

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Standards Committee - 13 June 2024  
**Subject:** Operation and Efficacy of Planning Protocol  
**Report of:** City Solicitor

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**Summary**

To advise the Committee of the operation/efficacy of the Planning Protocol.

**Recommendation**

To note the position regarding the operation/efficacy of the Planning Protocol.

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**Wards Affected:** All

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**Financial Consequences for the Revenue Budget:** None directly

**Financial Consequences for the Capital Budget:** None directly

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**Backgrounds documents (available for public inspection):**

None

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This report provides Committee with an update and an overview of the operation and efficacy of the Council's Planning Protocol.
- 1.2. At the Committee on 15 June 2023, whilst noting a previous report on the Planning Protocol, Members commented that all council policies and protocols should adopt gender neutral terminology when being reviewed and updated.
- 1.3. Some very minor amends have been made having regard to the comment set out in 1.2 There are no other changes recommended at this time.

## **2. Effectiveness of the Protocol**

- 2.1. Officers continue to be of the view that the Protocol remains effective. There continue to be very few occasions when the Protocol has to be referred to. As has been the case in previous years, the occasions when the Protocol has been referred to are almost exclusively related to advising Members on the provisions around personal/prejudicial interests, bias/predetermination and members' rights with regard to participating where these issues arise. There has also been some reference to material considerations and to the provisions on site visits.
- 2.2. There have been no complaints about Member conduct in relation to Planning matters since the last report to Committee in June 2023.
- 2.3. Members of the Planning and Highways Committee have continued to seek advice in relation to interests or potential bias/predetermination situations, suggesting the Protocol is effective in achieving its purpose.

## **3. Potential amendment to the Planning Protocol**

- 3.1. Although it is considered that the Planning Protocol is effective, it is continually kept under review. Amendments to the Protocol are considered where particular issues arise which are either not covered by the Protocol or where the provisions in the Protocol could be improved or clarified.
- 3.2. As noted in the report to Committee in June 2023, the Protocol had mainly used gender-neutral language, although there were some instances where amendment had been needed. These have been made and adopted as part of an updated Constitution on 15 May 2024.
- 3.3. No further amendments to the Protocol are proposed at this time.

## **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1. The Planning Protocol sets out a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct in the discharge of the Council's duty as local planning

authority. It is considered to be effective in doing so, but notwithstanding this the Protocol is reviewed annually and periodically changes are made having regard to legislative changes or to ensure best practice continues to be followed.

## **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1. The recommendations appear at the front of this report.