



**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE
MEETING
HELD AT 2:00PM, ON
TUESDAY, 12 MAY 2020
ZOOM VIRTUAL CONFERENCE**

Committee Members Present: Harper (Chairman), Casey (Vice Chairman), Rush, Brown, Hiller, Warren, Hussain, Amjad Iqbal, Jones, Hogg and Bond.

Officers Present: Nick Harding, Head of Planning, Peterborough and Fenland
Dan Kalley, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Stephen Turnbull, Planning Solicitor

Others Present:

50. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

52. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 FEBRUARY 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2020 were agreed as true and accurate record.

**53. PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE TEMPORARY
DECISION-MAKING ARRANGEMENTS DURING COVID19 RESTRICTIVE PERIOD**

The Head of Planning introduced the item and explained that, due to the restrictions currently in place, it was necessary to look at how planning decisions could be made on items that would normally be presented to the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee. Different authorities had responded in different ways, with some authorities continuing with meetings on a virtual basis whilst others had adjusted the delegations to officers.

The proposed scheme related to applications usually presented to the Committee and suggested that applications were initially considered by the Chair and Group Representatives as to their suitability for the decision to be delegated to officers. Should feedback suggest a preference for the application to go before committee in the public interest, a normal planning meeting would be held virtually. The only change to the current meeting format would be to ask speakers to submit a written text in advance which would be distributed to all Committee Members as a safeguard should the speaker lose access to the meeting and not be reconnected.

The Planning and Environmental Protection Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Local Ward Members had the opportunity to comment or call in all planning applications at the initial consultation stage and any comments made would be included in the report to the Chairman and Group Leaders in the normal way. The views of the Ward Members would enable the Chairman and Group Representatives in providing feedback.
- The opinions of the Chairman and Group Representative would be reported to the Head of Planning who would consider all comments before deciding whether to determine the decision or refer to the Planning and Environmental Protection Committee. An application which had caused strong feedback would be referred to the Committee.
- Officers and Members considered that it would be difficult to propose a maximum number of applications to be considered at one meeting as this would depend on the scale and complexity of each application and would be a more appropriate consideration when structuring meetings.
- Advice regarding the continuing site visits was difficult at this stage as, due to the changing situation, any advice given may not be relevant at the time of the actual visit. Visits would be based on the government guidance in place at the time the committee agenda was being prepared with consideration given to the health and well-being of all concerned. It was currently not considered safe to carry out site visits. Future visits would be considered on a case by case basis.
- Usual transport provided for site visits could be adapted with all Members arriving to site independently and socially distance whilst on site when a visit was deemed necessary.
- The Council did not have a drone or a drone operating licence for use in planning applications. However any technologies would be looked into, whether this would involve the use of video as an alternative to a physical site visit.
- Members thanked the Democratic Services Team and Officers for working to get virtual meetings up and running and welcomed future applications to be heard via virtual committee.

RESOLVED:

The Planning Environment Protection Committee considered the report and debate by Officers and Members. The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously) that:

- The Head of Planning be given authority to determine the agenda item subject to consultation with the Committee Chairman and Opposition Group Representatives (or the substitutes for these three individuals).
- The Chairman & Opposition Group Representatives have 2 working days to respond to the consultation.
- The outcome of the consultation will either be that the head of Planning will determine the item in accordance with the officer recommendation OR that the item will be presented to a virtual meeting of the normal committee.
- The virtual committee meetings will allow for public speaking / members questions (as per normal arrangements) in the usual way and shall be broadcast to the public.

Chairman
2.00pm – 2.25pm