

County Council Meeting – 10 December 2013

REPORT OF THE PLANNING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE

- * Mr Keith Taylor (Chairman)
- * Mr Tim Hall (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr Ian Beardsmore
- * Mrs Natalie Bramhall
- A Mrs Carol Coleman
- * Mr Jonathan Essex
- A Mrs Margaret Hicks
- * Mr George Johnson
- * Rachael I. Lake
- * Mr Ernest Mallett MBE
- * Mr Michael Sydney
- * Mr Richard Wilson

* = Present

A = Apologies

A. REVIEW OF SCHEME OF DELEGATION

1. The Committee considered a review of the current scheme of delegation following recommendations of the 2013 Planning Service Review and Peer Challenge to improve efficiency and reduce costs in the decision making process. The Committee heard that the potential benefits of increased delegation to officers are:
 - Applications dealt with more effectively & efficiently
 - More effective use of Member time
 - Greater capacity to deal with increasing work loads
 - Reduction in printing / admin related activities
 - Greater number of applications determined within required period (8 weeks for minor applications, 13 weeks for major applications and 16 weeks for major applications with Environmental Assessments)

These benefits are particularly important when considered in light of the large number of applications that are expected over the next five-year period from the school places programme. This forecast increase in the number of applications will create more demand on both officer and Member time. Revising the scheme of delegation is therefore vitally important to help ensure that the above benefits are realised and to enable the Planning & Regulatory Committee to deliver quality decisions to relevant applications within the required timescales.

2. Following a robust debate, the Committee supported the level of delegation being revised so that:
 - All details pursuant (applications relating to a previously granted permission) and non-material amendments (minor issues that do not change the principles of an existing permission) will be delegated to officers (irrespective of the number of objections).
 - Any full application with fewer than 5 objections, which is in accordance with the development plan and national policies will be delegated to officers.

- Any full application with fewer than 5 objections that is not in accordance with the development plan (i.e. waste development in Green Belt) and national policies will be delegated to officers in liaison with either the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Planning & Regulatory Committee.
- Any application can come before committee if requested by the local member or a member of the Planning & Regulatory Committee.

As a prerequisite to the Scheme of Delegation being revised, the Committee requested a monthly list of planning applications received by the planning service. The first of these monthly lists has now been circulated to the Committee.

3. The Committee therefore **RECOMMENDS** to Council the following revisions to the Scheme of Delegation:

Planning

P1 – amend to state “Where fewer than 5 objections have been received and no request has been made by the local member or a member of the Planning & Regulatory Committee for the application to be determined by that Committee, to determine planning applications for minerals, waste development and County Council development which comply with the development plan and national policies”.

P2 – amend to state “Where fewer than 5 objections have been received and no request has been made by the local member or a member of the Planning & Regulatory Committee for the application to be determined by that Committee, and after consultation with the Chairman or, in his/her absence, Vice-Chairman of the Planning & Regulatory Committee, to determine planning applications for minerals, waste development and County Council development which do not comply with the development plan and national policies”.

P6 – amend to state “To determine all details pursuant applications (applications relating to a previously granted permission) irrespective of the number of objections unless a request has been made by the local member or a member of the Planning & Regulatory Committee for the application to be determined by that Committee”.

P7 – amend to state “(i) To determine whether county development applications and minerals and waste applications constitute a ‘non material amendment’ within section 96A of the TCPA, and (ii) To determine such applications, irrespective of the number of objections, unless a request has been made by the local member or a member of the Planning & Regulatory Committee for the application to be determined by that Committee.”

Keith Taylor
Chairman of the Planning & Regulatory Committee
September 2013