

Planning and City Development Committee: 7 November

Item 4: Update on the Planning Review

The Committee received a report from the Director of Place Shaping and Town Planning providing an update on the Planning Review programme of work to deliver improvements to the processes and practices of the planning service to address the findings of the review carried out by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), which informed the recommendations that made to Cabinet on 25 October 2018, and which the Cabinet resolved to endorse. The progress on the implementation of the Planning Review programme was previously reported to the Planning and City Development Committee on 20 June 2019. These included: -

- Review of Public Speaking at Planning Applications Sub-Committees

Members welcomed the findings following the review of public speaking at the Planning Applications Sub-Committees and noted that the feedback provided were largely positive and that speakers understood the procedures and process. The Sub-Committee was advised that a visible clock which enable speakers to gauge the time remaining to speak was to be introduced. Members were informed that the speaking procedure rules would be amended to allow previous speakers to be given priority to address the Sub-Committees on Applications that had previously been deferred.

Members agreed that all the Sub-Committees should have two speaking slots for both Objectors and Supporters. This is to ensure that interested persons are given the full allocated time to address the Sub-Committee and reduce occurrences where a single 'speakers' slot was shared between two or more speakers. Members noted that speakers who supported an Application addressed the Sub-Committee first and commented whether this should be amended to allow objectors to be the first speaker.

- Live Streaming at Sub-Committees

The live streaming of the Planning Applications Sub-Committees will start in February 2020. The requisite equipment for streaming meetings has been installed in the Committee's Rooms at 64 Victoria Street. Members commented that the live streaming of meeting may affect the number of requests to make verbal representation at the Sub-Committees and requested that this be reviewed and reported back at the next Committee.

- Pre-Application Community And Ward Member Engagement

Members noted that the Pre-Application Community And Ward Member Engagement schemes was still in the preliminary stages and urged that the process is made informal. The Sub-Committee noted that the forums would be multi-disciplinary and would comprise of residents, officers and councillors. These bodies would also provide better opportunities for lobbying and ensure that all Ward Councillors are involved in the early stages of the planning applications and allow interested parties to influence decisions. The Forum will provide a mechanism which enable developers to test the viability of their application before entering the formal planning

statutory process.

The proposed scheme would encourage early engagement from planning developers and help to formalise this process. Members commented that at the Sub-Committee they had been disclosures that developers had not engaged with interested parties. The Committee noted that developers may wish to engage with stakeholders independently and that a 'hybrid system' would be in operation.

Resolved:

1. That the recommendations of the 6-month review of public speaking and the ongoing work on Planning Review programme to implement measures pursuant to the recommendations endorsed by Cabinet in 2018 to make the planning service more proactive, transparent and focused on the delivery of shared strategic and corporate objectives be agreed.
2. That Public speaking be permitted on all previously deferred applications with previous speakers who have addressed the Sub-Committee on the same application be given priority, prior to speaking slots being offered to new speakers.
3. That Neighbourhood Forums be included with Amenity Societies as bodies that may receive a separate public speaking 'slot' on each item.
4. That a timer visibly displaying the remaining time for public speakers be provided to assist those addressing the Sub-Committee.
5. That there be two speaking slots for both Objectors and Supporters on all Planning Applications Sub-Committees.
6. That the amendments to the Speakers Protocol be implemented from January 2020.