

Process for Councillor ‘call-up’ (referral) to Planning Committee

Applications to be included in this process:

- All planning applications, including S.73 applications
- Listed building consent applications
- Advertisement consent applications
- Tree Work Applications for trees subject to a TPO

Applications excluded from this process:

- Lawful Development Certificate applications
- Prior approval applications
- Section 211 notifications (Trees in Conservation Areas)
- Consultations from other authorities

Process

Upon validation of relevant applications, they will be included on the weekly list of planning applications. Councillors will have 21 days from the date of publication of the weekly list to submit a committee referral.

Councillors will be requested to make one of the following responses:

- No comments
- I have concerns/see potential benefits (these must be planning considerations, directly related to the applications) and would like the application referred to committee. Please indicate planning concerns/benefits:.....
.....
- I consider that due to the specific circumstances/scale of the development it will have wide ranging planning implications and I would like the application referred to committee. Please specify the nature of the wide-ranging implications:.....
.....
- I do not wish to refer the application to Committee, but I would like the following comments/suggestions for conditions taken into consideration:
.....
.....

Where there is more than one Councillor representing a ward, all the ward councillors are able to comment.

Response to be sent via email directly to the case officer and copied to PlanningEnquiries@guildford.gov.uk to ensure that it is recorded on the file and not missed due to officer absence. The request will be detailed in the officer's report.

Where comments are raised that are NOT material planning considerations the case officer will advise the Councillor of this before drafting the report.

Determination/referral to Committee

The referral of the application MUST have regard to the Councillor(s) response and the following scenarios may occur:

- Where "No comments" are specified; or where no councillor response is received, the application will proceed under delegated powers. No further councillor contact required.
- Where a Councillor has made a comment the case officer will include it in the delegated report and notify the Councillor.
- Where the Councillor response is a request to refer to Committee. Their request will be referred to in the committee report. Should the application be amended, the officer will notify the Councillor to see whether their request stands.

All requests for referral to Planning Committee will be subject to ratification by the Chairman of the Planning Committee and Executive Head of Service (or Strategic Director). The draft agenda will be shared with the Chairman who can comment at that point on any of the Member referrals.

Note – these referral measures do NOT affect the automatic thresholds for Committee referrals i.e. number of representation letters received.

Reporting

Management information should be produced to facilitate reviews of the process. Subject to system constraints, the following information should be produced every 12 months and should include a comparison with the previous 12 months:

- Number of applications decided in the period
- Number and percentage of applications referred to the committee
- Number and percentage of referrals overturned by the committee
- Number and percentage of overturns upheld at appeal

Implementation

The new process will require changes to functionality of the current planning IT system. However, the new process will be implemented as soon as possible

Reviewing

A review of this process shall be carried out after the first 12 months of operation following its adoption, or sooner if sufficient cause is identified by the Executive Head of Service following consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee. Any such review should seek views from officers and Councillors over the operation of this process. It should also look at the management information and compare with the previous system.

It is intended that this should offer a flexible framework and be adaptable. If issues arise which do not fundamentally alter the concept, then these operational changes should be put in place to allow for efficient working.

Longer term reviews of delegated processes should be undertaken at least every 24 months, led by the Executive Head of Service, in consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Committee. Officers should also seek the views of members during such a review.