Functions of the Planning and Regulatory Committee

The Committee has responsibility for all those non-executive functions set out in the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 as amended, except for those specifically reserved to full Council (set out in Article 4 of the Constitution) and those separately referred to in the Scheme of Delegation or within the terms of reference of other Committees.

These include the following functions:

(a) Planning and Development Control

Functions relating to town and country planning and development control, including tree preservation orders and limestone pavement orders.

Entering into agreements for the execution of highway works.

The Committee has responsibility for those planning applications which fall to the County Council to determine. These are:

- Minerals and Waste applications
- Development required for County Council services

It is also required to be consulted by the Cabinet in the preparation of plans and other major planning-related policy documents. The Committee may also be asked to comment on planning applications of strategic importance when consulted by the District Councils.

Related to the above functions, the Committee will receive reports on enforcement, appeals and other matters relating to the handling of individual planning applications. On occasion, it may be appropriate to receive reports on Government planning guidance where it relates specifically to the handling of those planning applications.
Most matters to do with tree preservation orders (TPO), listed buildings and conservations areas are now the responsibility of the District Councils. However the County Council retains some residual powers. Most important is the power to make TPOs and conservation areas. Normally this is only exercised by the County Council where the site crosses District boundaries – and where the District Councils agree.

As the Highway Authority, the County Council enters into a wide variety of agreements with landowners and developers on matters which affect the highway. These may include works required for access to the highway from new development, works on the highway to accommodate traffic from the development, the adoption of new roads, the installation of various facilities on the highway, dropped kerbs, and other minor changes to the highway.

Almost all of these are normally dealt with under powers delegated to officers but, in future, that delegation will be exercised through the Planning and Regulatory Committee.

(b) Licensing and Registration Functions

These include powers to issue safety certificates for sports grounds and fire certificates, powers under the Highways Act 1980, powers to licence the employment of children, and animal movement licences.

(c) Commons Registration

The aim of the service is to ensure that the County Council fulfils its statutory duties as the Registration Authority under the Commons Registration Act 1965 and the Commons Act 2006 by maintaining and updating the records relating to common land and village greens in Surrey so that the information is available for public inspection.

The involvement of the Committee relates to the registration of common land or village greens including disposal of applications for the registration of new common land or new village green.

(d) Health and Safety

Functions relating to health and safety otherwise than in the Council’s capacity as employer.

(e) Births, Deaths and Marriages

The involvement of the Committee relates to the power to approve premises for civil marriage and partnerships and to approve the licensing of religious buildings for civil partnerships.
The core functions of the Registration Service are to register births, deaths and marriages and to take notices of marriages and civil partnerships. The registers are stored securely at the Guildford Register Office. The public may request, for a fee, certified copies of the register entries.

The registration service is divided into 3 districts:

- East Surrey based at The Mansion, Leatherhead, comprising the Boroughs of Epsom & Ewell, Reigate & Banstead and the Districts of Mole Valley and Tandridge.
- North Surrey based at Rylston, Oatlands Drive, Weybridge, comprising the Boroughs of Elmbridge, Runnymede, Woking and Spelthorne
- West Surrey based at Artington House, Guildford, comprising the Boroughs of Guildford, Waverley and Surrey Heath

Each of the three district offices has a marriage room for conducting Civil Marriage Ceremonies. There are also local out stations for registering births and deaths.

The Registrar General has responsibility for maintaining standards in the Service and Surrey County Council has overall responsibility for recruiting and managing the staff and providing suitable accommodation. The Marriage Act 1994 enables couples to choose to marry or have a civil partnership at any register office in England and Wales or at approved venues licensed by local authorities. There are currently over 100 licensed premises including one religious building for civil partnerships in Surrey and staff attend at these venues to conduct each Civil Marriage and Civil Partnerships

(f) Rights of Way & Highways

Those non-Executive functions relating to public rights of way set out in the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, as amended, where a local Committee has been unable to determine the matter or where the matter has been referred to the Planning and Regulatory Committee for a decision.

(g) Functions relating to elections

The business of running elections is delegated to the Chief Executive however this function is retained in the terms of reference for the Planning and Regulatory Committee to deal with special circumstances, for example the Periodic Electoral Review.

(h) Development Plans

Advising the Executive on such aspects of the Local Development Documents and local plans or any other plan or policy of the Council which relates to these functions.