

MINUTES of the meeting of the **PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE** held at 10.30 am on 26 July 2023 at Council Chamber, Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 8EF.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its next meeting.

Members Present:

Ernest Mallett MBE
Jeffrey Gray
Victor Lewanski
Scott Lewis
Catherine Powell
Edward Hawkins (Chairman)
Colin Cross
John Robini
Jonathan Hulley

Apologies:

Jeremy Webster
Richard Tear

42/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies for absence were received from Richard Tear and Jeffrey Gray.

43/23 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING [Item 2]

The Minutes were APPROVED as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

44/23 PETITIONS [Item 3]

There were none.

45/23 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME [Item 4]

There were none.

46/23 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [Item 5]

There were none.

47/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS [Item 6]

There were none.

48/23 PLANNING ADVISORY SERVICE REVIEW OF THE PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE [Item 7]

Officers:

Caroline Smith, Planning Group Manager

Sian Saadeh, Planning Development Manager

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Officers introduced the item and stated that the report was to inform the Committee of the outcome of a review of the Planning and Regulatory Committee (P&R) that was undertaken by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). The review was commissioned by the County Council to consider the effectiveness of the committee processes and conduct and to suggest ways in which the operation of the committee could be improved. Members noted that the overall conclusions of the committee was that it was well-run and functioned effectively. Further to this, it was noted that any constitutional changes would need to be approved at the meeting of the County Council.
2. The Chairman stated that he would list each of the recommendations provided within the report and ask Members and Officers for comments. It was also noted that any changes would be reviewed after six months. The following comments were made.

a. Recommendation 1: Reporting Performance

3. No comments from Members.

b. Recommendation 2: Annual Planning Committee Monitoring Visit.

4. Officers suggested that monitoring visits were held every spring to allow Members to visit sites that they had previously made decisions on. Cllr Powell suggested that the committee also review conditions that had previously been agreed and assess the council's ability to enforce. The Chairman noted the suggestion and stated that officers would need to consider any legal restrictions of a Member review of a site's conditions.

c. Recommendation 3: Publish Planning Committee Decisions.

5. Officers highlighted that only the committee's 'resolution' could be published as the decision was not usually implemented until some time after the meeting. Officers added that more consideration was needed on whether Recommendation 3 was feasible and helpful.

d. Recommendation 4: Regulation 3 Planning Applications.

6. Officers stated that there was also an opportunity for training across the wider authority on the role of the Planning and Regulatory Committee in respect of Regulation 3 applications.
7. Councillor Lewanski asked whether the committee could make training mandatory. Officers stated that they did not believe it was possible to make training mandatory however they could strongly recommend

attendance. Members further stated the importance of Members and officers in the authority having a good understanding of the committee's processes.

e. Recommendation 5: Review Delegation Definition.

8. No comments from Members.

f. Recommendation 6: Speaking at Committee Process.

9. The Chairman provided an overview of the recommendation and stated that he believed that the current process of a maximum of five objectors and five supporters over 30 minutes could sometimes be an overload of information for Members. Cllr Lewis stated that he felt that Members should have the opportunity to allow additional time to speakers if their speech was particularly relevant to the decision of the committee. Officers highlighted that Recommendation 7 included a proposal to allow Members to ask for clarification from speakers. Cllr Powell further added that it would be helpful to allow speakers to delegate their speaking time to another speaker and combine the points they wish to raise.

g. Recommendation 7: Running Order at Planning Committee.

10. No comments from Members.

h. Recommendation 8: Site Visit Conduct and Reporting.

11. Officers provided a brief overview however noted that a site visit was not a formal part of the decision making process and therefore felt that recommendation 8.3 as noted within the report was unnecessary. Cllr Powell agreed that Recommendation 8.3 was unnecessary but asked that any documentation circulated during a site visit was shared with all Members of the committee.
12. Cllr Lewanski asked whether it would be possible to hold site visits on a Saturday. The Chairman felt that this would not be feasible for officers and, further to this, some sites did not operate during the weekend.

i. Recommendation 9: Officer Reports.

13. Members noted that officers were considering different ways to shorten the length of reports.

j. Recommendation 10: Officer Presentations.

14. Cllr Powell suggested that the officer presenting the report also had control of the PowerPoint presentation, rather than a separate officer, to simplify the process.

k. Recommendation 11: Training.

15. Cllr Powell suggested that training take place during a meeting slot when a committee was cancelled as all Members would be available. It was also asked that training take place virtually where possible.

Actions / Further information to be provided:

None.

Resolved:

The Committee noted the report.

49/23 ENFORCEMENT & MONITORING UPDATE REPORT [Item 8]

Officers:

Ian Gray, Planning Enforcement Team Leader

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Planning Enforcement Team Leader introduced the report and provided Members with a brief overview of the enforcement team and their structure. Further to this, Members noted a brief overview of the report as included within the meeting's agenda.
2. In regard to paragraph 1.4 which was regarding the site monitoring visits which been significantly affected, Cllr Hulley asked how confident officers were that they would meet their target of 80%. The Team Leader confirmed that he was confident that the target could be met as the number of officers within the team had increased.
3. Cllr Lewis asked whether the local councillor was notified of any enforcement issues within their division. The Team Leader explained that officers considered the information that had been received, which was usually quite extensive, and did not actively seek further information from local councillors. Cllr Lewis asked whether it would be possible to at least notify the local councillor of an enforcement issue. Officers noted the comment and stated that they would consider this further outside the meeting. Cllr Powell further encouraged officers to consider notifying the local Member. Following the discussion, the Chairman raised concerns with consulting a local Member too early in an enforcement process but felt that it was something officers should consider.
4. Members noted that it would take time for newer member of the enforcement team to get a good understanding of the planning enforcement environment within the county.
5. Members noted that Legal officers liaised closely with the enforcement team to provide advice when necessary and, further to this, highlighted the large workload officers faced when considering enforcement action..
6. Cllr Powell stated that it would be helpful to have an understanding of the issues officers faced when working through the enforcement legal system and how officers felt it could be improved. The legal representative at the meeting stated that one of the issues she faced was due to the limited resources available to agencies when addressing issues, such as waste enforcement issues, within the county.

Actions / Further information to be provided:

None.

Resolved:

The Committee noted the report.

50/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 9]

The date of the next meeting was noted.

Meeting closed at 11.40 am

Chairman