Moulton	Moulton	Daventry	Daventry	4113	457	4048	449.7778
Newnham	Newnham Parish Council		8 AWW11	Woodford & Weedon	Woodford & Weedon	Daventry	Daventry	539	67.375	538	67.25
Naseby	Naseby Parish Council		8 ABX15	Briworth	Naseby	Daventry	Daventry	630	79.625	637	79.625
Overstone	Overstone Parish Council		9 AML10	Moulton	Moulton	Daventry	Daventry	1075	119.4444	3853	428.1111
Pitsford	Pitsford Parish Council		9 AML11	Brixworth	Moulton	Daventry	Daventry	543	60.33333	553	61.44444
Potterspury	Potterspury Parish Council		13 DDH8	Deanshanger	Deanshanger & Paulerspury	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	1240	95.38462	1237	95.15385
Preston Capes	Preston Capes Parish Council		7 AWW12	Woodford & Weedon	Woodford & Weedon	Daventry	Daventry	154	22	171	24.42857
Quinton	Quinton Parish Council		7 DHG10	Hackleton & Grange Park	Hackleton & Roade	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	157	22.42857	169	24.14286
Roade	Roade Parish Council		13 DTR2	Towcester & Roade	Hackleton & Roade	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	2557	196.6923	2684	206.4615
Shutlanger	Shutlanger Parish Council		7 DTR3	Towcester & Roade	Hackleton & Roade	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	228	32.57143	255	36.42857
Sibbertoft	Sibbertoft Parish Council		7 ABX18	Brixworth	Rural North East	Daventry	Daventry	282	40.28571	294	42
Silverstone	Silverstone Parish Council		11 DSV18	Silverstone	Rural South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	2099	190.8182	2173	197.5455
Stoke Bruerne	Stoke Bruerne Parish Council		7 DTR4	Towcester & Roade	Hackleton & Roade	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	302	43.14286	346	49.42857
Stowe Nine Churches	Stowe-Nine-Churches Parish Council		7 AWW14	Woodford & Weedon	Rural South Northamptonshire	Daventry	Daventry	217	31	234	33.42857
Thornby	Thornby Parish Meeting		0 ABX20	Brixworth	Naseby	Daventry	Daventry	140	N/A	149	N/A
Thorpe Mandeville	Thorpe Mandeville Parish Council		5 DSV22	Middleton Cheney	Middleton Cheney	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	124	24.8	143	28.6
Tiffield	Tiffield Parish Council		9 DTR5	Towcester & Roade	Towcester	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	254	28.22222	282	31.33333
Warkworth	Warkworth Parish Meeting		0 DMC15	Middleton Cheney	Middleton Cheney	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	28	N/A	33	N/A
Weedon Bec	Weedon Bec Parish Council		13 AWW15	Woodford & Weedon	Woodford & Weedon	Daventry	Daventry	2204	169.5385	2224	171.0769
West Haddon	West Haddon Parish Council		10 ALB16	Long Buckby	Braunston & Crick	Daventry	Daventry	1456	145.6	1481	148.1
Wootton	Wootton Parish Council		12 DNV2, DNV3, DNV4, DNV5	Nene Valley	Nene Valley	Northampton South	Northampton South	5823	485.25	6053	504.4167
Yardley Gobion	Yardley Gobion Parish Council		11 DDH11	Deanshanger	Deanshanger & Paulerspury	South Northamptonshire	South Northamptonshire	1007	91.54545	1013	92.09091





# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## Democracy and Standards Committee 12 September 2023

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**Report Title**                      **Updates to the Constitution**

**Report Author**                      Catherine Whitehead  
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### Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	Catherine Whitehead	
<b>Chief Finance Officer (S.151)</b>	Martin Henry	
<b>Communications</b>	Becky Hutson	

### List of Appendices

Appendix A – Draft revised Constitution (available on request from [democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk))

#### **1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Democracy & Standards Committee on a number of proposed changes to the Constitution and request that the committee recommend the revisions to Council for adoption.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 The Constitution for West Northamptonshire Council was formally adopted by the West Northamptonshire Shadow Authority prior to vesting day (1 April 2021). A major review of the Constitution was then undertaken by the Democracy and Standards Committee in the autumn of 2021, reporting to Council in December 2021. Since that time, the Democracy and Standards Committee has considered several suggested changes to the Constitution and has made recommendations to Council accordingly.
- 2.2 Further suggested amendments are summarised in section 5 below. These changes have generally been made to address issues that have been identified with the operation of the Constitution or to ensure the Constitution is up-to-date, for example by reflecting changes to legislation or statutory guidance.

### 3. Recommendations

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3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Note and approves the updates to the Constitution as set out in Section 5; and
- b) Recommends the updates to Council for approval.

### 4. Reason for Recommendations

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Keeping the Constitution under regular review will help ensure that it is legally compliant, complete, reflects the character and culture of the authority and supports effective and efficient decision making.

### 5. Report Background

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#### Property Transactions

- 5.1 At its meeting in July 2021, the Cabinet considered a report relating to several property transactions. Also set out within this report were a number of wider delegations to officers designed to enable the effective management transactions relating to the Council's property portfolio. These delegations were agreed and it was intended that they be incorporated within the relevant section of the Constitution as part of the wide-ranging review overseen by this committee and which concluded in December 2021.
- 5.2 Although the delegations were agreed by the Cabinet, it appears the changes that were agreed were omitted from that review. The Committee are therefore asked to recommend these changes by include in order to correct this anomaly. The specific changes are to be made to the constitution are set out in the table at points 9-12 below, while officers have also taken the opportunity to clarify and simplify the table.

#### Scheme of Delegation to Officers:

##### C. EXCEPTIONS PROPERTY

Process	Officer Delegation	Cabinet Approval	Council Approval
<b>Disposal and Acquisition of Land</b>			
1. Asset Management Plan	No	Yes	No
2. Acquisition at or over £500,000	No	Yes	Where it exceeds the Capital or Revenue Budget
3. Acquisition under £500,000	Assistant Director	No	No

	Assets and Environment in consultation with the s151 Officer <b>if value over £100,000</b>		
4. Disposal (including allowing occupation or sharing the use of any land) in any of the following cases: a. Freehold or leasehold or rights over land where the value does not exceed £500,000 and the disposal is not at an undervalue (except where authorised by existing policy). b. Leasehold where the lease term does not exceed fifteen years of the Council has ability to break at intervals not exceeding fifteen years and the disposal is not at an undervalue (except where authorised by existing policy). c. Leases of up to 125 years at nil consideration, or otherwise at an undervalue, which are directly related to the conversion of a local authority maintained school to an academy, or where as a result of a Council decision (including provisions of a Section 106 agreement entered into by the Council or Section 106 unilateral undertaking benefiting the Council) a new school is to be created, and that school will be an academy. <b>d. Licenses and leases of community centres and similar buildings at undervalues (including nil consideration) with parish councils, charities or VCS groups as defined in the Policy on the Use of Property by Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise and Faith Groups</b> e. Licenses and tenancies at will, including grants at undervalues (including nil consideration), where this supports the effective management of the Council's property or enables implementation of the Council's policies or statutory duties.	Assistant Director Assets and Environment, in the case of items (a) if value is over £100,000 and (d) in consultation with Chief Finance Officer	No	No
5. Disposal of land not covered by 4	No	Yes	No
6. Non-Land Based Asset Disposal	Yes in accordance with the Finance	No	No

**Fire Safety Act 2021 and Building Safety Act 2022**

- 5.3 The Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Building Safety Act 2022 have made significant changes to the way in which high rise residential buildings are managed.
- 5.4 Part 4 of the Building Safety Act identifies new duty holders - who will be known as 'accountable persons' - for residential high-rise buildings. This will be the organisation or person who owns or has responsibility for the building. It may also be an organisation or person who is responsible for maintaining the common parts of a building, for example corridors or lobbies.
- 5.5 The duties of the accountable persons will include;
  - Registering high risk buildings with the regulator;
  - Applying for a Building Assessment Certificate, which must be obtained before the building can be occupied;
  - Appointing Building Safety Managers;
  - Ongoing obligations to assess and fire and structural issues;
  - Maintain a building safety case file;
  - Provide residents with key safety information and ensuring a resident engagement strategy is in place; and
  - Engage with the BSR as required, including the proactive reporting of defect/failures.
- 5.6 The Council is therefore required to identify an Accountable Person for building safety and a Responsible Person for Fire Safety. The Council’s Executive Leadership Team reviewed the requirement and agreed that the Director of Communities and Opportunities be named as the Accountable Person for Building Safety and designated Officer for the Housing Consumer Standards and Health and Safety Lead, while the role of Responsible Person as required by the Fire Safety Act 2021 be delegated to the individual building managers at Northamptonshire Partnership Homes. The update to the list of proper officers is set out below:

**BUILDING SAFETY ACT 2022**

Section	Brief Details of Responsibility	Proper Officer
Part 4	Accountable Person for Building Safety and designated Officer for the Housing Consumer Standards and Health and Safety Lead.	Director of Communities and Opportunities

- 5.7 It should be noted that, as a new statutory requirement, this change has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer under delegated powers to ensure the Constitution is up-to-date and compliant, but is being reported to the Committee for completeness.

**6. Issues and Choices**

6.1 The issues and choices insofar as they relate to the operation of the Constitution are set out in section 5 above.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.1 Resources and Financial**

7.1.1 There are no financial implications arising directly as a result of the Constitution review process.

### **7.2 Legal**

7.2.1 Every local authority is under a legal duty to prepare and keep up to date its Constitution (see Appendix B). In particular, section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000 requires the Constitution to contain:

- a) a copy of the authority's standing orders;
- b) a copy of the authority's code of conduct;
- c) such information as the Secretary of State may direct; and
- d) such other information (if any) as the authority considers appropriate.

7.2.2 Regular review of the Constitution helps to ensure these legal requirements are met. The amendment set out above will assist in ensuring the Council is able to operate in a lawful manner.

### **7.3 Risk**

7.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from this report. Reviewing the Constitution helps to reduce any risks that could arise as a result of the Constitution not properly supporting decision making and delivery of Council services.

### **7.4 Consultation**

7.4.1 Consultation will be undertaken with this committee prior to recommendations being submitted to Council.

### **7.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.5.1 Not applicable to this report.

### **7.6 Climate Impact**

7.6.1 There is no climate impact to consider in relation to the recommendation.

### **7.7 Community Impact**

7.7.1 None specific.

## **8. Background Papers**

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8.1 None

**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL**  
**DEMOCRACY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**12 September 2023**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>STATISTICS - CODE OF CONDUCT ARRANGEMENTS - UPDATE</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager,</b> <a href="mailto:tracy.tiff@westnorthants.gov.uk">tracy.tiff@westnorthants.gov.uk</a>

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<b>Deputy MO</b>	Sarah Hall	4/9/23
<b>S151</b>	Martin Henry	
<b>Communications Lead/Head of Communications</b>	Becky Hutson	

**List of Appendices**

None.

**1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 The report provides detailed statistics for the Committee's information in relation to Member Code of Conduct complaints dealt with under the Member Complaints Procedure (the "Arrangements").

**2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 This report provides the Committee with a precis of each completed complaint and any outstanding complaints of alleged breaches of the West Northamptonshire Council ('WNC') Code of Conduct or of Parish or Town Codes of Conduct, since the complaints statistics were last reported to the Committee at its meeting on 12 January 2023. Any complaints that were reported to the January 2023 meeting that are still live have been included within the information detailed at paragraph 4.1 below. Since the January 2023 meeting of this Committee, Officers have worked on the complaints. The majority of the complaints that were live in January 2023 are now closed as detailed in paragraph 4.1 below.
- 2.2 Having oversight of this information in relation to Code of Conduct complaints is part of the Committee's duty to discharge standards functions by promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct within WNC and Town and Parish Councils within the area of West Northamptonshire.

### **3 Recommendation**

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3.1 It is recommended that the Democracy and Standards Committee notes the statistics in relation to the number of complaints received and dealt with, in respect of the WNC Members' Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Town and Parish councils within West Northamptonshire.

#### **3.2 Reason for Recommendation**

The Committee is recommended to receive the statistical data to:

- a) enable it to carry out its Standards responsibilities effectively; and
- b) to enable it to identify whether there are any patterns or common themes in the type of complaints received and to consider whether all Members would benefit from training on any matter relating to Member conduct to enable them to fulfil their public functions effectively.

### **4 Report Background**

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4.1 WNC's Constitution specifies that one of the purposes of the Democracy and Standards Committee is, "*to oversee and develop the Council's Code of Conduct and the overall standards of conduct for Council Members, co-opted Members, and Parish and Town Councillors of West Northamptonshire.*" Therefore, statistical data in relation to complaints received and dealt with is provided to inform this role of the Committee.

#### **Complaints – Members' Code of Conduct**

4.2 The adopted arrangements for dealing with allegations of breach of the WNC Members' Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Town/Parish Councils provides for an initial filtering process by the Monitoring Officer and in consultation with one of the Independent Persons to decide whether: -

- There is no breach of the Code, and no further action should be taken; or
- There is a potential breach of the Code and informal resolution is appropriate, to include for example mediation, training, apology, advice; or
- There is a potential breach of the Code, and the Monitoring Officer should undertake or commission an investigation into the complaint.

4.3 The analysis in this report provides details of the nature of the complaint, the initial filtering decision of the Monitoring Officer, any informal resolutions agreed (where applicable), and the status of the complaint.

4.4 Some specific detailed information regarding pending complaints has not been provided as this may be prejudicial to the conduct of the ongoing complaints process. Personal details have also not been included to protect both the identity of councillors and the complainant.

4.5 Details of Code of Conduct complaints are set out below.



**Information regarding "live " complaints in accordance with the Code of Member Conduct that were provided to the meeting of the Democracy and Standards Committee – 12 January 2023 and have now been updated.**

Where a complaint has since been closed, this is detailed within the status column below.

<b>Date received</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Assessment of the Monitoring Officer</b>	<b>Status</b>
28/02/22 and 01/03/22	<b>Parish Council</b> Complaint against a Councillor regarding alleged linguistic racism and aggressive behaviour during a meeting.	The Deputy Monitoring Officer consulted the Independent Person and assessed that there had been a potential breach of the Code. The complaint was referred to investigation.	Closed. The Deputy Monitoring Officer has met with the Subject Member and re-assessing the complaint
13/10/22 and 15/11/22	<b>Parish Council</b> Four complaints received regarding a number of Councillors and their alleged aggressive and impartial behaviour during a Parish Council meeting.	The Deputy Monitoring Officer has assessed the complaint and consulted the Independent Person and recommended to the Parish Council that the subject Members attend relevant training.	Live - The Deputy Monitoring Officer has made a preliminary assessment in consultation with the independent person that subject Members attend relevant training, subject to receipt and review of some further information by the Deputy Monitoring Officer/Independent Person.
14/10/22	<b>Parish Council</b> Complaint received regarding alleged abusive comments within correspondence.	The Deputy Monitoring Officer has assessed the complaint and consulted the Independent Person and decided that it is not in the public interest to investigate the complaint. Governance training was recommended to the Parish Clerk for all Members of the Parish Council.	Closed
8/11/22	<b>West Northants Council and Parish Council</b> Complaint received regarding alleged	The Deputy Monitoring Officer consulted the Independent Person on the complaint decided that this complaint referred to a right of way and is outside the remit of the Code	Closed

	disrespectful behaviour of the subject Member	of Conduct complaints process and therefore no further action.	
15/11/22	<p><b>West Northants Council</b></p> <p>Complaint received against three Members regarding alleged pre-determination regarding a Planning application. Behaviour in relation to one member.</p>	<p>The Deputy Monitoring Officer assessed the complaint with the Independent Person – Referred for investigation.</p> <p>The investigator found one Subject Member was found to have failed to comply with paragraph 3.1 (members must treat others with respect.)of the Code, on the basis that they did not treat the Senior Planning Officer with respect and that they involved themselves as a Committee member in both the discussion and decision to reject the aforementioned planning application despite having predetermined their position on it and recommended that the subject Member be found to have failed to comply with paragraphs 3.8 (members must not conduct themselves in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or the Authority into disrepute) and 3.12(members must not use their position improperly to confer on, or secure for yourself or any other person, an advantage or disadvantage) of the Code.</p> <p>A Standards Hearing was held and it was resolved:</p> <p>The Hearings Sub-Committee found that the Subject Member had not breached paragraph 3.1 of the West Northamptonshire Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The Hearings Sub-Committee found that the Subject Member had breached paragraph 3.8 and 3.12 of the West Northamptonshire Code of Conduct in that they had predetermined the decision and in doing so had improperly used their position as a councillor to disadvantage the applicant which could be regarded as having brought the Council into disrepute.</p>	Closed

		<p>Sanctions applied:</p> <p>(a) Findings in respect of the Member's conduct be published; (b) Recommend to the Member's Group Leader that the Subject Member is suspended as a member of the Strategic Planning Committee and Planning Policy Committee for a period of three months from 1 June 2023.</p> <p>(c) Instruct the Monitoring Officer to arrange individual training for the Member to take place during the 3-month Committee suspension period.</p>	
05/12/22	<p><b>Parish Council</b> Complaint received regarding alleged aggressive behaviour by the subject Member at a meeting of the Parish Council</p>	<p>The Deputy Monitoring Officer undertook an initial assessment of the complaint with the Independent Person. It was the view of the Deputy Monitoring Officer that an investigation would not be proportionate and in the public interest. The complaint was not considered to be sufficiently serious and the Deputy Monitoring Officer considered that there may be a tit for tat element to this complaint. The Deputy Monitoring Officer therefore decided that no further action should be taken.</p>	Closed
6/12/22	<p><b>Parish Council</b> Complaint relates to a Member appointment and a previously closed complaint following the resignation of the subject Member.</p>	<p>A response has been provided regarding the appointment process and a review took place regarding the previously closed complaint as the subject Member is once again a Member. The Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that there is no right of appeal to the Deputy Monitoring Officer's decision not to re-open the complaint.</p>	Remained closed

**Code of Conduct Complaints received from January 2023 – 1 August 2023**

Date received	Council	Assessment of the Monitoring Officer	Status
16/01/23 WNC01	<p><b>WNC</b> Complaint received regarding comments</p>	<p>The Deputy Monitoring Officer assessed the complaint with the Independent Person and decided</p>	Closed

	made by a Councillor on his personal social media account	that no action should be taken in respect of the complaint as it was deemed that the subject Member was not acting as a Councillor as this social media account related to them as an individual and not as a Councillor of WNC.	
23/01/23 WNC02	<b>Parish Council</b> The complainant makes allegations of bullying and aggression by the subject Member	The Deputy Monitoring Officer assessed the complaint with the Independent Person and decided that no action should be taken in respect of this complaint as it is outside the scope of the remit of the standards complaints process as it refers to a long-standing legal dispute.	Closed
27/02/23 WNC03	<b>Parish Council</b> The complaint relates to the subject Member signing letters for works to be undertaken	A formal complaint was not submitted therefore the complaint file was closed	Closed
07/03/23 WNC05	<b>Parish Council</b> The complaint relates alleged aggressive behaviour (same complaint as WNC06)	The Deputy Monitoring Officer closed the complaint as the subject Member is no longer a Parish Councillor.	Closed
07/03/23 WNC06	<b>Parish Council</b> The complaint relates alleged aggressive behaviour (same complaint as WNC05)	The Deputy Monitoring Officer closed the complaint as the subject Member is no longer a Parish Councillor.	Closed
27/02/23 WNC07	<b>Parish Council</b> The complaint relates to alleged divisive and untrue information published on the Parish Council's social media site	The Deputy Monitoring Officer assessed the complaint with the Independent Person and decided that the complaint is outside scope as it relates to the Parish Council not the subject Member.	Closed
21/03/23 WNC08	<b>Parish Council</b> The complaint relates to alleged disrespectful and misogynistic tones by the subject Member during a Parish Council meeting	The Deputy Monitoring Officer assessed the complaint with the Independent Person and further information from the complainant was requested. After four weeks this information was not received, therefore the complaint was closed.	Closed
10/03/23 WNC09	<b>WNC</b> The complaint relates to a lack of response from an email to the subject Member	The Deputy Monitoring Officer assessed the complaint with the Independent Person and decided this complaint was outside scope and therefore closed.	Closed

05/04/23 WNC10	<b>Parish Council</b> The complaint relates to alleged poor governance of the Parish Council, incorrect completion of Register of Interest and bullying	This complaint is currently being pre-assessed by the Deputy Monitoring Officer	Live – This complaint is being assessed
27/4/23 WNC12	<b>WNC</b> The complaint relates to the subject Member's alleged aggressive dog	The Deputy Monitoring assessed the complaint and decided it was outside scope as the subject Member was not acting in their capacity as a Councillor	Closed
03/05/23 WNC13	<b>Parish Council</b> The complaint relates to incomplete Register of Interest of the subject Member	The Deputy Monitoring assessed the complaint and decided that the complaint should be closed as the subject Member had updated their Register of Interest.	Closed
04/05/23 WNC14	<b>Parish Council</b> The complaint relates to alleged disrespectful behaviour of the subject Member	The complaint was submitted on behalf of a number of Councillors. All have been individually contacted to ascertain if they want to submit the complain themselves. Complaint forms have not been received and the complaint is therefore closed but a new file will be opened should a complaint form(s) be received.	Closed
09/05/23 WNC15	<b>Parish Council</b> The complaint relates to alleged bullying behaviour of the subject Member	The Deputy Monitoring Officer agreed more information is required before the complaint can be assessed	Live - pending further information being provided
23/05/23 WNC16	<b>Parish Council</b> The complaint relates to alleged bullying behaviour of the subject Member	The Deputy Monitoring Officer assessed the complaint with the Independent Person and agreed to close the complaint as it is outside scope of the Code of Conduct complaints process.	Closed
05/07/23 WNC17	<b>WNC</b> The complaint relates to the alleged incomplete Register of Interest forms of three Members	The Deputy Monitoring Officer assessed the complaint and had dialogue with the subject Members regarding the completion of their Register of Interest forms that were updated where applicable.	Closed
05/07/23 WNC18	<b>Parish Council</b> The complaint relates to the alleged incomplete Register of Interest forms of the subject Member	The Deputy Monitoring Officer is assessing the complaint	Live – Currently being assessed

02/07/23 WNC19	<b>WNC</b> The complaint alleges that the subject Member has brought the Council into dispute by their actions.	The Deputy Monitoring Officer is assessing the complaint	Live – Currently being assessed
13/07/23 WNC20	<b>WNC</b> The complaint refers to the subject Member’s alleged lack of engagement with the community.	The Deputy Monitoring Officer assessed the complaint with the Independent Person and agreed this complaint is out of scope as it relates to lack of engagement by the ward Councillor. The extent to which ward Councillors engage with the local community is not within scope.	Closed
01/08/23 WNC21	<b>Parish Council</b> The complaint refers to the three subject Members allegedly acting outside the governance [processes] of the Parish Council	The complaint is currently awaiting pre- assessment.	Live – awaiting pre assessment

## 5 Issues and Choices

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- 5.1. Members are asked to note the information provided in respect of the Code of Conduct complaint process and complaints received.

## 6 Implications (including financial implications)

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### 6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation.
- 6.1.2 There are no Officer cost and time implications arising directly from this report, however, the Committee will be aware that the handling and processing of complaints is resource intensive. A high volume of complaints could have an impact upon resources. It is therefore important that the Committee promotes and maintain high standards of conduct by all Councillors to help limit the number of complaints.

### 6.2 Legal

- 6.2.1 The Council has a statutory duty under section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council. In discharging its duty, the Council must adopt a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of Members when they are acting in that capacity.

6.2.2 Under Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council must have in place 'arrangements' under which allegations that an elected or co-opted councillor of the Council or of a town or parish council within West Northamptonshire has failed to comply with the relevant Code of Conduct, can be considered and decisions made. It is for the Council to decide the details of those arrangements, but they must appoint at least one Independent Person whose views are to be taken into account before making a decision to investigate a complaint.

6.2.3 Complaints are received in accordance with the arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the West Northamptonshire Members' Code of Conduct and of Codes adopted by Town/Parish Councils within West Northamptonshire. The Council has a legal duty to respond to such complaints.

### 6.3 **Risk**

6.3.1 There are none specifically.

### 6.4 **Communication and Consultation**

6.4.1 This is an update report which monitors complaints handling and is therefore not appropriate for wider consultation.

### 6.5 **Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

6.5.1 This is an update report which monitors complaints handling and it is therefore not appropriate to be referred to Overview and Scrutiny.

### 6.6 **Climate Impact**

6.6.1 There are no immediate climate implications arising from this report.

### 6.7 **Community Impact**

6.7.1 There are no immediate community implications arising from this report.

## **7 Background Papers**

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Complaints received in respect of the arrangements for dealing with allegations of breaches of the West Northamptonshire Members' Code of Conduct and of Codes of Conduct adopted by Town/Parish Councils within West Northamptonshire. These records contain exempt information (Categories 1 (Information relating to any individual) and 2 (Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual))

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**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL**  
**DEMOCRACY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**12 September 2023**

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>Councillor Development Programme 2023 -2025 – Progress report</b>
<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Tracy Tiff, Deputy Democratic Services Manager, <a href="mailto:tracy.tiff@westnorthants.gov.uk">tracy.tiff@westnorthants.gov.uk</a></b>

<b>Contributors/Checkers/Approvers</b>	
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	Catherine Whitehead
<b>S151 Officer</b>	Martin Henry

**List of Appendices**

**Appendix A Councillor Development Feedback Form**

**Appendix B Proforma for Members attending Conferences and external courses**

**1. Purpose of Report**

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- 1.1 This report provides a progress report on Councillor Development programme for the Democracy and Standards Committee's (the Committee) information.

**2. Executive Summary**

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- 2.1 As reported to the both the March and June 2023 meetings of this Committee, the Member Development programme for 2023/2024 will concentrate mainly on training for Planning Members and training for Overview and Scrutiny.
- 2.2 The mandatory training for Planning Committee members took place during June 2023 and all members and named substitute members of the Planning Committees have received the required training.
- 2.3 A suite of training for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees commenced in July 2023 and will be externally delivered by senior Officers of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS): the training has been tailored to the Council's requirements in order to reflect the improvement plans for Overview and Scrutiny. The schedule will include:

- Understand scrutiny including its role, principles, and value
- Chairing skills
- Questioning skills

- Budget Scrutiny and finance scrutiny
- Performance, finance, and risk
- Work programming

- 2.4 All newly appointed members and named substitute members of the Licensing Committee have received the required training to enable them to sit on this Committee and Hearings Panels.
- 2.5 Other training and briefings will be offered to Members during the year. Further details are contained within section 4 of this report.
- 2.6 A draft feedback form for Councillors to complete following each development session has been produced for the Committee's consideration and approval.
- 2.7 A number of requests have been received by Democratic Services by Councillors for them to attend externally delivered courses, conferences and seminars. Such sessions incur a cost varying from £200 to £500 plus travel costs. A draft proforma for Members' attendance at such conferences is attached at Appendix B for the Committee's consideration and approval.

### **3. Recommendations**

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- 3.1 It is recommended that the Democracy and Standards Committee:
- a) Notes and provides comment on the further progress undertaken on developing a Councillor Training Programme for 2023/24.
  - b) Considers other potential opportunities to deliver and promote learning and development opportunities for Councillors.
  - c) Confirms that training for all Members of the Democracy and Standards Committee on the process for Hearing sub-Committees is scheduled as soon as possible and delivered by the Monitoring Officer.
  - d) Considers for approval the Councillor Training Session Feedback form, at **Appendix A**.
  - e) Considers for approval the Proforma for Members' attendance at external conferences, seminars and courses at **Appendix B**.
  - f)

#### **3.2 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.2.1 The recommendations are intended to:
- a) Enable the Committee to receive a progress report regarding the Councillor development programme and provide Councillors with an opportunity to suggest further training requirements that they feel are required.
  - b) Enable the Committee to consider the various opportunities available to promote learning and development for Councillors.

- c) Ensure all Members of the Democracy and Standards Committee are training on the process for Hearing sub-Committees.
- d) Ensure that feedback is received and analysed on the various training sessions delivered to Members which will make sure that the Councillor Development Programme is as effective and efficient as it can be.
- e) Ensure there is a clear and transparent process in place for the approval of Members attendance at external conferences, seminars and courses.

## **4. Report Background**

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### **Councillor Development**

- 4.1 The Standards responsibilities of the Committee includes advising, training, or arranging training for Councillors and co-opted Members of the Council, Parish and Town Councils on matters relating to the Councillor Code of Conduct and the Planning Code of Conduct. Councillor training is a wider issue and particularly for a new Council it is important that there is oversight of the Councillor training programme to ensure that Councillors have the skills they need to support effective decision making.
- 4.2 Councillor development includes training and development opportunities as well as activities, programmes and briefings that are offered to elected Councillors by West Northamptonshire Council which support Councillors to carry out their roles effectively. A well-designed training programme helps to ensure decision making is robust and contributes to the effective management of risks identified by the Council.
- 4.3 As reported to the meetings of the Committee that took place in March and June 2023 questionnaires were issued to all Councillors regarding suggestions for their training requirements, a further questionnaire was issued to Committee Chairs regarding the potential requirements of training for their Committees and to Group Leaders regarding potential training needs for their Groups.
- 4.4 The results of the completed questionnaires have been analysed, along with the review into Overview and Scrutiny which has been carried out by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) and the review of the Planning Service by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). This information assisted in informing and developing the Councillor Development programme 2023-24 in respect of Planning training and Overview and Scrutiny training as the programme for 2023-24 will concentrate primarily on a suite of development sessions in relation to both Overview and Scrutiny and Planning. The cost for this training is detailed in section 6.1 of this report.

### **Mandatory Training - Planning Committee Members**

- 4.5 Mandatory training for Members and named substitute Members of the Planning Committees took place in June 2023 and two identical sessions were held in order that all Members could attend. It was delivered by senior internal officers together with a highly recommended external training provider. All Members and named substitute Members to the Planning Committees have received the required training. In addition, a number of Councillors who are not members or substitute Members of a Planning Committee attended one of the training sessions. Feedback received from these sessions were that it was well received and it has led to an improvement in debate and decision making undertaken at the Committee meetings.

4.6 There is a need to gather feedback following each training session, which will assist Officers and this Committee when arranging further training and engaging external training providers. A draft feedback form is attached at **Appendix A** for the Committee's consideration and approval. Once approved Democratic Services will use this form to gather data and report back to this Committee periodically.

### **LGA training - Planning**

4.7 In addition to the mandatory training for Members of Planning Committees as detailed in paragraph 4.5; discussions have been ongoing with Local Government Support Officers at the LGA regarding further training. The training will be around behaviours, questioning techniques, how to deal with officers appropriately in planning committee and how to be effective in a planning committee. A training plan is being drafted by Officers at the LGA and will be scheduled into the programme for Members and named substitute Members of the Planning Committees. The training plan will be delivered by the LGA. This training schedule will incur a cost.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Training**

4.8 The Deputy Chief Executive of the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny produced a schedule for a suite of training for Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) that will be delivered from July 2023 to November 2023. This suite of training was compiled in accordance with the recommendations proposed in the review of the Overview and Scrutiny structure at WNC undertaken by the CfGS.

4.9 The Deputy Chief Executive will deliver the majority of the sessions himself:

Scrutiny essentials	19 July 2023
Financial and Budget Scrutiny	21 September 2023
Performance, finance, and risk review exercise	26 September 2023
Questioning skills and making committee meetings more effective (2 sessions)	9 & 12 October 2023
Work Programming (4 sessions)	16, 18 & 30 October and 6 November 2023

4.10 Following completion of the suite of O&S training, the training provider will review feedback and ascertain whether he should recommend any further training sessions.

4.11 All sessions are now scheduled to commence at 5pm and will be held remotely. The training provider had initially proposed that the session on "*questioning skills and making Committee meetings more effective*" should be a full day's session and could be held face to face. He further suggested that the session around "*work programming*" should be held over two full day sessions and again could be a face-to-face training session. Following individual feedback from a number of members, it appeared that the proposed daytime sessions were not convenient and the proposed venue was not felt to be suitable either. Therefore, following discussion with the training provider, some of the sessions were split into a number of shorter sessions scheduled to commence at 5pm and held remotely. Due to the fact some of the sessions have been moved to an evening slot, some Councillors are not able to make these due to other conflicting meetings such as Parish Council meetings. Officers have done their best to manage this, but it has not always been possible to avoid conflicts.

- 4.12 The training provider has confirmed that it is acceptable to record the sessions. A copy of the recording, along with presentations given will be available for Members in the Councillor Development Teams channel. A library of Councillor training session is available in this Teams channel which is a useful reference tool for Members.

### **Mandatory Training - Licensing**

- 4.13 All Members and named substitute Members appointed to the Licensing Committee are required to attend mandatory training before they can sit on the Licensing Committee. In 2023/24 there were three newly appointment Members to the Licensing Committee and two newly appointed substitutes. One Councillor attended a full day's training session hosted by the Institute of Licensing on 26 May 2023. The date was not convenient to other Members and a session was delivered on 3 August 2023 by the Principal Lawyer (Licensing) to the other Members and substitute Members. All Members and substitute Members to the Licensing Committee have received the required training.

### **Training for Members of the Democracy and Standards Committee - Hearing sub-Committees**

- 4.14 Prior to the Hearing Sub Committee (Hearings Panel) that took place in March 2023, the Director of Legal and Democratic delivered comprehensive training to the Members of that Hearings Panel.
- 4.13 It is suggested that training for all Members of the Democracy and Standards Committee on the process for Hearing sub-Committees is scheduled and delivered by the Monitoring Officer.

### **Training for the Audit Committee**

- 4.15 At the June 2023 meeting of the Standards and Democracy Committee, the Chair of the Audit Committee, also a member of the Standards and Democracy Committee, asked whether there was training available specific to Members of the Audit Committee. This request was agreed by the Committee. Officers have been in dialogue with the Section 151 Officer and Deputy Section 151 Officer regarding potential training. Details of which will be provided to the meeting. The training could incur a cost if it is delivered by an external training provider.

### **Individual Councillor requests to attend external training and conferences**

- 4.16 There is a need for a process to be in place for the consideration of requests from individual members to attend external training sessions. Such requests will need to be carefully assessed in order to avoid exceeding the allocated budget for this year. Previously, requests from Councillors to attend events have been received by Democratic Services, such as: events on as improving support to care leavers, Westminster Forum - Improving Childcare Services and WEdF policy conference - Tackling abuse and sexual misconduct in the education system. The requests were from Councillors that did not have specific responsibility for these areas, either as a Cabinet Member or a Committee chair. There was a cost to attend these events. Therefore, a proforma has been drafted and is attached at **Appendix B** for the Committee's consideration and approval. The proforma will assist in managing the requests for attendance at various external conferences and training events. It is proposed that requests will be considered by the Head of Democratic and Elections in consultation with the Chair of the Democracy and Standards Committee. Criteria has been put together that will assist the Head of Democrat and Elections in consultation with the Chair of the Democracy and Standards Committee to consider each request against the set criteria:

## **Training Priorities**

**Priority 1**- Training specifically identified as necessary to be provided by the Committee.

**Priority 2** - Training relevant to the specific functions of the Councillor and to support their ability to carry out those functions. For example: Cabinet/Scrutiny function

**Priority 3** Training relevant to a particular issue in the ward of the Councillor, for example planning relating to a specific type of development happening in the Councillor's ward.

**4** Training which is of personal interest to the Councillor

## **Generic Member training/briefings**

- 4.17 The Committee is asked to consider whether it feels there is a need for training, or briefings, to be delivered on various issues such as housing or Place for example and whether ICT training would be useful to Members.
- 4.18 Officers from Democratic Services have offered and can host more sessions on the Committee Meeting management system - Mod.Gov, how it works and its various features. A video on how the app. Works is published on the Members' area on the Intranet and a short slide deck has been produced that details the key features of the app. and how they can be used. If the Committee feels these would be useful further drop- in sessions for Councillors could be scheduled. Officers could, at these sessions, provide short training on other IT packages such as Microsoft Office if this would be useful.
- 4.19 Dates are reserved in the Councillor Meeting calendar for monthly briefings. The dates are issued to Members calendars and then updated when Cabinet Members or Officers request that a briefing is given. So far this year briefings have been delivered on the following topics:
- Planning - varying topics
  - Housing and Planning
  - Community Safety
- 4.20 The briefing sessions are mainly held remotely and usually commence at 5pm.
- 4.21 Other Councillor sessions and events have been scheduled and include Enforcement S106 and CIL - Councillor Engagement" sessions. These sessions are held regularly and alternate between the Guildhall, Northampton and the Forum at Towcester. The facility for Members to dial in remotely is available also if required.
- 4.22 The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Transport, Transport, Highways & Waste has held one briefing session on areas within his portfolio with another scheduled over the summer.
- 4.23 The Councillor Development Programme for 2024/2025 will potentially contain fewer training sessions than previously due to the fact that it will be ahead of the Local elections for West Northamptonshire scheduled for May 2025. However, briefings that may be of use to members will continue. A comprehensive induction programme for Members from May 2025 will be drafted and presented to this Committee during 2024 for discussion and approval. External expert trainers can then be engaged ahead of the Induction Programme being rolled out in May 2025. Page 46

## **5 Issues and Choices**

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- 5.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress report on the structured four-year Councillor Development programme starting with 2023 - 2025 (year 3 - 4) and provide comment.

## **6 Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **6.1 Resources and Financial**

- 6.1.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising from the proposals in further developing a structured Councillor development programme. However, when the development sessions were scheduled for Planning and Overview and Scrutiny, external training providers were sourced this training. The total cost of the training was £10,400. There is now limited budget available for further Councillor training for 2023/24, from the total budget of £15,531. There will be a cost to the proposed training to be delivered by Officers of the LGA as detailed in paragraph 4.6. There could also be a cost to the training for the Audit Committee should this be delivered by an external training provider. In considering requests from individual members to attend external training sessions, the Head of Democratic and Elections in consultation with the Chair of the Democracy and Standards Committee will consider such requests against the priority matrix. They will also give consideration the available budget against such requests.
- 6.1.2 As training sessions generally take place in the evenings, there is a resource implication on the officers internally delivering training and hosting briefings.

### **7.1 Legal**

- 7.1.1 The Democracy and Standards Committee and the wider Council have a duty to ensure that Councillors are supported in carrying out their roles effectively. This includes providing training. One of key roles undertaken by Councillors is decision making and particularly quasi-judicial decision making where there is a requirement to adhere to specific rules in the way in which decisions are made. Failure to adhere to these rules can jeopardise the decision making of the Council and result in legal challenges. In addition, the Council is under a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct which all councillors must uphold in performing their duties.
- 7.1.2 A structured training and development programme for newly elected Councillors and continuing training for all Councillors throughout their term of office will equip them with essential knowledge and skills to perform their roles effectively.

### **7.2 Risk**

- 7.2.1 There are risks if Councillors do not receive the training, they need to carry out their roles effectively.
- 7.2.2 The training for Members of the Planning Committees and Licensing Committee is mandatory. Without this training Members would not be able to sit on the Committees or Hearings Panels.

- 7.2.3 It is important for members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to attend the suite of training being delivered by the CfGS. These sessions have been rescheduled in order that attendance is maximised.
- 7.2.4 Training for all Members of the Democracy and Standards Committee on the Hearing Sub Committee (Hearings Panel) process is important to ensure that all Members understand and are trained on the procedure.

### **7.3 Consultation**

- 7.3.1 All Members and named substitute Members of the Planning Committees attended the mandatory training and were advised in advance of the dates.
- 7.3.2 A number of members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees conveyed concern regarding the scheduling of full day training sessions and these training sessions were re arranged, following this feedback.
- 7.3.3 All Councillors have been provided with a questionnaire regarding a structured Councillor Development programme, the results of which have been analysed.
- 7.3.4 Members and named substitute Members to the Licensing Committee were consulted on dates for the mandatory training and the training scheduled accordingly. They were also offered external training delivered by the Institute of Licensing, but the date was only suitable to one Member who attended this training.

### **7.4 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

- 7.4.1 The Triangulation Group, that comprises Cabinet Members and the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which held its inaugural meeting on 21 May 2023 was consulted on the content on the development sessions specific to Overview and Scrutiny. A further update was provided to the Triangulation Group at its meeting held in July 2023.

### **7.5 Climate Impact**

- 7.5.1 There are no immediate climate implications arising from this report.

### **7.6 Community Impact**

- 7.6.1 There are no immediate community implications arising from this report.

### **7.7 Background Papers**

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Members' induction programme 2021/2022

Democracy and Standards Committee - agenda and minutes - 27 January 2022, 28 July 2022, 12 January 2023, 9 March 2023 and 15 June 2023

Report following the review of Overview and Scrutiny by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS)

Report following the review of Planning by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS)





**West  
Northamptonshire  
Council**

## POST COURSE REVIEW: COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT

Councillor:

Course/Event title:

Date/Time of Course

Please rank your overall perception of the course/event by ticking the appropriate columns below  
**5 = Very Good;** 4 = Good; 3 = Average; 2 = Marginal; **1 = Poor**

<b>Session</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
How well did the session meet your needs?					
Did the content of the session provide enough information?					
Did the course materials provide adequate information?					
Will there be value of your learning from this session to the Council?					
How do you rate the overall quality of the session?					
<b>Facilitator</b>					
Do you feel the trainer was knowledgeable of the subject matter?					
How well did the trainer communicate during the session?					
How well did the trainer listen and answer questions during the session?					
<b>Facilities</b>					
Was the location/accessibility of the session appropriate?					
Were the facilities/venue appropriate for the session?					

**General comments on the course/event:**

**Please give examples of how you will apply this gained knowledge to your role: Page 49**

**Could this session be improved? if so please provide suggestions:**

**Do you have any general comments to make about the session?**

**POST COURSE EVALUATION:**

When complete please email or pass to [democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk) . Please can the completed form be passed to Democratic Services within five days of the course attended

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

Date Post Course Review received:

Date entered on to evaluation & attendance logs:

Details of any follow up actions:

Application Number:

**Please return completed form: [democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@westnorthants.gov.uk)**



## **Protocol for Members Attending Conferences/Courses**

1. External Course/conference material will often be sent direct to Members from a variety of sources.

Should a Member express an interest to attend, and the course or event is felt to be relevant to the Member's job role, for example Cabinet Member, shadow Cabinet Member Committee Chair/Vice Chair, the Head of Democratic and Elections in consultation with the Chair of the Democracy and Standards Committee will be asked to confirm they are supportive of the Member attending such events. If so, Democratic Services will book the Member onto the event and a purchase order will be raised with the organisation. Criteria for assessing Member requests for training is detailed below:

### **Training Priorities**

**Priority 1-** Training specifically identified as necessary to be provided by the Committee.

**Priority 2 -** Training relevant to the specific functions of the Councillor and to support their ability to carry out those functions. For example: Cabinet/Scrutiny function

**Priority 3** Training relevant to a particular issue in the ward of the Councillor, for example planning relating to a specific type of development happening in the Councillor's ward.

**4** Training which is of personal interest to the Councillor

- 2 Members are asked complete an Expression of Interest Form (Appendix A) to obtain agreement of the Head of Democratic and Elections in consultation with the Chair of the Democracy and Standards Committee. Democratic Services will confirm whether budget is available to the Chair of the Democracy and Standards Committee. Once confirmation of attendance is obtained, Democratic Services will make the necessary booking arrangements on behalf of the Member. Democratic Services will arrange for the event host to send the joining instructions direct to the Member.
- 3 It would be useful for the Member to circulate notes of the event to Democratic Services so that they can be stored on the Members' area of ILearn on the Intranet for all Members to have access to.



**Councillor request for attendance at an external seminar/conference/event**

<p><b>Councillor's name:</b></p>	
<p><b>Course Title:</b></p>	
<p><b>Organisation to deliver seminar/conference/event and the location.</b></p>	
<p><b>Date:</b></p>	
<p><b>Description:</b></p>	<p>Please attach any information you have from the organisation hosting the training to this form.</p>
<p><b>Which areas of responsibility does this seminar/conference/event relate to?</b></p> <p><b>Training Priorities</b></p> <p><b>Priority 1-</b> Training specifically identified as necessary to be provided by the Committee.</p> <p><b>Priority 2 -</b> Training relevant to the specific functions of the Councillor and to support their ability to carry out those functions. For example: Cabinet/Scrutiny function</p>	<p><b>Please refer to the priority criteria and indicate which priority you feel this training is applicable to and why:</b></p>

<p><b>Priority 3</b> Training relevant to a particular issue in the ward of the Councillor, for example planning relating to a specific type of development happening in the Councillor's ward.</p> <p><b>4</b> Training which is of personal interest to the Councillor</p>			
<p><b>Describe how this seminar will help you in your role as a West Northants Councillor?</b></p>	<p>Please provide a short business case how this course will assist your role as a West Northants Councillor</p>		
<p><b>Describe how you plan to share the information with other Councillors</b></p>			
<p><b>Cost</b></p>	<p><b>Course</b></p>	<p><b>Travel and subsistence</b></p>	<p><b>Accommodation</b></p>
<p><b>Budget code to be charged under</b></p>	<p>Councillor Development Budget <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other _____</p>		
<p><b>Signed by the Head of Democratic and Elections in consultation with the Chair of Democracy and Standards Committee</b></p>	<p>Agreed <input type="checkbox"/> _____</p> <p>Not agreed <input type="checkbox"/> Reasons _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Signature 1 _____ Date _____</p> <p>Head of Democratic and Elections _____</p>		

Please email the completed form to Democratic Services who will liaise with the Chair of Democracy and Standards Committee regarding this request.

Please state clearly your business case for attending this external seminar/conference/event.

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WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL  
DEMOCRACY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024

Date of the Democracy and Standards Committee	Topics and Rationale
12 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Member Development</b> – To provide an update on Member training for the Committee’s information and seek support for the classification and requirements in relation to the Member training programme</li> <li>• <b>Statistics – code of Conduct Arrangements – Annual update</b> – To provide an update on the number of complaints received and dealt with, in respect of the Code of Member Conduct</li> <li>• <b>Proposed amendments to the Constitution</b> - To consider proposed amendments to the Constitution</li> <li>• <b>Carried Motions on Notice - Predecessor Councils</b> - The Committee to consider carried Motions from Predecessor Councils, with reasons provided proposed for re-adoption.</li> <li>• <b>Work Programme 2023/2024</b> - To approve the Work programme for 2023/2024</li> </ul>
9 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Boundary Review Task and Finish Group</b> - To provide an update on progress of the work of this Task and Finish Group</li> <li>• <b>Proposed amendments to the Constitution</b> - To consider proposed amendments to the Constitution</li> <li>• <b>National Changes – Ethics and Standards</b> – To provide an update on national changes in respect of Ethics and Standards that may impact on the Council’s arrangements for ethical standards (if required)</li> <li>• <b>Proposed Member Development Programme (years 3 and 4)</b> - To provide an update on the proposed Member Development Programme</li> <li>• <b>Work Programme 2023/2024</b> - To review the Work Programme for the Democracy and Standards Committee</li> </ul>
15 June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Register of Members' Interests</b> - To provide an update regarding the operation of the Register of Members’ Interests 2022/2023</li> <li>• <b>Proposed amendments to the Constitution</b> - To consider proposed amendments to the Constitution</li> <li>• <b>National Changes – Ethics and Standards</b> – To provide an update on national changes in respect of Ethics and Standards that may impact on the Council’s arrangements for ethical standards</li> <li>• <b>Annual Report of the Democracy and Standards Committee 2022/2023</b> – To consider the draft Annual Report of the Democracy and Standards Committee 2022/2023</li> <li>• <b>Member Development Programme 2023/2024</b> – Progress report</li> <li>• <b>Work Programme 2023/2024</b> - To review the Work Programme for the Democracy and Standards Committee</li> </ul>

<p><b>12 September 2023</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Proposed amendments to the Constitution</b> - To consider proposed amendments to the Constitution</li> <li>• <b>Statistics – code of Conduct Arrangements – Six monthly update</b> – To provide an update on the number of complaints received and dealt with, in respect of the Code of Member Conduct</li> <li>• <b>National Changes – Ethics and Standards</b> – To provide an update on national changes in respect of Ethics and Standards that may impact on the Council’s arrangements for ethical standards (if required)</li> <li>• <b>Training for Democracy and Standards Committee</b> - to consider any training specific to the Democracy and Standards Committee Members</li> <li>• <b>Work Programme 2023/2024</b> - To review the Work Programme for the Democracy and Standards Committee</li> </ul>
<p><b>15 November 2023</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>National Changes – Ethics and Standards</b> – To provide an update on national changes in respect of Ethics and Standards that may impact on the Council’s arrangements for ethical standards (if required)</li> <li>• <b>Revised Member Complaints Procedure</b> – To consider the revised Member Complaints Procedure</li> <li>• <b>Proposed amendments to the Constitution</b> - To consider proposed amendments to the Constitution</li> <li>• <b>Work Programme 2023/2024</b> - To review the Work Programme for the Democracy and Standards Committee</li> </ul>
<p><b>25 January 2024</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Statistics – code of Conduct Arrangements – Annual Review</b> – To provide an update on the number of complaints received and dealt with, in respect of the Code of Member Conduct</li> <li>• <b>Member Development</b> – To provide an update on member training for the Committee’s information and seeks support for the classification and requirements in relation to the member training programme</li> <li>• <b>National Changes – Ethics and Standards</b> – To provide an update on national changes in respect of Ethics and Standards that may impact on the Council’s arrangements for ethical standards (if required)</li> <li>• <b>Work Programme 2024/2025</b> - To propose a work programme for the Committee for 2024/2025</li> </ul>