

REPORT OF PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

(Meeting held on 9 July 2008)

1. OPERATION OF THE PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE – RIGHT OF REPLY (MINUTE NO. 11)

In July 2007 the Committee decided to run a trial of revised public speaking arrangements that allowed all speakers a right of reply at the end of the debate. It was agreed that the trial would run for 6 months starting in October 2007.

Members gave initial consideration to the operation of the trial at the meeting on 12 March 2008 when it was agreed that the public speakers who had taken part in the trial of the right of reply should be contacted to seek their perceptions on how the scheme operated and its value to them.

A total of 66 people, who had experienced the public participation period, were asked for their views. An encouraging number of responses was received with 18 (27%) taking the trouble to respond. Universally the right to reply has been welcomed and seen as a positive way forward. The right of reply reassures people that their viewpoint is being properly heard and considered.

Members of the Committee have not identified any major practical problems arising from the introduction of the right of reply. The length of meetings has not increased significantly, and the closing statements have not sparked a further round of debate. Members' impressions of the value of the right of reply are very favourable.

RECOMMENDED:

That paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10 of Chapter 24 of the Constitution be amended as set out below:

3.9 Planning Development Control Committee – Time at which Public may Speak

Amend 3.9.1 to read “Initial remarks by members of the public and representatives of town and parish councils shall be made immediately after the Chairman calls the relevant agenda item and any essential additional update information has been given, before the Members start their debate.”

Add “3.9.2 Each public speaker may also exercise a right of reply, at the close of the debate, and before the vote is taken, in accordance with the rules set down in paragraph 3.10”

3.10 Planning Development Control Committee – Rules and Time Limits for Public Participation

Amend 3.10.3 to read “Each member of the public and representatives of town and parish councils may speak once at the start of the deliberation on a planning application and also speak again at the end of the debate, before the vote is taken. They may also respond to questions from Members of the Committee, but otherwise may not speak within the debate”

Amend 3.10.8 to read “The maximum time for public participation at the start of the item is 9 minutes, divided as follows:

**Applicants/Agents/Supporters of the application – 3 minutes
Objectors to the application – 3 minutes
Town or Parish Councils – 3 minutes**

The Chairman may limit the number of speakers from each of these three groups so that each person who is permitted to speak has an adequate opportunity to express their views (As a guideline, three speakers from each group is normally the practical limit).”

Add 3.10.9 “At the end of the debate, before the mover and seconder of any motion before the Committee sum up and/or exercise their right of reply, the persons who have spoken in the initial public participation period may also sum up and reply to the debate in the following order:

**Applicants/Agents/Supporters of the application – 1 minute
Objectors to the application – 1 minute
Town or Parish Councils – 1 minute”**

**Cllr Mrs P A Wyeth
CHAIRMAN**