



THE
NORWICH
SOCIETY

21st April 2020

Dear members of the Planning Applications Committee,

Proposed temporary changes to the scheme of delegation

We note that a meeting of the Planning Applications Committee has been scheduled for the 23rd April via videoconferencing with an item proposing temporary changes to the scheme of delegation.

We would like to ask members of the committee to oppose this proposal, and instead suggest that Planning Applications Committee continues to hold meetings via videoconferencing.

Whilst we recognise that a decision was already made by a meeting of a subset of the committee on the 30th March, we feel that there was not enough notice of that meeting or an adequate mechanism for members of the public or groups like ours to feed in before that decision was made. Furthermore, we feel that circumstances have changed since then (what with the government announcing on 2nd April that planning committees would be able to meet virtually) and therefore that it should not longer be necessary to amend the scheme of delegation in this way.

We are concerned that the proposal leaves the responsibility for making key decisions on potentially major and highly controversial applications in the hands of a single councillor, and does not give any opportunity for democratic oversight from opposition councillors or other members of the committee.

Given that the inability to hold public meetings in person may not be restored for several months, we believe that the only way to ensure such democratic accountability at this time is to hold meetings virtually, with the ability for members of the public to observe.

We thank you for taking the time to read this.

Yours faithfully,

Barry Howell, Chair of The Norwich Society
Jon Boon, Vice Chair and Chair of The Norwich Society's Planning Appraisal Committee.