

# **Appendix 1**

## **Full Member Workshop questions and feedback summary**

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### **Question 1. What are the benefits of reducing the number of Planning Committees to either 2 or 1?**

The general consensus was that two Planning Committee meetings would be the preference.

Suggestion that there is a break clause after 12 months.

If each committee meets every three weeks then this would fit with the Government timescales.

This would enable meetings to be more streamlined and would enable a legal representative to be at each committee.

Some members raised concerns that this would give more power to officers and less to Members and may put additional pressure on the planning department.

### **Question 2. The proposal is to reduce the number of Members sitting on each Committee to 9. Are there any caveats that Members feel would be relevant to implementing this?**

Large consensus that 9 would be sufficient, but certainly no less than this. Some Councillors suggested 11 or 12 would be preferable.

Only have two committees would help with substitutions.

Suggestion that the members should be drawn from a pool of 18, including any substitutes.

Quora should be 7 members.

Important that Ward Members are able to speak at Committee and should not be limited to 3 minutes or just a single ward member.

General consensus that Ward Members should not be able to vote on applications in their ward.

Suggestion that dual-hatted Members should not sit on Planning Committees.

Suggestion that the Chairman of the Planning Committee should have the casting vote, however should not be included in the general vote until this point.

### **Question 3. PAS recommend that the Committees are organised on the basis of agenda management rather than locality. What are the benefits of this Committee Structure?**

General agreement with this. Helps with substitutions.

Suggestion that the members for a committee should be drawn from a pool of 18 each time. That there is a pool of 3 or 4 chairman that can be called upon, and that the vice-chairman is decided on the night.

Some Members felt that the two committees should be geographical with the District being split to accommodate this.

**Question 4. It has been agreed by Cabinet that consideration be given that any reference to Council must be by a majority vote. Do you have a view on this?**

General consensus was that the minority reference should be removed.

Suggestion that if a Planning Committee cannot reach a determination then the application could be referred to the alternative Planning Committee.

Opinion was expressed that no applications should be referred to Full Council.

Suggestion from some Members that the minority reference is kept but the number increased. However, if only 9 Members sit on a Planning Committee then any increase above 4 would result in a majority reference.

**Question 5. Officers have recommended changes to the delegated agreement to ensure that only items that require scrutiny in public are considered by the committee. What are your views on these proposals and please explain your rationale?**

Largely in agreement with the proposed changes.

Members felt that it needs clearer definition of 'public interest' for Member call ins.

Point 4 needs to be strengthened as 'material planning reasons'.

Point 5 – Members who call in an application should attend and speak.

Should be Portfolio Holder with agreement from Head of Planning/Chairman for other applications to be determined at committee.

Need to be careful with regards to retrospective applications and amendments to approved schemes (i.e. where affordable housing is being reduced).

Need to ensure that there is more proactive engagement with and from Ward Members.

Discussion around whether uncontentious majors (i.e. with no objections) would need to go, or whether all majors just be determined at committee.

Some Members felt that householder applications should not be excluded from going to Committee, and also that all of the Councils own applications should be determined at Committee.

One of the members felt that as part of this Councillors should have more oversight of officer delegated decisions.

**Other Matters**

It was clear from the feedback received that Members appreciate that there is value in the local knowledge that Ward Councillors bring.

It was agreed that any Members sitting on Planning Committee should be adequately trained and that this needs to be compulsory. However, it was also recognized that presenting officers would benefit from presentation training.

There was a general consensus that a legal representative should be in attendance at Planning Committees.

It was largely agreed that it would be beneficial if site visits were organized and undertaken on all planning application sites being determined at committee prior to the applications being heard. It was certainly agreed that site visits should not be requested at committee unless there is very good reason to do so.

Some discussion took place around how the members would be chosen (pro-rata?). Also around what would happen when a new Members are voted in (further training?).