

Report on	Revisions to the Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee
Reporting Officer	Dr Chris Boomer
Contact Officer	Dr Chris Boomer

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To agree amendments to the Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee in order to reduce the time spent at the Planning Committee.
1.2	The Protocol forms part of council Standing Orders. As such, any amendment to same must be undertaken in line with Standing Order 30.2 where it refers, that once proposed and seconded the matter stand adjourned without discussion until the next ordinary meeting of council
2.0	Background
2.1	Revisions to the Protocol for the operation of the Planning Committee were brought to the Planning Committee meeting on 7 th November 2017 where it was agreed that a decision would be held to give Members more time to consider.
2.2	A workshop had been held on 29 th March 2017 to review the operation of the planning Committee. At that meeting members voiced concerns that meetings were running to late primarily as a result of repetition and over-rehearsal of the arguments of some matters.
2.3	This was symptomatic of time spent on matters which were subsequently deferred, agents utilising the ability to speak to the committee prior and post deferral and the time allowed for non- planning committee members to speak. It was also recognised that members should be empowered to ask questions of applicants and other speakers as well as officers in order to assist in making sound decisions. Accordingly, the Planning Manager was asked to examine how the Protocol could be amended to assist in speeding up the Committee.
2.4	The matter was returned to the Planning Committee on 6 th March where it was agreed that in addition to the changes highlighted, greater discretion would also be given to the Planning Committee as to when an agreement would be given for a site meeting.
2.5	It was agreed the amendments should be brought forward to Council for decision

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>In order to assist the Planning Committee expedite its business in a more timely manner the Planning Manager advises that the Protocol be revised to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Empower member to ask questions of speakers but also advise members not engage in open conversation with speakers. (ii) Encourage members to only normally only speak once on any application in order to ensure committee business is dealt with in a speedy manner and to empower the Chair to curtail members where points are being made repeatedly (iii) Advise applicants seeking deferral of an application, to make such requests in writing prior to the Committee so the Planning Manager may review these and where appropriate ask the Committee to defer prior to further discussion. (iv) Limit speakers to one opportunity to speak to the Committee, and advise that they will not normally be given the opportunity to speak for a second time if the application is deferred and returned to Committee for final decision. (v) Reduce the time given to members to speak to 3 minutes in line with other speakers. (vi) Facilitate the Planning manager to ask for decision on applications to be deferred where it is brought to his attention that there are errors or omissions in the case officer's report or where there is a matter worthy of further consideration.
3.2	<p>The alterations are detailed in red in the revised protocol (appendix one) and were discussed at a training session on the code of conduct and protocol on 9th October 2017 and no concerns were raised. However, members did suggest additional measures could be taken to prevent meetings running so late, for example, starting meetings earlier, having a second date in the month for spill over or more contentious items, use of pre determination hearings and special meetings. It was recognised at the meeting that in order to change the time it would be necessary to relook at the councils standing orders and more consideration would be needed as to the implications of additional changes.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p><u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u></p> <p>Financial: N/A</p> <p>Human: N/A</p>

4.2	<u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u> <u>N/A</u>
4.3	<u>Risk Management Implications</u> <u>N/A</u>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the Council consider and adopt the changes recommended within the amended Protocol attached as Appendix One. That the matter once proposed and seconded stand adjourned without discussion until the next ordinary meeting of the Council.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 - Revised Protocol for the Operation for the Planning Committee