



Planning applications committee

09:30 to 10:00

30 March 2020

Present: Councillors Driver (chair), Huntley, Neale, Ryan and Wright
(substitute for Councillor Lubbock)

Apologies: Councillor Lubbock

(This meeting was comprised of a pre-agreed politically balanced quorum and was held by teleconferencing from the Westwick Room, City Hall.)

1. Declarations of interest

There were none.

2. Temporary proposed revised scheme of delegation

The area development manager (outer) presented the report. During his presentation he explained that the proposed changes to the current scheme of delegation were intended to be temporary and would be reviewed when it was possible to hold a virtual or physical planning applications committee. He also pointed out that officers would use their discretion and where an application was contentious and needed robust determination would delay a decision until such time as a committee meeting could be convened.

During discussion the area development managers referred to the report and answered members' questions. Members were advised that applicants had the right of appeal if a planning application was not determined within the timescale and therefore, potentially contentious planning applications would be determined by the Planning Inspectorate. In response to a member's question about the necessity of changing the delegations immediately rather than waiting, the area development managers explained that the government supported the continuance of planning services in the interest of the economy and there were a number of pending applications that would have been referred to committee that needed to be determined. There was a high risk that the delay in determining these planning applications would result in appeals to the Planning Inspectorate and therefore removing the council's ability to determine the application and creating an additional burden on the council's resources.

Discussion ensued on the emerging secondary legislation to hold council meetings remotely and the council's technological ability to do this at present. Several

members considered that the proposed temporary amendment to the committee delegations was an appropriate measure in the light of the current pandemic.

During discussion a member queried the proposed delegation to the area development managers in consultation with the chair and vice chair, because he considered that it would not be objective and that the full committee or a quorum should be consulted. This then led to further discussion about applications where the committee had overturned the officer recommendation and a further application was expected. In these circumstances where the new applications were of a similar description and size, officers would not determine it under delegated powers. Councillor Neale moved and the chair seconded that an additional clause be added under (1) approval of major planning applications, to ensure that contentious applications which overturned officer recommendations were not made by the area development managers in consultation with the chair and/or vice chair. The chair pointed out that he supported the recommendation that such applications were not made under delegated powers and that they should be deferred until a committee could be convened. Councillor Ryan said that he would vote against the amendment because this was a pandemic and the intention of the proposal was to provide a service and not to short change democracy. On being put to the vote the amendment was carried by 4 members voting in favour (Councillors Neale, Driver, Huntley and Wright) and 1 member voting against (Councillor Ryan).

The chair then moved the recommendations as set out in the report and as amended above, seconded by Councillor Huntley.

RESOLVED, with 4 members voting in favour (Councillors Driver, Huntley, Ryan and Wright) and 1 member abstaining from voting (Councillor Neale), to approve for use with immediate effect the changes to the scheme of delegation as set out in the "Proposal" section of the report and at Appendix B, subject to the following additional clause inserted at 1(c) and excluded from delegation to the area development managers in consultation with the chair or vice chair, as follows:

- 1(c) the application is a resubmission of a proposal involving development of the same character or description and on the same site where the officer recommendation to committee on an earlier application was overturned by the planning applications committee.

CHAIR