

2. POLICY ON TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERS DETERMINING PLANNING MATTERS (A.111/JBD)

Purpose of the report

1. Members of the Authority who are appointed to positions where they are able to make decisions on planning matters should not be debarred from doing so, but this must be balanced with public confidence in their ability to do so. This policy creates a framework which enables members to do this.

Recommendations

2. **1. That the policy on training requirements for members determining planning matters at appendix 1 be adopted with immediate effect**

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. The public expect members who determine planning applications to follow the general principles of public office but also that they are aware of matters that are relevant to planning. They are expected to bring a lay perspective to the professional advice from officers, but in order to do so they should be familiar with matters such as:
 - National legislation and planning policy at local, regional and national level
 - The context of planning, such as matters important to the community and the special qualities of the national park
 - The role of officers and members in the planning process
 - Procedures for and conduct of Authority meetings
 - The way in which our public participation arrangements work
 - The way in which members declare interests in planning matters and other Code of Conduct issues
 - The Authority's Planning Protocol including being familiar with the issues relating to predetermination and bias

Proposals

4. That the policy on training requirements for members determining planning matters at appendix 1 be adopted. A short period of preparation time is required for the Planning Service to complete preparation of a planning training pack. It is considered that in the intervening period, our existing procedures such as members access to training courses and advice from planning officers provides a good basis for ensuring they meet the required standard to participate in planning decisions.
5. It has been our policy for some time that members, especially of Planning Committee, should attend planning training and planning training courses have been provided, although it is only with the adoption of this policy that the consequences of not attending are that members cannot attend or vote. Most members have attended these courses, although there are a small number of members who have not yet attended a training course in 2009 or 2008. These members were not aware of this new policy and therefore it may seem harsh to debar them from attending Planning Committee or the Authority when Planning cases are decided for the remainder of this year. It is suggested that a 3rd training session be identified before the end of March 2010 for those members who have not so far attended a training course in the last 2 years and that this policy will come into effect from that date.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

6. **Financial:** Planning training will be provided within the existing Planning Service budget
7. **Risk Management:** The policy should be implemented in a way that balances the credibility of the Authority's decision-making procedures with the requirement to demonstrate that members have sufficient understanding of planning matters to carry out their role.
8. **Sustainability:** No implications
9. **Background papers** (not previously published)

None

Appendices

None

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Jim Dixon, Chief Executive, 26 November 2009