

Review of Area Planning Committees

Report of the Planning Portfolio Holders

Recommended:

1. That the review of the performance of the new Development Management Committee Structure be postponed.
2. The review be undertaken once the Committees have received 'business as usual' for a period of 12 months after the date at which in the opinion of the Head of Planning and Building Service in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder, measures have been established to adequately address the issue of nitrate neutrality in planning applications.

SUMMARY:

- At Council on 10 April 2019 it was resolved that the existing Development Management Committee system be abolished and replaced with a new system.
- As part of the introduction of the new system, it was agreed that its performance would be reviewed ahead of Annual Council 2020.
- Due to advice issued by Natural England regarding the impact in the Solent of nitrates from new developments, the number and type of applications considered by the Committees does not accurately reflect typical business; therefore it is proposed that the review be delayed until such time as normal business has resumed for a period of 12 months.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At Council on 10 April 2019 it was resolved that the existing Development Management Committee system of Northern Area Planning Committee, Southern Area Planning Committee and Planning Control Committee be abolished and replaced with two Development Management Committees; Northern Area and Southern Area, each reflecting the representation of local ward members and each comprising thirteen Members.
- 1.2 It was also resolved that the performance of the new Committee structure would be reviewed prior to Annual Council 2020.

2 Background

- 2.1 The new Development Management Committees came in to effect from 9 May 2019.
- 2.2 It was originally agreed that the performance of the new arrangements would be reviewed ahead of Annual Council 2020 after they had been operating for 12 months.

- 2.3 In June 2019, Natural England issued updated advice regarding the impact of nutrients from new development on the international nature conservation designations, within and around the Solent. Due to the uncertainty that new development will not cause further adverse impact, the recommended approach is for new development to achieve nutrient neutrality.
- 2.4 As a result of this advice the Council has not been determining planning applications for development covered by the advice, unless nutrient neutrality can be demonstrated, such that it is satisfied that this would be Habitats Regulations compliant.
- 2.5 This has had an impact on the Development Management Committees. The number of applications presented for consideration by the Committees has reduced significantly with nearly a third of scheduled meetings cancelled due to lack of business.
- 2.6 Business being considered by the Committees does not reflect the typical applications that would normally be considered.

3 Options

- 3.1 In order to effectively evaluate the performance of the new Development Management Committee Structure, a period of time is required when the Committees have been operating under typical circumstances to accurately reflect the workloads and applications that have in the past been considered by Committee Members. Postponing the review would allow for this.
- 3.2 To undertake a review of the performance of the new Development Management Committee Structure as planned, ahead of Annual Council 2020.

4 Option Appraisal

- 4.1 It is recommended that the review be delayed as undertaking an assessment at the current time would not accurately reflect the operation and performance of the Committee under typical circumstances.
- 4.2 Both the number and type of applications received by the Committees since May 2019 is not considered to be normal business for the Committees.

5 Risk Management

- 5.1 An evaluation of the risks associated with the matters in this report has previously been reported to Members as part of the Review of Area Planning Committees presented to Council on 10 April 2019.

6 Resource Implications

- 6.1 None

7 Legal Implications

7.1 None

8 Equality Issues

8.1 None

9 Other Issues

9.1 Community Safety - none

9.2 Environmental Health Issues - none

9.3 Sustainability and Addressing a Changing Climate - none

9.4 Property Issues - none

9.5 Wards/Communities Affected - none

10 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

10.1 It is recommended that the review of the performance of the new Development Management Committee Structure be postponed until nitrate neutrality can be demonstrated on relevant applications and the Committees have received 'business as usual' for a period of 12 months in order for performance to be effectively reviewed when the Committees are operating under normal conditions.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	0	File Ref:	N/A
(Portfolio: Planning) Councillor N Adams-King			
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Report to:	Council	Date:	26 February 2020