

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Area Plans Sub-Committee 'A'

**Date:** 20 February 2007

**Chairman:** Councillor J Hart

**Item:** 12

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## **1. AREA PLANS SUB-COMMITTEE 'A' – REVIEW OF OPERATION**

### **Recommending:**

- (1) That the following measures in order to make a 25 member Sub-Committee workable be introduced from the commencement of the 2007/8 Council year:
    - (a) acknowledging that some councillors representing wards in Area 'A' may not wish to serve on the Sub-Committee, membership be determined by the Council at the commencement of each municipal year by requiring members to signify in writing that they wish to serve on the Sub-Committee for that year;
    - (b) those councillors who opt in to membership should do so for the whole of the Council year;
    - (c) those councillors who do not opt in be deemed not to be members of the Sub-Committee for the municipal year in question;
    - (d) the quorum for meetings of this Sub-Commission be set at one quarter (rounded up to the nearest whole number) of the total members who have opted in to membership or 5 whichever is greater;
    - (e) the Head of Research and Democratic Services be authorised to amend the Council's Constitution to reflect these changes;
  - (2) That the following operational measures be introduced for the Sub-Committee from the commencement of the 2007/08 Council year and reviewed by the Sub-Committee after six months (i.e. November 2007):
    - (a) a revised layout for meetings at Roding Valley High School;
    - (b) precedence to be given to ward members during discussion of planning applications;
    - (c) more rigorous controls on repetition in debate;
    - (d) addition of relevant District wards on each planning application report.
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- 1.1 At its December meeting, the Council agreed that this Sub-Committee should, subject to an operational review by the Sub-Committee itself, increase membership to the 25 ward councillors for Area 'A'.

- 1.2 The recommendations set out above reflect the consensus achieved at an informal meeting of Sub-Committee members on 23 January 2007 which were confirmed by the Sub-Committee at its meeting on 8 February 2007.
- 1.3 Recommendation (1) sets out proposals for constitutional changes to make a 25 member Sub-Committee viable. Primarily, the view was that there may be councillors who do not wish to serve on the Sub-Committee. It is proposed that those who wish to be members should "opt in" in writing at the start of the Council year. This would set the size of Sub-Committee, excluding members who did not "opt in".
- 1.4 The "opted in" total would then be the basis of calculating the quorum (one quarter – rounded up) or 5 whichever is greater. Five members is the quorum level currently set for all Area Plans Sub-Committees
- 1.5 Recommendation (2) seeks to advise the Council of operational changes which would assist in running a larger committee. The meeting on 23 January 2007 agreed that a review after six months would be useful in assessing how well the new arrangements work. This could include the need for a second Area 'A' during the monthly cycle and accommodation