

APPENDIX I: UPDATED CONSTITUTION

PART 1 - SUMMARY AND EXPLANATION

1.1 The Constitution

1.1.1. This document is Swale Borough Council's Constitution. It sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which need to be followed. The Council will exercise all its powers and duties in accordance with the law and this Constitution.

1.2.1 Purpose

1.2.1 The purpose of the Constitution is to:

- a) enable the Council to provide clear leadership to the community in partnership with the public, businesses and other organisations;
- b) support the active involvement of citizens in the process of local authority decision- making;
- c) help Councillors represent their constituents more effectively;
- d) enable decisions to be taken efficiently and effectively;
- e) create a powerful and effective means of holding decision-makers to public account;
- f) ensure that no one will review or scrutinise a decision in which they were directly involved;
- g) ensure that those responsible for decision making are clearly identifiable to local people and that they explain the reasons for decisions; and
- h) provide a means of improving the delivery of services to the community.

1.3 How the Council operates

1.3.1 The Council is composed of 47 Members, otherwise called Councillors and elections are held every four years. One or more Councillors will be elected by the voters of each ward in accordance with a scheme drawn-up by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their ward.

- 1.3.2 Only registered voters of the Borough or those living or working or owning land or premises in Swale will be eligible to hold the office of Councillor.
- 1.3.3 The overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them.
- 1.3.4 All Councillors will:
- a) represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision making process, i.e. become the advocate of and for their communities;
 - b) collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions;
 - c) deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving particular concerns or grievances;
 - d) balance different interests identified within the ward and represent the ward as a whole;
 - e) be involved in decision-making;
 - f) be available to represent the Council on other bodies; and
 - g) maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics.
- 1.3.5 Councillors will have such rights of access to such documents, information, land and buildings of the Council as are necessary for the proper discharge of their functions and in accordance with the law.
- 1.3.6 Councillors will not make public, information which is confidential or exempt, without the consent of the Council or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a Councillor or Officer entitled to know it. For these purposes, "confidential" and "exempt" information are defined in the Procedural Rules in Part 3.2 of this Constitution.
- 1.3.7 Councillors have to agree to follow a Code of Conduct set out in Part 4 of this Constitution to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties. The Standards Committee is responsible for matters relating to the Code of Conduct.
- 1.3.8 Councillors will be entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the Members' Allowances Scheme set out in Part 5 of this Constitution. The Scheme is approved by Full Council following advice from an Independent Members' Allowances Panel.

1.4 The Committee System

- 1.4.1 The Council operates a 'committee system' form of governance. This means that decisions are made by Full Council or delegated to Committees, Sub-Committees and Officers. Full Council is the meeting of all 47 Councillors and Full Council is ultimately responsible for the exercise of all functions and certain matters are expressly reserved to be taken by a meeting of the Full Council.

1.5 How Decisions Are Made

- 1.5.1 This part of the Constitution explains who takes decisions and sets out the responsibilities of the Council, Committees, Sub-Committees and officers.
- 1.5.2 All Councillors meet together a number of times each year as the Full Council. The main role of Full Council meetings is to decide the Council's overall policies and set the budget each year. Further details are set out in Part 3.3 of the Constitution.
- 1.5.3 Full Council elects a Mayor as chair of the Full Council meeting and who performs the Council's civic role and represents the Council in the community. The Mayor is the representative of the Crown in the Borough and as such is the First Citizen of the Borough. They are the principal ambassador of the council. The Mayoralty cannot be used for political purposes. The Full Council also elects a Deputy Mayor who will deputise for the Mayor when they are unavailable or absent.
- 1.5.4 Meetings of the Full Council will generally be open for the public to attend except where exempt or confidential matters are being discussed.
- 1.5.5 There are three different types of Full Council meeting:
- a) The Annual Meeting of the Council;
 - b) Ordinary meetings; and
 - c) Extraordinary meetings, which will be called as and when required in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules.
- 1.5.6 The Council will issue and keep up-to-date a record of what part of the Council or individual has responsibility and for particular types of decisions or decisions relating to particular areas or functions. This record is set out in Part 2 of this Constitution.
- 1.5.7 All decisions of the Council will be made in accordance with the following principles:
- a) due consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers;

- b) respect for human rights;
- c) a presumption in favour of openness;
- d) clarity of aims and desired outcomes;
- e) due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty; and
- f) due regard for the individuals and communities served by the Council.

1.6 Committees

- 1.6.1 Whilst certain functions are reserved to the Council, the Council can delegate many of its functions to a Committee, a Sub-Committee, a joint Committee or an Officer. These are set out in Part 2 of the Constitution. Part 2 of the Constitution also sets out the responsibilities for the Council's functions which are not the responsibility of the Full Council.
- 1.6.2 The Committee system consists of a number of service-based and other committees taking decisions under their terms of reference which are agreed by Full Council and set out at Part 2 of this Constitution.

1.7 The Council's Staff

- 1.7.1 The Council has people working for it (called 'Officers') to give advice, implement decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of its services. Some Officers have a specific duty to ensure that the Council acts within the law and uses its resources wisely. A structure chart is attached as Appendix 1 to this constitution.

1.8 Finance, Contracts and Legal Matters

- 1.8.1 The management of the Council's financial affairs will be conducted in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules as set out in Part 3.8 of this Constitution.
- 1.8.2 Every contract made by the Council will comply with the Contract Standing Orders as set out in Part 3.9 of this Constitution.
- 1.8.3 The Directors/Head of Legal are authorised to institute, defend or participate in and settle any legal proceedings in any case where such action is necessary to give effect to decisions of the Council or is in accordance with Council policy or in any case where he or she considers that such actions are necessary to protect or pursue the Council's interests. If the action is not required to give effect to a decision or policy of Council the Director/Head of Legal will consult with the Chairman of Policy and Resources or Vice-Chair in their absence.

- 1.8.4 Where any documents are necessary to any legal procedure or proceedings on behalf of the Council, it will be signed by the Head of Legal Partnership or other person authorised by him/her, unless any enactment otherwise authorises or requires, or the Council has given requisite authority to some other person.
- 1.8.5 The Common Seal of the Council will be kept in a safe place in the custody of the Head of Legal. A decision of the Council, or any part of it, will be sufficient authority for sealing any document necessary to give effect to the decision. The Common Seal will be affixed to those documents which in the opinion of the Head of Legal Partnership should be sealed. The affixing of the Common Seal will be attested by the Head of Legal Partnership or some other person authorised by him/her.

1.9 Review and Publication of the Constitution

- 1.9.1 This Constitution will be kept under review by the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.9.2 The Proper Officer will give a printed copy of this Constitution or summary to each Member of the authority upon delivery to him/her of that individual's Declaration of Acceptance of Office on the Member first being elected to the Council and advise members of any members or changes.
- 1.9.3 The Proper Officer will ensure that copies are available for inspection at the Council offices. The Constitution will also be available to view on the Council's website. If requested, hard copies will be made available on payment of a reasonable fee.
- 1.9.4 The Proper Officer will ensure that the summary of the Constitution is made widely available within the area and is updated as necessary.

PART 2 – RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNCTIONS

2.0 Introduction

The Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) sets out the arrangements authorities can make for the discharge of their functions. Authorities may discharge their functions through committees, sub-committees etc. There is no power to delegate Council functions to an individual Member, but powers can be delegated to an officer in consultation with a Member.

2.1 Functions of Full Council

2.1.1 The following functions are the responsibility of the full Council and will be discharged by the Full Council unless specifically delegated to another Committee, Sub-Committee, body or Officer elsewhere in this Constitution:

- a) to adopt and approve the budget and any amendments to it which cannot be made by other bodies pursuant to the Financial Regulations;
- b) to adopt and amend any policies reserved to Full Council by law or this constitution;
- c) to adopt and amend the Constitution;;
- d) to appoint the Mayor and Deputy Mayor;
- e) to elect the non-executive leader of the Council;
- f) to make appointments to committees;
- g) to make appointments to outside bodies;
- h) to nominate directors of any companies in which the Council has shares or owns wholly or partly where the Council has a right to nominate directors
- i) to change the name of the area;
- j) to confer the title of Honorary Alderman/Alderwoman or Freeman of the Borough;
- k) to adopt the Codes of Conduct for Members and officers;
- l) to adopt a Members' Allowances Scheme, after considering the report of the Independent Members' Allowances Panel;
- m) to appoint or dismiss the Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer, the Monitoring Officer or the section 151 Officer;

- n) to resolve any matters requiring Member involvement, relating to local elections, electoral registration, revisions of electoral boundaries, orders in respect of parishes and related matters pertaining to the Borough or Parish Councils;
- o) to make, amend, revoke, re-enact or adopt bylaws and promote or oppose the making of local legislation or personal Bills; and
- p) all other matters which, by law, must be reserved to Council.

2.2 Committees of the Council

2.2.1 Policy and Resources Committee

Membership and functions of the Policy and Resources Committee

2.2.1.1 The Policy and Resources Committee shall be comprised of 15 members of the Council

2.2.1.2 The functions of the Committee are:

- i. to propose an annual revenue budget, capital budget, medium-term financial plan, and schedule of fees and charges to Council;
- ii. to coordinate the development of the council's strategy and policy across service committees, and to adopt strategies and policies, where appropriate based on proposals from other service committees;
- iii. to propose to Council the strategies and policies the adoption of which is reserved to Council;
- iv. to maintain strategic oversight of all council services, including oversight of resources, performance and risks;
- v. to exercise and delegate authority on behalf of the Council over all non-regulatory matters falling within the committee's area of responsibility;
- vi. to exercise and delegate authority on behalf of the council over all non-regulatory matters which fall within the area of responsibility of multiple service committees, or to determine which service committee should exercise or delegate such authority;
- vii. to commission, procure and manage external contractors on matters falling within the committee's area of responsibility, and to maintain strategic oversight of the Council's commissioning and procurement processes;
- viii. to oversee the Council's relationships with partner organisations, and involvement in formal and informal partnerships, in matters falling within the committee's area of responsibility, including strategic relationships with government and Kent County Council;

- ix. to receive, and optionally to give effect to, recommendations from other service committees and from subcommittees of the policy and resources committee; and
- x. To consider amendments to the Constitution and to make recommendations on amendments or changes to Full Council.

2.2.1.3 The areas of responsibility of the Policy and Resources Committee are:

- i. corporate strategy and corporate plan;
- ii. development of annual budget and medium-term financial plan;
- iii. overall budget management;
- iv. overall risk management;
- v. overall performance management;
- vi. organisational health and safety;
- vii. customer services, including oversight of service-related complaint handling;
- viii. communications including website;
- ix. transformation and digitisation;
- x. commissioning and procurement systems and processes;
- xi. revenues and benefits, including council tax collection and council tax support;
- xii. corporate services including all Mid-Kent Services functions;
- xiii. cemeteries;
- xiv. members' and officers' learning and development;
- xv. equality and diversity;
- xvi. resilience, including emergency planning and business continuity; and
- xvii. All matters relating to the Council's responsibilities as an employer.

Sub-committees

2.2.1.4 The Policy and Resources Committee may establish such sub-committees as it requires and may set the terms of reference and membership of those Sub-committee. It shall also have the following sub-committees each comprised of 7 members of the Committee who have received appropriate training on the conducting of hearings and employment;

Appointments Sub-committee

2.2.1.5 The functions of the Appointments Sub-committee shall be to:

- i. agree the appointments of Directors of the Council/Shared Services; and
- ii. make recommendations to Full Council on the appointments of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer.

Investigation and Disciplinary Sub-committee

2.2.1.6 The function of this Sub-committee shall be to consider any disciplinary action against one of the Council's statutory officers, the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer or the section 151 Officer. The powers of the Sub-committee shall include, in accordance with the Employment Procedure Rules to;

- i. suspend a statutory officer;
- ii. appoint an investigating officer to carry out a disciplinary investigation in respect of a statutory officer;
- iii. conduct a disciplinary hearing;
- iv. recommend to Council the dismissal of a statutory officer; and
- v. determine disciplinary action short of dismissal in respect of a statutory officer.

Statutory Officers Disciplinary Appeals Sub-committee

2.2.1.7 The function of this Sub-committee shall be to hear any disciplinary appeals brought by a statutory officers on any disciplinary sanction short of dismissal. No member may sit on the Appeals Sub-committee on a case which has been considered by them as a member of the Investigation and Disciplinary Sub-committee.

Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group

2.2.1.8 The Policy and Resources Committee shall establish a working group to make recommendations to it on the following areas:

- i. The development of planning policy including policies forming the local plan for recommendation to Council;
- ii. Section 106 and community infrastructure levy;
- iii. building and development control;
- iv. transport; and
- iv land charges.

2.3 Service Committees

2.3.1 Membership and functions of all service committees

2.3.1.1 All service committees shall be comprised of 15 members of the Council.

2.3.1.2 All of the service committees shall exercise the following functions within their areas of responsibility:

- i. to exercise and delegate authority on behalf of the Council over all non-regulatory matters falling wholly within the committee's area of responsibility;
- ii. to provide strategic oversight of Council services falling within the committee's area of responsibility, including oversight of resources and performance;
- iii. to commission, procure and manage external contractors on matters falling within the committee's area of responsibility;
- iv. to oversee Council relationships with partner organisations, and involvement in formal and informal partnerships, in matters falling within the committee's area of responsibility;
- v. to make recommendations to the Policy and Resources Committee on policies, strategies, budgets, fees and charges concerning services and other matters falling within the committee's area of responsibility; and
- vi. to appoint and oversee the work of any subcommittees.

2.3.2 Community committee:

- i. inclusivity and tackling disadvantage;
- ii. crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour;
- iii. CCTV;
- iv. Culture
- v. Leisure and sport
- vi. Play areas and outdoor fitness equipment
- vii. voluntary and community sector;
- viii. liaison with town and parish councils;
- ix. parking;
- x. heritage and conservation, including closed churchyards and
- xi. to act as the Council's crime and disorder (overview and scrutiny) committee for the purposes of and with the powers set out in the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and any regulations made under those Acts.

2.3.3 Environment committee:

- i. refuse collection and recycling;
- ii. street cleansing;
- iii. climate and ecological emergency;

- iv. environmental response, including fly-tipping, contaminated land, animal welfare, pollution control, littering and illegal encampments;
- v. environmental health, including management of public health and safety risks;
- vi. air quality;
- vii. green spaces, open spaces and grounds maintenance;
- viii. flooding, sea defences and coastal protection;
- ix. active travel; and
- x. public conveniences.

2.3.4 Housing and health committee

- i. housing advice, homelessness prevention and housing register;
- ii. affordable and social housing;
- iii. disabled facilities grants, home improvements and Staying Put;
- iv. empty dwellings;
- v. private-sector housing support and enforcement;
- vi. health inequalities;
- vii. liaison with public health, health providers and adult social care;
- viii. children and young people, including liaison with children's services; and
- ix. child and vulnerable adult safeguarding.

2.3.5 Regeneration and property committee

- i. Regeneration;
- ii. economic development;
- iii. town centres and markets;
- iv. visitor economy;
- v. property asset management, including beach huts;
- vi. learning and skills; and
- vii. sea fronts, harbours and quays;

2.3.6 Sub-committees and Working Groups

2.3.6.1 Service committees may set up subcommittees. The subcommittees will have decision making powers where these are delegated to them by the Committee. The subcommittees may make recommendations to the whole committee on particular elements of the area of responsibility of the committee.

2.3.6.1 The Housing and Health Committee shall have a Sub-committee called the Swale Rainbow Homes shareholder representation subcommittee which shall be made up of members who have received appropriate training. This shall make decisions in respect of the Council's role as shareholder of Swale Rainbow Homes.

2.3.6.2 Any Sub-committee or Working Group must report to the Service Committee and its membership will be set by the Service Committee. The membership of a Sub-committee must be drawn from the parent committee but the membership of a Working Group need not do. The political balance rules and access to information rules will not apply to any Working Groups but they will operate in an open and transparent way and membership will be drawn from members who are from different political groups on the Council. Where a Working Group is to be supported by officers the Chief Executive will be consulted before it is established.

2.4 Other Committees

2.4.1 Audit Committee

2.4.1.1 The Audit Committee shall comprise of 9 members of the Council.

2.4.1.2 The purpose of the Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the authority's financial and nonfinancial performance to the extent that it affects the authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process.

2.4.1.3 The Audit Committee has responsibility for:

Audit Activity

- i. To consider the Head of Audit Partnership's annual report and opinion, and a summary of audit activity (actual and proposed) and the level of assurance it can give over the council's governance arrangements, and any report from Internal Audit on agreed recommendations not implemented within a reasonable timescale;
- ii. To consider reports dealing with the management and performance of Internal Audit Services, including consideration and endorsement of the 3 year Strategic Internal Audit Plan;
- iii. To consider the external auditor's annual letter, the report to those charged with governance, and any specific reports as agreed with the external auditor;

- iv. To oversee the appointment of the Council's external auditor, comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and ensure that it gives value for money;

Regulatory Framework

- v. To review any issue referred to it by the Chief Executive or the Director or any Council body;
- vi. To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management and corporate governance in the Council;
- vii. To monitor council policies on 'Whistleblowing' and the 'Antifraud and Corruption Strategy';
- viii. To consider and comment on the authority's Annual Governance Statement and agree its adoption as part of the
- ix. approval of the annual accounts;
- x. To consider the Council's arrangements for governance and whether adequate safeguards are in place to secure compliance with its own and other published standards and controls and best practice;

Accounts

- xi. To review and approve the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether there are concerns arising from the financial statement or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Policy and Resources Committee or the Council;
- xii. To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues from the audit of the accounts;
- xiii. To be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the treasury management strategy and policies (Note: Council is responsible for adopting the Treasury Management strategy and policy); and

Reporting

- xiv. To present an annual report to the Council providing assurance that the responsibilities of the Committee have been met.

2.4.2 Urgent Decisions Committee

2.4.2.1 The Committee shall comprise of 7 Members of the Council, to include the Group Leaders subject to political balance rules.

2.4.2.2 The Committee shall have responsibility for exercising the functions of Full Council, if necessary, in cases where it is not possible to call an extraordinary Council meeting, subject to a full report to the next available meeting of Full Council for information.

2.4.3 Licensing Committee

2.4.3.1 The Licensing Committee shall comprise of 15 members of the Council who have received appropriate training on licensing.

2.4.3.2 The Committee shall have responsibility for:

- i. To review and make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee and thereafter full Council upon policy in relation to licensing matters under the Licensing Act 2003 and the statement of licensing policy;
- ii. To discharge the Council's functions as a Licensing Authority under the Licensing Act 2003, within agreed policy;
- v. To arrange for the discharge of any of the licensing functions exercisable by the Committee to an Officer of the Licensing Authority subject to the limitations set out in Section 10(4) of the Licensing Act 2003;
- vi. To review and make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee and thereafter full Council upon policy in relation to licensing matters under the Gambling Act 2005 and the statement principles;
- vii. To discharge the Council's functions as a Licensing Authority under the Gambling Act 2005, within agreed policy;
- viii. To arrange for the delegation of any of the licensing functions exercisable by the Committee to an Officer of the Licensing Authority subject to the limitations set out in Section 154 of the Gambling Act 2005;

General Licensing Matters

- ix. To make recommendations to Policy and Resources Committee on any matters of licensing policy;
- x. To review and make decisions in accordance with Council policy in licensing matters under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 Schedule 3 (Sex Establishments) and Schedule 4 (Street Trading) and the statement of principles;

- xi. to discharge the Council's functions as a Licensing Authority under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, within agreed policies;
- xii. To arrange for the delegation of any of the licensing functions exercisable by the Committee to an officer of the Licensing Authority subject to the limitations set out in Schedule 3 and Schedule 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982;
- xiii. To consider enforcement action against Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Operators under the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 and Town Police Clauses Act 1984;
- xiv. To discharge all licensing functions of the Council not reserved to Full Council;
- xv. To exercise the Council's functions under any of the relevant statutory provisions relating to Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, as far as they are the responsibility of the Council; and
- xvi. To make decisions on matters relating to the Council's responsibilities in respect of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles and Drivers.

2.4.3. The Licensing Committee shall have a Licensing Act Sub-Committee and a General Licensing Sub-committee each comprised of 3 members of the Committee.

2.4.3.1 The Licensing Act Sub-committee shall have responsibility for:

Licensing Act 2003

- i. Application for a personal licence if any objection is made;
- ii. Application for a personal licence where a person has any unspent convictions;
- iii. Application for a premises/club premises licence if a representation is made;
- iv. Application for a provisional statement if representation is made;
- v. Application to vary the DPS if the police object;
- vi. Application for the transfer of premises licence if the police object;
- vii. Application for interim authority if the police object;
- viii. Application to review a premises/club premises licence

- ix. Decision to object when the Councils a consultee and not the Licensing Authority; and
- x. 10. Application for a temporary event notice when the police object.

Gambling Act

- xi. Application for a premises licence where representations have been received;
- xii. Application to vary a premises licence where representations have been received;
- xiii. Application to transfer a licence where representations have been received;
- xiv. Application for a provisional statement where representations have been received;
- xv. Review of a premises licence;
- xvi. Application for club gaming machine permits where representations have been received;
- xvii. Cancellation of a club gaming machine permit; and
- xviii. Application for more than 4 gaming machine permits in a licensed premises.

2.4.3.2 The General Licensing Sub-committee shall have responsibility for making decisions about individual licensing matters and appeals where not otherwise delegated to the Head of Environment and Leisure Services or the Head of Housing and Community Services.

2.4.4 Planning Committee

2.4.4.1 The Planning Committee shall be comprised of 17 members of the Council who have received appropriate training on planning.

2.4.4.2 The Committee shall have responsibility for making decisions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, including:

- i. The granting of permissions, or approvals;
- ii. Refusals of permissions;
- iii. Applications for listed building and conservation area consent;
- iv. Resolution to make and confirm tree preservation orders;
- v. Orders under Section 215 relating to maintenance of waste land and resolution to prosecute for noncompliance with an order;

- vi. Resolution to serve enforcement notices and listed building enforcement notices and service of "stop notices", or resolution to prosecute in the case of failure to comply with any type of confirmed order;
- vii. Resolution to serve a repairs notice and to carry out urgent works to preserve listed buildings under Sections 48 and 54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- viii. Resolution to prosecute for the unauthorised display of advertisements.
- ix. Agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended);
- x. Notices under Section 79 of the Building Act 1984;
- xi. To respond to consultations on any planning applications to be carried out by and/or determined by other Authorities, Agencies or Government Departments;
- xii. The determination of applications for development to be carried out by the Council;
- xiii. To resolve to make an Article 4 Direction;
- xiv. To resolve to make an 'Area of Special Control' under the Advertisement Regulations;
- xv. To resolve to secure the preservation of a building under Sections 3 and 4 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 or such other relevant legislation as may be enacted thereafter;
- xvi. To resolve to revoke a planning permission;
- xvii. To resolve to accept a Purchase Notice;
- xviii. To resolve to serve a discontinuance order;
- xix. To determine other related planning matters including conservation, tree preservation, advertisement control, building preservation and functions the subject of agency.

NOTE

- A. that in cases where the Committee is minded to make a decision that would be contrary to officer recommendation and contrary to policy and/or guidance, the Chairman should invite the Head of Planning an request should be made to consider if the application should be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee or if there should be a short adjournment for Officers to consider the views of the Planning Committee and to give further advice.
- B. that in cases where the Committee determines an application contrary to officer recommendation a full record should be made of the reasons for rejecting the recommendation.

2.4.4.3 The Committee shall have a Working Group called the Planning Committee Site Visits Group. It shall be comprised of members of the committee and ward councillors will be invited to attend. Its responsibility will be to visit sites the subject of planning applications, as directed by the Planning Committee, and report back to the subsequent meeting Planning Committee. See Planning Committee Procedural Rules in Part 3 of this Constitution.

2.4.5 Standards Committee

2.4.5.1 The Committee shall be comprised of 11 members of the Council plus three non-voting co-opted Parish representatives.

2.4.5.2 The Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- i. to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members and co-opted members of the authority and Parish Councils within the Borough;
- ii. to recommend to Full Council for adoption a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of members and co-opted members of the Council when they are acting in that capacity;
- iii. to monitor and review the Code of Conduct as appropriate to ensure it is consistent with the following principles: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership;
- iv. to ensure that the Code of Conduct includes the provision that the authority considers appropriate in respect of the registration in its register, and disclosure, of (a) pecuniary interests, and (b) interests other than pecuniary interests which the Council thinks appropriate;

- v. to put in place arrangements under which allegations can be investigated and decisions on allegations can be made. Such arrangements to include provision for the appointment by the authority of at least one independent person and to cover Parish Councils in the Borough;
- vi. to consider applications for the grant of dispensations in accordance with the provisions contained within S.33 (b) (c) and (d) of the Localism Act 2011; and
- vii. to set the allowances and expenses for the Independent Person.

2.4.5.3 The Committee shall have a Sub-committee called the Standards Hearing Panel.

2.4.5.4 The Standards Hearing Panel shall be comprised of 3 members of the Committee who have received appropriate training on the conducting of hearings.

2.4.5.5 The Standards Hearing Panel shall have the following responsibilities:

- i. to consider any matter referred for investigation in accordance with the arrangements adopted by the Council for considering any allegation that a member or co-opted member of the Council or a Parish Council in the Borough has failed to comply with the Code of conduct; and
- ii. to conduct a hearing and decide whether a member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and, if so determine what action(s) to take in accordance with the Council's arrangements

2.5 Area Committees

2.5.1 The purpose of area committees is to enhance the quality of life and of council services in the relevant area and to bring greater local insight to bear in council decision-making.

2.5.2 The Membership of each Area Committee shall include all ward members in the area. Area committee boundaries will align with ward boundaries. Substitute Members are not permitted on Area Committees.

2.5.3 There shall be Area Committees for the following areas;

- i. Eastern (Abbey; Boughton and Courtenay; East Downs; Priory; St Ann's; Teynham and Lynsted; Watling). 12 Members (quorum: four Members);
- ii. Sheppey (Minster Cliffs; Queenborough and Halfway; Sheerness; Sheppey Central; Sheppey East). 14 Members (quorum: five Members);
- iii. Sittingbourne (Chalkwell; Homewood; Kemsley; Milton Regis; Murston; Roman). 11 Members (quorum: four Members);
- iv. Western (Bobbing, Iwade and Lower Halstow; Borden and Grove Park; Hartlip, Newington and Upchurch; The Meads; Woodstock; West Downs). 10 Members (quorum: three Members).

2.5.4. The Area Committees shall have the following responsibilities:

- i. develop a work programme to enhance core services within the area and take a report to council on an annual basis to provide an update on progress;
- ii. agree spending decisions in relation to specific funding allocated to members of the Committee;
- iii. provide area intelligence to the Policy and Resources Committee and heads of service, and assist with policy development on relevant matters; and
- iii. make recommendations to Full Council, Policy and Resources Committee or any Service Committee on issues in the committee's area and respond to any other specific matter referred to it by Full Council, a committee or a senior council officer.

2.5.5 Each Member will receive an identical amount of specific funding, established in each annual council budget, to be allocated to projects in consultation and agreement with the Area Committee at large. Members may make proposals for allocating any part of the amount remaining to them at any meeting of the Area Committee, and the Committee's agreement will be decided by a simple majority of Members present. The pooling of individual Members' amounts is permissible. Any amount for which an allocation has not been agreed by the Area Committee by the end of the financial year will be forfeited, and no rollovers will be permitted. Any funding allocation agreed by the Committee but unspent by the end of each electoral cycle will also be forfeited.

2.6 Joint Arrangements

- 2.6.1 Kent Resource Partnership: Swale representative appointed by Environment Committee.
- 2.6.2 South Thames Gateway Building Control Joint Committee: Swale representative appointed by the Policy and Resources Committee.

2.7 Proper Officer Schedule (unchanged)

2.8 Officer Delegations (see Appendix II)