



PLANNING COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2026

Status of the Committee

The Planning Committee is a standing committee of Stotfold Town Council established under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Committee shall exercise the powers and functions delegated to it by the Town Council, subject to:

- statute and common law;
- the Council's Standing Orders;
- the Council's Financial Regulations;
- the Council's Scheme of Delegation;
- the Council's Planning Application Policy;
- national and local planning policy;
- the Council's adopted policies;
- approved budgets, where relevant; and
- any specific direction of the Town Council.

Membership

- The Committee shall comprise 10 Town Councillors, appointed annually by the Town Council at its Annual Meeting.
- The Chair of the Council and Vice-Chair of the Council shall be ex-officio members of the Committee.
- The Town Council shall appoint the Chair of the Committee in accordance with Standing Orders.
- The Committee may appoint a Vice-Chair at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Council, if permitted by Standing Orders.
- Five members shall constitute a quorum.
- Non-members of the Committee may attend meetings and, at the discretion of the Chair, may speak but may not vote.

Meetings

- Meetings shall be called when a planning application is deemed to have met the criteria set out in the Council's adopted Planning Application Policy.
- Additional meetings may be called where necessary to meet statutory consultation deadlines or to respond to urgent planning matters.
- Extraordinary meetings may be called in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.
- Meetings shall be held in public unless the Committee resolves to exclude the press and public in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and other relevant legislation.
- Public participation shall be in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

Purpose



The purpose of the Planning Committee is to consider planning applications, planning consultations and planning-related matters affecting Stotfold and its immediate environs, and to submit comments, representations or recommendations on behalf of the Town Council where delegated to do so.

In all its considerations and actions, the Committee shall have regard to:

- the Council's adopted Corporate Strategic Plan;
- the Council's Planning Application Policy;
- the Stotfold Neighbourhood Plan, where relevant;
- the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan and other relevant local planning policy;
- the National Planning Policy Framework;
- material planning considerations;
- biodiversity, sustainability and environmental impact;
- the character, amenity and infrastructure needs of Stotfold; and
- the interests of residents and the wider community.

Delegated Powers

The Committee is authorised to consider and respond to planning applications and planning-related consultations within its delegated powers and in accordance with the Council's Planning Application Policy.

The Committee may:

- consider planning applications which meet the criteria set out in the Planning Application Policy;
- agree and submit comments to Central Bedfordshire Council;
- resolve whether to support, object to, or make no comment on planning applications;
- request that a Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Member considers calling in an application to Central Bedfordshire Council's Development Management Committee;
- appoint members to attend Development Management Committee meetings or other planning-related meetings to speak on behalf of the Town Council;
- respond to local and national planning policy consultations where delegated;
- make recommendations to Full Council where a matter is outside the Committee's delegated authority.

Functions of the Committee

Planning Applications

The Committee shall be responsible for:

- Considering any planning application which meets the criteria set out in the Council's adopted **Planning Application Policy**.
- Making comments and passing resolutions in accordance with national and local planning policy.
- Submitting responses to Central Bedfordshire Council within the required consultation timescales.
- Considering the impact of planning proposals on Stotfold, including but not limited to:
 - design and appearance;
 - scale, layout and density;
 - residential amenity;
 - highways, parking and access;
 - drainage and flooding;



- trees, landscaping and biodiversity;
- heritage and character;
- public open space and community infrastructure;
- sustainability and environmental impact;
- compliance with relevant planning policy.
- Ensuring that comments are based on material planning considerations.

Planning Policy and Strategic Planning

The Committee shall be responsible for:

- Monitoring Central Bedfordshire Council planning policies, development plan documents, supplementary planning documents and other planning-related strategies which may affect Stotfold.
- Responding to consultations on local or national planning policy where delegated to do so.
- Considering matters relating to the Stotfold Neighbourhood Plan where relevant to planning applications or planning policy consultations.
- Considering the effect of emerging planning policy on the town and making recommendations to Full Council where required.
- Monitoring major development proposals within Stotfold or its immediate environs where these may affect the town, its infrastructure or residents.

Development Management Committee and Call-In Requests

The Committee shall be responsible for:

- Appointing one or more members to attend Central Bedfordshire Council's Development Management Committee meetings to make representations on behalf of the Town Council where necessary.
- Agreeing the basis of any representation to be made on behalf of the Town Council.
- Requesting that a Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Member considers calling in an application for determination by Central Bedfordshire Council's Development Management Committee, where the Committee considers this appropriate.
- Ensuring that any call-in request or representation is supported by clear planning reasons.

Infrastructure, S106 and Community Impact

The Committee shall:

- Consider the potential infrastructure implications of planning applications affecting Stotfold.
- Identify matters which may be relevant to S106 contributions, infrastructure requirements or mitigation measures.
- Refer any financial, infrastructure or S106 matters to the Governance and Resources Committee or Full Council where appropriate.
- Consider the impact of development on community facilities, highways, open space, schools, health provision and other local infrastructure where relevant to a planning application or policy consultation.

Biodiversity, Environment and Sustainability

The Committee shall:

- Consider biodiversity, environmental and sustainability issues when responding to planning applications and planning policy consultations.
- Have regard to the Council's Biodiversity Policy and any relevant environmental policies when



formulating comments.

- Consider whether proposals provide appropriate landscaping, habitat protection, biodiversity net gain, sustainable drainage and climate resilience measures where relevant.
- Support development that protects or enhances the natural and built environment, where consistent with planning policy.

Appeals and Enforcement Matters

The Committee may:

- Consider planning appeals where the Town Council is invited to comment or where a further response is appropriate.
- Agree representations on appeals in accordance with the Council's previous comments and relevant planning policy.
- Refer suspected breaches of planning control to Central Bedfordshire Council as the Local Planning Authority.
- Monitor planning enforcement matters of significance to Stotfold and make representations where appropriate.

For the avoidance of doubt, planning enforcement powers rest with Central Bedfordshire Council as the Local Planning Authority.

Matters Reserved to Full Council or Another Committee

The following matters are reserved to Full Council, Governance and Resources Committee, or another properly authorised body unless expressly delegated elsewhere:

- Adoption or amendment of the Council's Planning Application Policy.
- Adoption or amendment of any Neighbourhood Plan document or formal planning strategy of the Town Council.
- Approval of Council-led development proposals where the Town Council is the applicant or landowner, unless specifically delegated.
- Approval of any expenditure outside the Committee's approved budget or delegated authority.
- Decisions relating to land acquisition, disposal, leases or legal agreements.
- Strategic decisions relating to S106 priorities or allocation of Town Council resources.
- Any matter which by law must be determined by Full Council.

Where the Committee does not have delegated authority, it shall make recommendations to the appropriate body.

Working Groups and Advisers

- The Committee may establish time-limited working groups or task and finish groups in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation.
- Such groups shall be advisory only and shall not make binding decisions on behalf of the Council.
- The Committee may invite advisers, residents, community representatives or technical specialists to assist with specific matters where appropriate.
- The remit, membership and duration of any working group shall be clearly recorded.

Officer Delegation and Urgent Matters

- Officers shall support the Committee in carrying out its functions and shall act in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation and Planning



Application Policy.

- Where a planning response is required before the next scheduled Committee meeting, officer delegation may be used in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation and Planning Application Policy.
- Where urgent action is required between meetings, the Town Clerk/Proper Officer may act in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and/or Chair of the Council where appropriate.
- Any urgent or delegated action taken shall be reported to the next meeting of the Committee or Full Council as appropriate.
- Delegated decisions shall be recorded in accordance with the Council's delegated decision reporting arrangements.

Reporting and Accountability

- Minutes of the Committee shall be reported to the next appropriate meeting of the Town Council.
- The Committee shall keep under review its responsibilities, work programme and delegated powers.
- The Committee shall review documents and policies within its remit and recommend changes where required.
- The Committee shall ensure that the Council's planning responses are submitted within the required consultation timescales.
- These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council, or sooner if required.