

Comparison Authorities

Authority	Number of committees per month	Named Members	Substitute Members	Total Members	Maximum number of items	Minimum number of items	Average Number of items
Braintree	1	10	13	23	7	2	4
Colchester	2	10	31	41	5	1	3
Chelmsford City	1	13	3	16	3	2	2
Redbridge	1	11	0	11	3	1	2
Waltham Forest	1	5	0	5	4	2	2
Brentwood	1	12	6	18	6	1	3
Harlow	1	8	4	12	7	1	3
Uttlesford	1	9	0	9	9	6	7

As can be seen above, seven of the eight above surveyed nearby authorities only have one planning committee that sits once per month/approximately every 4 weeks. It should be noted that Uttlesford District Council previously had two committees per month, however for the last 6 months these appear to have dropped down to one committee a month. Despite largely only having a single planning committee per month, the average number of items that go to Committee are three per meeting.

Below are some key factors regarding the delegated authorities across the comparison authorities.

Braintree Council – Average of four items per Committee

- No householder applications go to Committee unless deemed as ‘significant’ by the Planning Development Manager.
- However all Major planning applications¹ go to Committee.
- Other triggers for committee:
 - Contrary view from Town/Parish Council; or
 - Member call in; or
 - Contrary decision to 6 or more responses from neighbours (however this only relates to minor applications for between 3 and 9 residential units).

Colchester City Council – Average of three items per Committee

Colchester City Council appears to be the only Council surveyed that has a Committee that sits fortnightly, which during the summer months increases to every three weeks.

Colchester City Council have a very extensive, far-reaching scheme of delegation for all categories of applications, including entering into agreements under s.106 and all enforcement action. Other than applications that have been called-in by Members, **all categories of applications** can be determined under delegated authority with the exception of the following:

- Any approvals that trigger consultation with the Secretary of State (i.e. contrary to the development plan);
- Where the heads of terms of a S106 are disputed; or
- Applications made by the council, councillors and staff.

¹ Major Applications – For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Chelmsford City Council – Average of two items per Committee

This Committee makes decisions on about 3% of the planning applications received by the council. All other applications are decided by the Director of Sustainable Communities, under delegated powers.

(Chelmsford City Council website)

Triggers for items to go to committee:

- Member call in; or
- If the decision is contrary to a previous refusal by Members; or
- Any approvals that trigger consultation with the Secretary of State (i.e. contrary to the development plan); or
- Council schemes that have been objected to; or
- any decision that may result in compensation.

Redbridge Borough Council – Average of two items per Committee

Triggers for items to go to Committee:

- Member call in, although the Member has to physically attend the Committee meeting otherwise it is dealt with as a delegated matter; or
- Where the decision is contrary to three neighbour representations but only where the Head of Planning and the Chairman agree it should go; or
- Where there is conflict with the Conservation Advisory Panel; or
- Applications submitted by Members or by/on behalf of a Political Party; or
- TPOs with objections.

It is interesting to note that the Member who calls an application to committee has to physically attend the committee otherwise the matter will be pulled from the agenda.

Waltham Forest Borough Council – Average of two items per Committee

Triggers for items to go to Committee:

- Applications submitted by Member or officers; or
- Call in by Member, but only if agreed by Head of Planning and the Chairman; or
- Schemes of over 150 residential units; or
- Developments over 30m in height; or
- Any approval of inappropriate development in the Green Belt; or
- Commercial development of 15,000 sq. m. or above; or
- Council owned development or where the Council are a financial beneficiary; or
- Approvals that have 5 objections or more if agreed by the Head of Planning and the Chairman; or
- or where the Head of Planning and Chairman agree it should go.

Brentwood Borough Council – Average of three items per Committee

Triggers for items to go to Committee:

- Any approvals that trigger consultation with the Secretary of State (i.e. contrary to the development plan); or
- Applications submitted by Member or officers; or
- Call in by Member, but only if agreed by Head of Planning and the Chairman or Vice-Chairman.

Appendix 2

However, it should be noted that an item is withdrawn from the agenda if the Member who called the item in subsequently declares a pecuniary interest.

Harlow Council – Average of three items per Committee

Triggers for items to go to Committee:

- Approvals with two or more objections, however comments are subject to strict timescale and this is only triggered when the objections are not resolved by negotiation or conditions;
or
- Member call ins; or
- Major applications which officers and the Chairman consider need to go; or
- The Councils own applications, except minor applications with no objection; or
- Applications submitted by Member or officers.

Uttlesford District Council – Average of seven items per Committee

This authority has the highest number of items that go to Committee. Their triggers for items to go to Committee are summarised as follows:

- If the decision is contrary to conditions imposed by Committee within 10 years; or
- Member call ins; or
- Any approvals that trigger consultation with the Secretary of State (i.e. contrary to the development plan; or
- Approval of major applications; or
- The Councils own applications; or
- Applications submitted by Members or officers; or
- where the Head of Planning decides it should go.