

Meeting: Council

Date: Wednesday 20 July 2016

Subject: Public speaking at Planning Committee and changes to the planning scheme of delegation.

Report of: Councillor Jim Murray on behalf of the Planning Committee

The Council is asked to consider the minute and resolution of the Planning Committee meeting held on 17 May 2016 as set out below.

Further copies of the report to the Planning Committee are available on request – please see end of this report. A copy may be seen on the Council’s website by following the link below:

<http://democracy.eastbourne.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

The Council is recommended to approve the committee’s recommendations for amendments to be made to the scheme of delegation and council procedure rules:-

**Minute extract
Planning Committee 17 May 2016**

9. Update on Public Speaking at Planning Committee and Update on the Planning Scheme of Delegation.

The committee considered the report of the Senior Specialist Advisor for Planning advising members of proposed changes to the constitution and the rules of procedure for speaking at Planning Committee and revisions to the planning scheme of delegation for determining planning applications.

A working party comprising Councillors Murray and Taylor had reviewed current practices and procedures associated with processing planning applications and the overall performance of the Planning Committee. A number of recommendations had been made which sought to deliver consistency to the procedure for the public right of address at Committee and to the type of applications reported to the Committee.

The current procedure for speaking at Planning Committee only permitted the applicant or representative to speak in response to an objector. It was proposed to amend the constitution to allow applicants or their representatives an automatic right to address the committee irrespective of a planning officers’ recommendation or whether an objection had been made to an application. It was acknowledged that although this may increase the time taken to process each case at committee, it would allow a more informed debate and would provide a more equitable and transparent approach.

In terms of the scheme of delegation, the working party had acknowledged that the role of the Planning Committee was to decide on more complex planning applications which related to the character, urban fabric and public realm of Eastbourne. It had identified that the type of application being submitted to the Committee over the past year had been inconsistent with previous years and a more stringent approach was proposed to the grounds on which an application was referred to the Planning Committee for decision. A copy of the revised scheme of delegation was appended to the report.

The Committee requested that section D which related to the referral grounds on which applications should be determined by Committee if submitted by a councillor, a member of the Corporate Management Team or an officer within Planning, be amended to all direct employees of the Council and elected members (and their spouse/partner). The Committee also proposed that the request to address Planning Committee should be accompanied by a written summary of the points to be used in an address.

RESOLVED: 1) That full Council be recommended to agree the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation as set out in the report with the following amendments:

- (i) Section D be amended as follows "Where a planning application or householder application has been made by an elected member (or their spouse partner) or any direct employee (or their spouse/partner) of Eastbourne Borough Council".
- (ii) Section J be amended to include the requirement for an objector to include a summary written statement of the issues intended for an address to committee.

(2) That Part 4, Section A of the Council's Constitution, Council Procedure Rules, be amended to allow applicants to have an automatic right to address the Planning Committee.

For a copy of the report please contact Local Democracy at 1 Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4TW. Tel. (01323) 415022 or 415021.
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