

EXTRACT FROM REPORT TO PLANNING COMMITTEE ON 24 JULY 2013

INVEST IN TELFORD – PLANNING UPDATE

REPORT OF SERVICE DELIVERY MANAGER: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The report provides an update to inform Planning Committee Members of the Planning team's performance over the past 12 months, in addition to the recent changes to the service area structure. The report also sets out the proposed national changes to performance indicators and the need to provide both timely and quality decisions. Consideration is given to Councils Priorities in addition to the service areas, and makes recommendations to achieve this when determining planning applications

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Planning Committee recommend to Full Council that the practices for public speaking at Planning Committee be brought in line with those of other Councils.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| COMMUNITY IMPACT | Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)? | |
| | Yes | Business Winning, Business Supporting Council |
| | Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people? | |
| | No | No |
| TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE | August 2013 | |
| FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT | Yes | The resource implications of the recommended changes to planning processes have been addressed through the restructure of the service and will be accommodated within existing budgets. Enhanced technical and administrative support has been resourced to facilitate determination of applications within the Planning Guarantee period of 26 weeks (paragraph 4.5), therefore the risk to local planning fee income as a result of this legislative change is considered to be low. |
| LEGAL ISSUES | Yes | Any recommended changes to the Public Speaking Scheme will need to be approved by full Council. |
| OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES | No | The recommendations carry no inherent risks but seek to provide a more effective and efficient planning service. |
| IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS | No | Borough wide impact. |

4. PROPOSED CHANGES

4.1 **Invest in Telford**

In April 2012, Cabinet approved a report entitled 'Encouraging Growth - A New Way of Working'. This recognised the challenges facing businesses and developers wishing to invest in the Borough both from global economic conditions but also those identified by investors as local barriers. The Report launched a Business & Development Charter which pledged to ensure a more streamlined, consistent, personalised and supportive service to all our customers. Since its adoption in June 2012 these pledges have been

embedded in new ways of working and new initiatives, including the opening on 4 February of a dedicated 'Business & Planning First Point' within the offices at Wellington. Staffed by Business Support Officers and Planning Customer Services Officers this provides a 'one stop shop' for all business and planning inquiries. Located in Wellington it gives access to Officers dealing with property, land, planning, development, funding for business and wide ranging business support advice.

- 4.2 It is also recommended that for a more effective use of Member time that the scheme for public speaking is brought in line with the practices adopted by other LPAs with regard to 3 minute representations. The Chair would still have discretion to exceed the time limits when there are particular applications which require longer presentations. The Parish Charter Monitoring Group have consulted all the Parish/Town Councils on this proposed change and the findings are shown in **Appendix 2**. Of the 17 responses received 9 Councils preferred 3 minutes (including 1 Parish that still wanted 5 minutes to be available when requested) with 4 Councils requesting 5 minutes. A total of 4 Councils had no opinion. Given the support from the majority of the Parish Councils it is proposed that Planning Committee recommend to the Council (as the scheme for public speaking is a Full Council initiative) that the time for public speaking be set at 3 minutes. The existing Public Speaking Leaflet is included at **Appendix 1**.

5. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 Public Speaking Leaflet

Appendix 2 Parish Charter Monitoring Group survey results

Report prepared by David Fletcher, Service Delivery Manager Development Management.

Public Speaking at Plans Board



The Council is responsible for determining applications for planning permission. The majority of planning applications are dealt with under delegated powers by Officers and are not considered by the Plans Board. However, major, complex and contentious proposals will be determined by elected Councillors at Plans Board meetings. Public speaking applies only to applications which are heard at a public meeting of the Plans Board.

Public speaking at Plans Board meetings is not a legal requirement. The purpose of this scheme is to give the public, Parish Councils and applicants an opportunity to make their views known in person to the Plans Board. Letters of support or objection will also continue to be taken into account.

Plans Board meetings are normally held on Wednesdays. Venue details can be obtained from Democratic Services. Wherever possible, items on which the public wish to speak will normally be considered early on the agenda and, therefore, the order of business may differ from the published schedule. Any speaker not present when the application they are concerned with falls to be considered will lose the opportunity to speak.

If you wish to speak at the meeting you **must** register in advance in accordance with the procedure set out below.

Can I speak on any planning application?

Only on those which are due to be determined by the Plans Board.

How will I know when a particular application will be heard at Plans Board?

Development Management will be able to advise whether an application is likely to be considered by the Board and when. Registrations for public speaking are not accepted until the relevant Plans Board agenda has been published. Agendas are published five clear working days before the date of the meeting.

Who can speak at Plans Board Meetings?

- The person applying for planning permission (or his or her agent or other representative) is entitled to speak in support of their application.
- Any other member of the public (or his or her agent or other representative) is entitled to speak either in favour or against the application.*
- A representative of a Parish or Town Council is entitled to speak either in favour or against the application, providing that the property is situated within that Parish or Town Council area, or in certain circumstances when the property is in an adjoining Parish or Town Council area.
- Borough Ward Councillors, providing that the property is located within their ward, or in certain circumstances when the property is located in an adjoining Borough ward. A Borough Councillor may also speak as a 'stand in' for the Ward Councillor.

An applicant in favour of the application can speak even though an objector does not and vice-versa.

* What if more than one person wishes to speak in each category?

In the event of more than one objector or one applicant/supporter wishing to speak either:

- Prior to the meeting, a spokesperson may be appointed on behalf of all those wishing to speak in the same category. This should normally be the first person who registered to speak but if an alternative is subsequently agreed, details must be provided to the Democratic Services Team before the day of the meeting. If the objectors or applicant/supporters cannot reach agreement about who will speak, then the person who registered first will be given the opportunity to speak.
- In some cases, for example when there are just two objectors wishing to speak, individuals may agree to share the allocated time.

Names and contact details of all those who register to speak will be publicly available from Democratic Services.

In the case of multi member Borough Wards, the Chairman may, at his discretion, allow more than one Borough Ward Member to speak.

How long is allowed for speaking?

A maximum of 5 minutes is allocated to each of the following categories of speaker:

- The authorised Parish or Town Council Representative for the area
- The Borough Ward Councillor (if not a member of Plans Board).
- Those wishing to speak in favour of the application
- Those wishing to speak opposing the application

These time limits will be strictly adhered to. In certain circumstances the Chairman may agree to extend these time limits in the interests of a balanced debate. Speakers will not be allowed to complete presentations if the allocated time limit expires.

What is the Procedure for speaking?

The Chairman will announce the application and speakers will then be invited to address the Board in the following order:

1. Parish/Town Council representative
2. Borough Ward Councillor
3. Objector (or agent/spokesperson on behalf of objectors)
4. Applicant or their agent/spokesperson

The Chairman will have the discretion to halt the Speaker should they begin to stray from the discussion of planning grounds or make inappropriate or offensive comments.

Speakers may read from prepared statements.

Once speakers have finished they will be asked to retake their seats in the public gallery and may take no further part in the meeting.

Following this, a Planning Officer will present the written report and respond to any questions raised by members of the Plans Board before the Board debates and makes a decision on the application.

What can I say?

Comments must be based on planning issues, for example: overlooking/loss of privacy, loss of light, adequacy of parking, highway safety and/or traffic generation, noise or disturbance resulting from use, layout and density, design, character and appearance, conservation, sustainability and planning policy. Issues such as boundary or property disputes, land ownership, restrictive covenants, property values, commercial competition and the developer's character or motives are not material planning considerations.

Speakers must not:

- Make statements of a personal or slanderous nature; or
- Be abusive; or
- Interrupt other Speakers or the debate of the Plans Board.

Can I provide additional information to present at the meeting?

Additional material, such as plans or photographs cannot be handed out at the meeting but must be provided to the Democratic Services Team at least 48 hours before the meeting.

What happens if an application is deferred?

If the Plans Board Members decide to defer the application (either before or after hearing the speakers) there will be a further public speaking session at the meeting to which the application is brought back for consideration but the registration requirements will still apply and the onus is on speakers to re-register.

What happens if an application is withdrawn prior to being heard?

Applications are seldom withdrawn, however, if the application is withdrawn before being presented at the meeting, those who have already expressed a wish to speak will be notified before the meeting, providing that sufficient time has been given for Officers to notify those involved of the withdrawal.

Where can I get further information or advice?

Public Speaking & Meeting Procedure Queries:
Democratic Services
☎ 01952 383215 ✉ publicspeaking@telford.gov.uk

Planning Application Queries:
Development Management
☎ 01952 380380 ✉ planning.control@telford.gov.uk

How do I arrange to speak at the Plans Board?

Borough Councillors, objectors, applicants/supporters must register to speak as below. Parish or Town Council representatives will be entitled to speak subject to the Clerk of their Council notifying Democratic Services in writing or by email of the nominated speaker(s) and the application(s) they will be speaking on in accordance with the process below.

Please contact the Democratic Services team by **no later than 5pm, two working days before the meeting** using one of the following methods:

✉ publicspeaking@telford.gov.uk
☎ 01952 383215
✉ Democratic Services
Telford & Wrekin Council
Addenbrooke House
Ironmasters Way
Telford
TF3 4NT

As part of the registration process, individuals should disclose whether they wish to speak for or against an application and in which category. In addition, email or telephone contact details must be provided.

Names and contact details of all those who register to speak will be publicly available from Democratic Services.

**CONSULTATION PARISH CHARTER MONITORING GROUP
REGARDING REDUCTION FROM 5MINS TO 3 MINS FOR SPEAKERS AT PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

| | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Church Aston | |
| Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote | 5 minutes |
| Chetwynd | 3 minutes |
| Dawley Hamlets | No opinion |
| Edgmond | 3 minutes |
| Ercall Magna | |
| Eyton Parish Meeting | |
| Great Dawley | |
| Hadley & Leegomery | 3 minutes |
| Hollinswood & Randlay | 3 minutes |
| Ketley | 5 minutes |
| Kynnersley | |
| Lawley & Overdale | 5 minutes plus other comments |
| Lilleshall & Donnington | 15 th July |
| Little Wenlock | |
| Madeley | |
| Newport | No opinion as yet |
| Oakengates | |
| Preston on the Wealdmoors Parish Meeting | 3 minutes, as long as 5 available when requested |
| Rodington | 5 minutes |
| St Georges & Priorslee | 3 minutes |
| Stirchley & Brookside | |
| The Gorge | 3 minutes |
| Tibberton & Cherrington | No opinion |
| Waters Upton | 3 minutes |
| Wellington | 3 minutes |
| Wrockwardine | No opinion |
| Wrockwardine Wood & Trench | |