



REPORT FOR INFORMATION

Item No:- PC22/089

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| Committee:- | Planning Committee |
| Date:- | 5 th April 2023 |
| Author:- | Martin Hammond, Clerk |
| Report Title:- | Changes to Delegation Scheme and Committee structures, by NNC |
| Wards Affected:- | All |

1. Purpose of Report

To advise members of changes NNC are making to their planning consultation and determination arrangements.

2. Recommendations

That the report be noted

3. Information

- 3.1. At previous meetings, reference has been made to the review being undertaken within NNC about how they consult on and determine planning applications. A consultation event with Town and Parish Councils was held on 2nd March to set out what NNC are aiming to do.
- 3.2. Their review followed a peer review carried out on the NNC planning service by the Planning Advisory Service which pointed out, inter alia, that NNC's practices were out of kilter with the norm across the country and that this was hindering its performance and effectiveness. In particular, there were too many area planning committees, with insufficient business for them each to conduct. Secondly, too many planning applications were being sent to committee because of a parish council objection, but that objection was not being upheld especially on small applications.
- 3.3. At present, if a town or parish objects to an application, then it is automatically sent to committee for determination. This referral also happens if there are ten or more objections from non statutory consultees. There was a view that some parish councils had been less than rigorous in setting out sound planning reasons for their objections. NNC carried out benchmarking work with similar councils which showed that they were the only large authority to allow parish councils their current "veto" over applications being determined at case officer level.

3.4. It is therefore proposed to reduce the number of area planning committees from four to two, (with a north south dividing line, so that Kettering's applications go to the north planning committee which also includes Corby, Thrapston and Oundle.

3.5. It is secondly proposed that Town and Parish Councils' objections will only trigger an automatic referral to committee when it deals with a major application i.e.

- Mineral extraction or waste development
- Residential development of between 10 or more dwellings or on a site area of 0.5 ha or more and the number of dwellings is unknown
- Development of floorspace of 1,000 sq. m or more
- Development on sites over 1 ha or more
- Change of use over 1,000 sq. or more

This change applies to all statutory consultees, not just Town and Parish Councils.

3.6. For all other applications, an automatic referral to committee when the case officer is not intending to take an application there, will require 10 or more objections from non statutory consultees or a call in by at least one NNC ward councillor. This suggests that the Town Council, where it feels strongly about a minor application being unacceptable, should lobby an NNC councillor to call it in, although sometimes there will be very limited time in which to do that, as often this committee is only seeing applications a few days before the consultation deadline. This is not to say that we can't continue to express our views and get changes made to applications and there have been plenty of applications where the case officer agreed with our views and was able to secure changes or issue a refusal without going to committee.

3.7. Where a parish council has triggered for a major application to go to committee, there will be "Strong encouragement" for the parish council to attend to set out their arguments for refusal.

4. Consultation and Engagement

NNC have engaged with parish councils on their proposals

5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

None directly.

6. Climate Change Implications

None directly

7. Other Policy Implications

This change makes it a more involved process to represent the town.

Background Papers

Presentation by NNC to event on 2nd March 2023

