

Policy on Training Requirements for Members Determining Planning Matters with effect 1 April 2010

Background

The Authority's decision making process must be, and be seen to be, of the highest standard. It is important that the public has confidence in all aspects of the Authority's work and especially all aspects of the planning system. Members have an important role in making decisions on non delegated cases. This policy relates to any meeting where planning applications and related matters are decided, which is usually the Planning Committee and sometimes the Authority meeting when matters are referred to it.

Members come to the Authority from a variety of backgrounds and with a variety of experience of the planning system. 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 must be familiar with matters such as:

- National legislation and planning policy at local, regional and national level
- The application of National Park Authority planning policy in the decision making process
- The context of planning in the National Park and its communities
- The nature of material planning considerations and an appreciation of the matters which planning decisions should seek to affect
- Planning application, enforcement and development plan processes
- The role of officers and members in the planning process
- Procedures for and conduct of the Authority's meetings
- The way in which our public participation arrangements work
- The application of the Members' Code of Conduct to decision making on planning matters including declaration of interests
- Guidance on other personal conduct expectations of Members
- The Authority's Planning Protocol including being familiar with the issues relating to predetermination and bias

Members of the Authority who are appointed to positions where they are expected 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. It forms part of the Authority's strategy on Member Learning and Development which also provides for development opportunities relevant to other areas of the Authority's work and Members' individual needs through personal development planning.

Policy

1. Planning Induction

All Members will go through two parts of an essential planning induction and:

- a) Receive, as soon as they are appointed to the Authority, a learning package that provides essential information related to their role on planning matters. This pack will include an assessment form which seeks to ensure that Members have understood all of the material. The Head of Planning or a senior qualified officer will assess each completed form submitted. They will raise any matters directly with the Member to ensure understanding and, conversely, the Member may discuss any matter that they are unsure of with the Head of Planning or other officer.
- b) Observe a National Park Authority Planning Committee. Any questions that arise from this experience should be discussed with a suitable officer (Head of Planning or Planning Manager, Authority Solicitor, Customer and Democratic Support Manager or the Chief Executive) or the Chair of Planning Committee.

Members are required to go through this essential planning induction before they can attend or vote at a Planning Committee or the Authority meeting when planning cases are being determined.

2. Continuous Planning Development

All Members will be required to attend every year (1st April to 31st March) a National Park Authority planning training workshop. Workshops will be scheduled generally twice every year in the Member Learning and Development Programme. Attendance at such workshops will only be recorded if Members attend all of the policy, legal, procedural and probity modules that make up the event.

Members who do not attend all of this essential continuous development training will not be able to continue to attend or vote at a Planning Committee or the Authority meeting when planning cases are being determined. This will be effective from 1 April following the 12 month period when a Member should have attended a workshop and will apply until this condition is satisfied through participation at the next available workshop.

Adopted
National Park Authority Meeting
5 February 2010