

APPENDIX 3

Update on Progress in respect of revisions to the Delegation Agreement particularly in relation to the determination of planning applications.

- 1 This matter was last considered by Executive at their meeting of 27 July 2016 when Members identified a lack of clarity in the Agreement concerning the mechanism through which Councillors can request that a planning application be considered by Planning Committee.
- 2 In order to ensure the smooth and transparent running of the planning application process, it is important to ensure that Members are fully aware of the procedure through which they are able to do so.
- 3 Officers are currently reviewing this process with the Development Portfolio Holder, Councillor Rhead and the Chairman of Planning Committee, Councillor Cooke, the outcome of which will be set out in a forthcoming report which is being prepared for the 4 January 2018 Executive meeting.
- 4 In particular, consideration is being given to the most effective point within the planning application process by when Members can call a particular planning application to Committee and the extent to which this should be linked to the timing of the Planning Officer's recommendation.
- 5 Since the last consideration of this matter, Officers and Planning Committee members have also become increasingly aware that a significant proportion of planning applications being considered by Planning Committee are relatively minor in nature.
- 6 This raises a concern that proposals which would usually be determined by Officers under delegated powers are being considered by Planning Committee resulting in increased timescales and cost to the applicant and the Council, and reducing the capacity for the Committee to consider the more controversial or complex proposals which is intended to be their focus.
- 7 For that reason, again in consultation with Councillors Rhead and Cooke, Officers are reviewing the reasons for this and considering the options available to address this imbalance of the work being undertaken by Planning Committee.
- 8 One of the particular areas under review is the ability of Town and Parish Councils to trigger the consideration of a planning application by Planning Committee which the evidence suggests is a key reason for the number of minor applications being included on Planning Committee agenda's, often where no other objections to a proposal have been received.
- 9 Intelligence from some of our peer authorities indicates that such an approach is far from widespread amongst Local Planning Authorities and it is therefore the intention that this matter, along with a small number of minor revisions to the delegation agreement to bring it up to date will also be the subject of the forthcoming Executive report.