

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES

Executive Summary

The Council is invited to consider the recommendations from the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 21 July 2020. The extract from the draft minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee is set out below.

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 21 JULY 2020

7. DEVELOPMENT MANAGER - SCHEME OF DELEGATION.

[Note: During the debate on this item, a Member referred to Council-owned companies. The following interests were then declared.

In accordance with the Officer Procedure Rules, Peter Bryant, Director of Legal and Democratic Services declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item arising from his position as a Council appointed Director of Thamesway Group Companies, Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited, Rutland Group companies and Brookwood Cemetery companies. The interest was such that it would not prevent the Officer from advising on this item.

In accordance with the Officer Procedure Rules, Douglas Spinks, Deputy Chief Executive, declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item arising from his position as a Council appointed Director of Thamesway Group Companies and Brookwood Cemetery companies. The interest was such that it would not prevent the Officer from advising on this item.]

The Committee considered a report which detailed the review of the Council's Scheme of Delegations to the Development Manager

Councillor S Ashall commented that this review of the Scheme of Delegations was welcomed and a positive move forward on how we do business at the planning Committee. He supported the criteria set out in the report and thought that it was important that Members retained the ability to call in applications to the Planning Committee if need be. Councillor S Ashall commented that he did not agree with the revised trigger threshold in relation to the number of dwellings proposed in a development for the application to be determined by the Planning Committee; he would be happier for this to remain at ten, as in the national definition of 'major developments'.

Some Members supported the view of Councillor S Ashall regarding the trigger threshold, whereas others welcomed the change and thought it would give the Committee greater control and prevent developers undercutting the figure to avoid determination by Planning Committee.

Councillor S Ashall proposed and it was duly seconded by Cllr G Elson a motion to amend the trigger threshold in relation to the number of dwellings proposed in a development for the application to be determined by the Planning Committee. This was currently set at five dwellings in the proposed Scheme of Delegations and Councillor S Ashall proposed it should be set at ten dwellings.

Supplementary Report – Recommendations of the Executive and Committees

In accordance with Standing Order 22.2, the Chairman deemed that a division should be taken on the motion above. The votes for and against approval of the motion were recorded as follows.

In favour: Cllrs Ashall, G Elson and N Martin.

TOTAL: 3

Against: Cllrs T Aziz, A Boote, G Chrystie, S Hussain and L Morales.

TOTAL: 5

Present but not voting: None.

TOTAL: 0

The motion was therefore not approved.

The Chairman and Councillor L Morales suggested that planning applications from Council owned Companies should need to be determined by the Planning Committee. Douglas Spinks commented that this issue was not raised when the proposed Scheme of Delegation was discussed by the Working Group and that Members had initiated the review of the Scheme in order to increase Delegated Powers, not remove them. Douglas Spinks suggested that it could be unfortunate to delay the planning application process for the Companies affected and it could be unfair to compromise them by including them under Woking Borough Council. It was likely this change would also see a number of smaller applications come to the Planning Committee that would normally be determined through delegated powers. Douglas Spinks suggested that there could be a way to highlight these Company applications on the weekly Planning List to bring awareness to Members at an early stage so that they had the opportunity to call in such applications; this would not compromise the Companies and would also avoid bringing small cases to the Planning Committee.

Some Members thought that there was a greater need for transparency regarding the Council owned Companies and commented that this proposed change to Delegated Powers would achieve that.

Some Members liked the suggestion made by Douglas Spinks to update the weekly Planning List and thought that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman could go through this list to determine which applications needed to be brought forward to the Committee. They thought it would be unfortunate if every application from Woking Borough Council owned Companies, including minor amendments had to get caught up in the Planning Committee process.

Councillor L Morales proposed and it was duly seconded by the Chairman a motion to amend point 3.3 (d) to include the words “and any companies or entities 50% or more owned by Woking Borough Council” inserted after “Council”.

In accordance with Standing Order 22.2, the Chairman deemed that a division should be taken on the motion above. The votes for and against approval of the motion were recorded as follows.

In favour: Cllrs T Aziz, A Boote, G Chrystie and L Morales.

TOTAL: 4

Against: Cllrs G Elson and N Martin.

TOTAL: 2

Supplementary Report – Recommendations of the Executive and Committees

Present but not voting: Cllr S Ashall and S Hussain.

TOTAL: 2

The motion was therefore approved.

RESOLVED that the Planning Committee RECOMMEND to Council that with effect from 1 August 2020, the current delegations to the Development Manager be rescinded and, subject to the note below, replaced by those in Appendix 3 to this report.

Note: Paragraph 1 d) of Appendix 3 shall have the words “and any companies or entities 50% or more owned by Woking Borough Council” inserted after “Council” so that it reads:-

“d) Applications where the applicant is Woking Borough Council and any companies or entities 50% or more owned by Woking Borough Council, except for non-material amendments and minor material amendments (irrespective of whether they are major or non-major development).” ”

Background Papers: None.

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