

Chairs Report - Planning Committee

The planning committee has met 3 times since the last full council meeting. Decisions can be found in the minutes of the meeting and via the online planning portal.

In line with the recommendations of the Planning Peer Review, the planning committee has moved to a four weekly cycle. In addition to the change in cycle, planning policy items will be discussed at separate meetings. This ensures the items receive appropriate consideration and pressure on already congested committee agenda's can be relieved. The first of these is to be held on 19th March 2015.

The appeal decision regarding the proposed development of 113 houses at Gateway Avenue was received in January. The inspector ruled in favour of the developer and outline permission for the development was granted. Whilst many members were disappointed with this decision the inspector has clarified several important factors that should be considered when deciding future applications.

Firstly the inspector has highlighted that the council's policies are to receive very little weight due to the absence of a 5 year housing land supply.

With regards to the 5 year housing land supply; the inspector highlighted that a 20% buffer needs to be applied when determining the land supply, rather than the 5% buffer required nationally. Despite over delivery against housing targets for the past two years (with this year following the same trajectory), the chronic under delivery in the previous 6 years (which equates to a deficit of 1 years supply) means it can not be deemed that the council has consistently delivered its target number of houses. As a result a 20% buffer must be applied. This has huge ramifications for the council's future ability to deliver a 5 year housing land supply. Despite the councils witness advocating for the existence of a 5 year housing supply (in contradiction to the position of officers), even he agreed that the council would not have a 5 year housing land supply based on his assessment if the 20% buffer needed to be applied.

Further detail can be found in the appeal decision document which is on the councils planning portal.

Training dates for members will be forthcoming and all members are encouraged to attend whether they sit on the planning committee or not.