
ISSUES ARISING FROM ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 REVIEW OF THE PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE

- 1.1 This item of business was referred by the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 14 December 2005 to this Committee with a number of recommendations. A copy of the officer's report to that meeting is attached as an appendix.
- 1.2 In response to Member questions relating to the size of a Planning Services Committee, the following key points were noted by Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee:-
- The percentage of applications allowed on appeal following determination by the Committee was relatively high, due to the fact that only the more challenging applications were considered by the Planning Services Committee.
 - Whilst there was no official guidance on the optimum size of a Planning Committee, a survey of this Council's Audit Commission Family Group had identified that the average Committee within the Group comprised seventeen Members.
 - The Head of Planning Services was not aware of any indications that a failure to reduce the size of the current Committee would have consequences for the Council's role as a Planning Authority.
 - It was important that all Members of a Planning Committee had equal levels of information about an application.
 - Individual Councils should decide whether full executive powers were delegated to their Planning Committees.
- 1.3 Following further Member debate around the advantages and disadvantages of retaining an all Member Planning Services Committee, a Motion was moved by Councillor P A Capon and seconded by Councillor P F A Webster, that it be recommended that all Members of the Council continue to serve on that Committee.
- 1.4 In considering the questions of arrangements for site visits, procedures for deferment and compulsory training, it was agreed that arrangements associated with deferment and site visits worked well. With regard to training, it was considered that there would be merit in introducing a compulsory session of up to four hours duration.

1.5 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) That all Members continue to serve on the Planning Services Committee.
- (2) That the current arrangements for site visits and deferment be retained.
- (3) That a compulsory training session of up to four hours duration be introduced for all Members of the Planning Services Committee, subject to appropriate arrangements being in place should someone fall ill or be unable to attend for some other significant reason. (HPS)

Sarah Fowler

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Background Papers:-

None

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