

In accordance with Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman has agreed to take this item as a late item of business in order to establish a working party as soon as possible.

PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF WORKING PARTY TO REVIEW THE SCHEME OF DELEGATION

1.0 Purpose of Report

To consider the recommendations of the Councillors Commission at its meeting on 15th September 2015 that the Planning Committee consider issues relating to the frequency of meetings of the Committee, in particular consider whether to amend the Scheme of Delegation to officers.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Following concerns expressed by some Members, the Councillors Commission considered issues relating to the frequency of meetings of the Planning Committee and in particular the fact that five additional meetings had been held over the Council's cycle of meetings and on occasion, meetings had started before the usual 4pm start time.
- 2.2 The Councillors Commission also noted that there had been a significant increase in applications submitted to the Council – over the last 12 month period there had been a 10.5% increase over the corresponding period in the previous year. Moreover, over the last 12 month period there had been a 54% increase in major applications.
- 2.3 The Councillors Commission consider that the Scheme of Delegation and mechanism for referral of items to Committee could be reviewed by the Planning Committee in particular to see whether it was possible to delegate minor applications in circumstances where an objection had been lodged by a Town or Parish Council. At present, these were automatically referred to Committee.
- 2.4 It was also suggested that presentation of reports by officers could be shortened and indeed there may not be a need for an officer presentation in respect of all items in any event, as the written report included detailed information.
- 2.5 It was also considered that the possibility of scheduling provisional meetings could be considered, with these being cancelled where they were not necessary. The number of site visits prior to Planning Committee meetings could potentially be reduced.
- 2.6 Clearly, the above requires detailed consideration of both the Scheme of Delegation and a range of other issues and it is suggested that the best way forward would be to constitute a Working Party of the Planning Committee to consider these issues in detail and to make recommendations back to the Planning Committee.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION that:

- (a) a Working Party be established to consider an amendment to the Scheme of Delegation to enable greater delegation to officers, to review the need for site visits

to be undertaken and to review the current system of referrals of matters to Planning Committee by Members and to make recommendations to the Planning Committee; and

- (b) the Planning Committee determine the composition of the Working Party.

For further information please contact Kirsty Cole on extension 5210

Kirstin H Cole
Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer