

## Scrutiny Review of Planning

### Recommendations Table for Lead Member / Officer / Partner Responses

| Recommendation   | Lead Member/Officer/<br>Partner             | Accepted<br>Yes / No | Comments  |
|--|---|----------------------|---|
| <b>Planning Service/Team</b>   |   |                      |   |
| 1. The Council work with other councils to encourage the Public Access Planning Software System supplier to improve the system to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate for customers.         | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | Yes                  | . This will be reported at the relevant IT user group, scheduled to meet in October 14. This User group covers Lancashire Authorities.  |
| 2. The content of the planning pages on the Council's new website be reviewed to make them more comprehensive and user-friendly.   | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | Already in<br>place  | This is an ongoing project. The website will continue to be reviewed. Members wishing particular aspects of the website to be considered for review can contact the Planning Manager at any time. We also have regard to customer comments and use these to improve our website.  |
| 3. The functionality of the Public Access Planning Software System is examined to see if consultees and other stakeholders could be automatically informed of the outcome of planning decisions via email. | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | Already in<br>place  | This is a feature of Public Access already. Users have the ability to register and then track applications - this will then send them automatic updates at each stage of the application. The information provided to consultees on how this process works will be reviewed to help make it simpler and more transparent. |
| 4. The job title of the Enforcement Officer is updated to Compliance and Enforcement Officer.  | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | To be<br>considered  | This will be considered in the review of the Planning Service   |

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| <b>Member Engagement and the Planning Committee</b>  |   |                      |  |
| 5. All Members receive a more detailed and structured training programme to enhance their role in the planning process and how they manage the expectations of local residents as soon as possible after being elected with regular updates. | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | Partial              | The training for Planning Committee Members is regularly reviewed to take account of policy and legal changes. The point of all Members of Council having training on how to manage local residents expectations will be passed to Member Training.  |
| 6. The Planning Manager puts in place a system for alerting Ward Members to potentially contentious planning applications and at an early stage with relevant pre planning application discussion.   | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | Already in<br>place  | This is already in place. There are a number of points:<br><br><ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ward Members are informed of major potentially contentious planning applications via email at pre planning application stage.</li> <li>2. A weekly list of all planning applications received is sent to all Ward Members electronically. These include all sizes and types of applications . Officers welcome Ward Members with local knowledge contacting the case officer were there may be local issues arising. It may be the officer is unaware of contentious matters in all cases. When officer and Members exchange knowledge in this way it helps strengthen the planning process.</li> </ol> |

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| 7. Ward Members are automatically notified of progress on planning appeals.  | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | Already in<br>place  | Ward Members and others are notified when an appeal is raised. All Members may attend any hearings throughout the appeal. Ward Members are made aware of the hearing meeting dates and arrangements by officers and are informed of the decision.  |
| 8. Ward Members have the automatic right to refer planning applications in their area to the Planning Committee where they have the agreement of their fellow or adjoining ward Member.  | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | Yes                  | In the Scrutiny report the Task Group found that on balance the current system of delegation worked well and ensured statutory timescales were met and the volume of applications were managed. However it is agreed that for a 6 month period this proposal be introduced subject to a review on the impact on resources.     |
| 9. For a twelve month trial-period, where Planning Officers feel there are balanced pros and cons to an application, no recommendation is made to the Planning Committee.  | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | No                   | Legal opinion has been sought on this matter. The external legal advice is that this is not good practice and may result in a risk to the Council in any appeal process. If officers failed to make a recommendation to could be difficult to defend a refusal as officers still have a duty to give an opinion at the appeal. |
| 10. The Planning Committee Chairman should summarise for the public why a decision has been taken, provide feedback on the public's key issues and help to manage the expectations of residents with regards the planning process. | Councillor Jon Hesketh /<br>Denise Johnson  | To be<br>considered  | This will develop with the legislative provisions for recording meetings.  |

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| 11. The convention that Members of this council who are also Members of Lancashire County Council don't sit on our Planning Committee is changed to allow this to happen.  | Group Leaders                              | No  | Decision for Group Leaders   |
| 12. A cross-party Planning Committee briefing is held with the Planning Chairman prior to each meeting at the discretion of the Chairman.  | Councillor Jon Hesketh /<br>Denise Johnson | Already<br>takes<br>place at<br>the<br>Chairman's<br>discretion | Meetings have been held at the Chairman's discretion. Such briefings are purely for the imparting of information and there would be no discussion on the merits of the planning application(s).  |
| 13. Consideration is given to providing video presentations of planning sites where this would be helpful and all images taken at different times of the day where this is relevant, with presentation screens being provided for the public/audience. | Councillor Jon Hesketh /<br>Denise Johnson | Yes   | Consideration will be given to this subject to the impact on resources within the service.   |
| 14. The process for organising site visits by the Planning Committee be formalised with a clear process developed of when and how they are organised, including feeding back at the meeting.   | Councillor Jon Hesketh /<br>Denise Johnson | Partial   | This is already undertaken. Since the Planning Committee membership was agreed in May all Planning Members were invited on a tour of the Borough looking at major sites. On the 30 <sup>th</sup> July the Planning Committee discussed further visits. It was agreed to conduct these for major sites. It is estimated this will be about 3 or 4 site visits per year. |

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|  |   |                      | The Constitution already includes a protocol for site visits.  |
| <b>Resident Engagement</b>   |   |                      |  |
| 15.The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing chairs a cross-party Member working group to look at how best community engagement in planning could be incorporated effectively into the My Neighbourhoods approach.   | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | No                   | The Cabinet does not agree to this approach. Planning will not be part of the My Neighbourhood arrangements<br>However the Portfolio Holders for Strategic Planning and Housing and Regeneration, Leisure and Healthy Communities will meet with the Chairs of the My Neighbourhood Forums to discuss community engagement.                |
| 16.A user-friendly leaflet is put together for applicants and those consulted on planning applications to explain the process in more detail, with all information reviewed and improved to manage the expectation of residents about the constraints and framework within which the Council operates. | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | Yes                  | A booklet on 'How to Comment on Planning Applications' and other advice and contact details is being designed.<br>As part of ongoing improvements to processes we will continue to look at how information to customers can be improved. If Members have particular issues they wish to see improved please let the Planning Manager know. |
| 17.Consultation letters sent to residents include the contact details of ward Members and local County Councillors so that they can be contacted about highways and transportation issues.   | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | Yes                  | This recommendation was introduced in July 14. Neighbour letters have been altered to include the Ward Councillor details. A list of County Councillors and the areas they cover will be inserted into the booklet referred to above which will be sent out with all neighbour letters.  |

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| <b>Lancashire County Council Highways</b>   |   |                      |  |
| 18.A more detailed summary of Lancashire County Council's Highways comments is provided in planning reports and a direct link to the full response be provided.   | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | No                   | It is not technically possible to include a direct link from the Committee agenda. However, as an alternative solution, a note will be put on all planning committee agendas to state where this information can be found on the public access system. |
| 19.County Councillors are informed of planning applications in their areas and are encouraged to liaise more closely with Lancashire County Council Highways officers on responding to planning applications in their Division and liaise more with South Ribble Members. | Councillor Cliff Hughes /<br>Denise Johnson | Yes                  | This has been implemented. County Councillors receive a copy of the weekly list of planning applications received.   |
| 20.Lancashire County Council Highways be asked to review its capacity for assessing and challenging information provided by developers so that they can provide assurance it is robust and takes all issues into account.   | Lancashire County<br>Council                | Yes                  | Lancashire County Council has been approached and the response to this was produced at the Scrutiny meeting on the 12 <sup>th</sup> August. .  |