

Planning & Infrastructure Policy Development Advisory Group
27 FEBRUARY 2024

Present: Councillors: John Milne (Chairman), Peter van der Borgh, Philip Circus, Mike Croker, Len Ellis-Brown, Alex Jeffery, Liz Kitchen, Joanne Knowles and Lynn Lambert

Also Present: Paul Clarke, Ruth Fletcher, Dennis Livingstone and Roger Noel

19 **UPDATE ON LOCAL PLAN REGULATION 19 PERIOD OF REPRESENTATION**

The Head of Strategic Planning provided an update on the Local Plan Regulation 19 period of representation, including the number of comments received so far and who they had been received from. The period of representation would close at 5pm on Friday 1 March.

She confirmed that recent IT outages at the Council had not affected the ability for comments to be submitted.

20 **UPDATE ON PLANNING COMMITTEE REVIEW**

The Governance Officer provided feedback from the Member workshop on the Planning Committee Review, where Members had considered the advantages and disadvantages of different Planning Committee arrangements.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure outlined a proposal which would result in a reduction in the size of the Planning Committees without removing the right of Members to sit on a Planning Committee, which Members debated at length. The proposal was not well received.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure also raised the question of whether Local Ward Members should be allowed to vote on applications in their wards, as this could lead to a perception of bias that could be subject to judicial review. Members were largely supportive of the idea that Local Ward Members should be allowed to speak but not vote on applications, as occurs at a number of other local authorities. The amount of time that Local Ward Members would have to speak and where they would sit to make their representations would need to be decided.

It was recognised that there were also opportunities for Local Ward Member engagement outside of Planning Committee, such as involvement with legal agreements.

One Member highlighted that decisions were sometimes delegated in consultation with Local Ward Members and asked whether decisions could continue to be delegated in this way if Local Ward Members were excluded

from decision-making at Planning Committee. The Head of Development and Building Control advised that this would need to be considered.

There was a commitment to provide Members with site photographs earlier and to identify key planning considerations for Members in advance of Planning Committee meetings. Officers would also explore providing videos of site visits when they had the appropriate technology.

The meeting closed at 6.53 pm having commenced at 5.31 pm

CHAIRMAN