



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	COUNCIL – 18 MARCH 2026
Subject	RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP (DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS, STANDARDS HEARINGS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP)
Wards affected	None
Accountable member	Councillor Mike Every, Chair of the Constitution Working Group Email: Mike.Every@Cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Andrew Brown, Head of Democratic and Electoral Services Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To present recommendations from the Constitution Working Group arising from meetings on 7 October 2025 and 13 February 2026 in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disclosable interests• Standards Hearings Sub-Committee Procedure Rules• Committee Membership
Annexes	Annex A – Extract of Part 5E: Planning Protocol, with proposed changes shown Annex B – Part D11: Standards Hearings Sub-Committee Procedure Rules, with proposed changes shown Annex C – Article 5, with proposed changes shown
Recommendation(s)	That Council resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agree to amend the Planning Protocol to include the new paragraphs drafted by the Head of Legal Services about the declaration of disclosable pecuniary interests, as shown in Annex A.2. Agree to amend the Standards Hearings Sub-Committee



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	<p>Procedure Rules following a review, as shown in Annex B.</p> <p>3. Agree to amend Article 5 to remove the rule that says the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council cannot both serve on the Planning and Licensing Committee.</p>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivering Good Services• Supporting Communities
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Constitution Working Group Head of Legal Services



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** Council is recommended by the Constitution Working Group to consider amendments to the Planning Protocol, Standards Hearings Sub-Committee Procedure Rules and the rules on committee membership.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Constitution Working Group met on 7 October 2025 and 13 February 2026 to consider a number of items on its work plan. This has resulted in the recommendations contained in this report.

3. PLANNING PROTOCOL

- 3.1** As part of a wider review of the Planning Protocol (Part 5E of the Constitution), it was identified that the wording in relation to the disclosure of interests could be updated and strengthened. The Head of Legal Services was tasked with reviewing the wording and suggested the inclusion of some additional wording, shown in red text in Annex A. The Constitution Working Group agreed to recommend the changes to full Council for inclusion in the Constitution.
- 3.2** The proposed additions seek to address the timing and manner for declaring interests, emphasising that members should review materials prior to meetings and discuss interests with relevant officers. The addition of a "Voting at Committee" section is intended to clarify that members could only vote if they were present for the entire presentation and discussion, without any relevant disclosable interest.

4. STANDARDS HEARINGS SUB-COMMITTEE PROCEDURE RULES

- 4.1** The Council adopted Standards Hearings Sub-Committee Procedure Rules in September 2025. These procedure rules have been reviewed by officers following a standards hearing held on 6 November 2025 (the first such hearing in c. 12 years). Generally, the procedure rules were found to have worked well. Some changes are proposed to strengthen the procedure rules, drawing on the experience of the recent hearing.
- 4.2** The proposed changes are shown in red text in Annex B and in summary are intended to: clarify the neutral role of the Investigating Officer, define exceptional circumstances, clarify that where there are multiple complainants, one representative



should be put forward to speak on behalf of all complainants, and clarify that any pre-hearing training or briefing sessions for member of the Sub-Committee are not formal meetings and are not open to Complainants or Subject Members.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

5.1 The Constitution Working Group considered removing the rule that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council cannot both sit on the Planning and Licensing Committee (Article 5, para 5.4). This rule is not a legal requirement it is something that the Council has historically agreed to include in its Constitution, potentially to prevent members from holding multiple roles.

5.2 The Working Group agreed that this rule is no longer needed as it serves to unnecessarily reduce the pool of members who can serve on the Planning and Licensing Committee. It is recommended that Council approves its removal from the Constitution.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

6.1 Council could choose not to agree recommendations in this report however the recommendations are aimed at strengthening the Council's governance arrangements and have been recommended to Council by the cross-party Constitution Working Group.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the information in this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Full Council, through its responsibilities as set out in the Constitution, recognises the requirement to observe specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on the Council by public law, but also accepting responsibility to use its legal powers to the full benefit of the citizens and communities in its area.

8.2 Section 9P Local Government Act 2000 requires the Council to keep its Constitution up to date.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT



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9.1 The recommendations are intended to reduce risks to the Council, specifically in relation to regulatory decision making and standards hearings.

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

10.1 There are no differential impacts on groups with protected characteristics.

11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no climate and ecological emergencies implications.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 None.

(END)