

# Minutes of a meeting of the **Planning Committee** held at the **New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate** on **Wednesday, 7 June 2023** at **7.30 pm**.

**Present:** Councillors; S. Parnall (Chair), M. S. Blacker (Vice-Chair), J. S. Bray, P. Chandler, Z. Cooper, P. Harp, K. Fairhurst, S. A. Kulka, S. McKenna, S. Parnall, K. Sachdeva, C. Stevens, Thorne, D. Torra, J. Baker (Substitute) and Dwight (Substitute)

## **1 Election of Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Parnall; having been proposed by Councillor Blacker, and seconded by Councillor Cooper, be elected as Chairman of the Planning Committee for the 2023-24 municipal year.

## **2 Election of Vice-Chairman**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Blacker; having been proposed by Councillor Parnall, and seconded by Councillor Cooper, be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee for the 2023-24 municipal year.

## **3 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 April 2023 be approved as a correct record.

## **4 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Hudson and Tary, Councillors Dwight and Baker attended as their respective substitutes.

## **5 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **6 Development Management Quarter 4 2022-23 Performance**

The Head of Planning explained that the table in the report showed quarter 4 performance as well as the end of year data. Performance indicators for major applications and non-major applications were set by the Government.

In respect of major applications that were determined in the targeted timeframe for quarter 4, 83% were determined within this timeframe and overall for the year this was 90%, against a target of 60%. For non-major applications in quarter 4, 82% were determined within this timeframe and overall for the year this was 82% against a target of 70%.



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Appeals were assessed on the quality of decision making. There had been 5 major appeals and 4 of these were dismissed, meeting the statutory target. 76% of non-major appeals were dismissed and this met the target. It was noted that 3 other Surrey authorities had been rated as poor performers.

In respect of enforcement, 483 breaches had been reported in 2022/23 and the number had been increasing year on year with possible reasons for the increase explained. These breaches had been managed well by the Enforcement Team.

The number of general planning applications received in 2022/23 had reduced slightly from the previous year. In March the number of days to register a planning application had increased to 10.8 and this was due to staff shortages. However, this had decreased more recently to 6.8 days. It was noted that a couple of Planning Officers had left the team, however a Planning Technician had been recruited and the Team believed in "growing their own" and the recruitment process would continue where required.

It was stated that the Government were looking to increase planning fees in the summer.

The Head of Planning **AGREED** to send information relating appeals and certificates of lawfulness.

In respect of recruitment, it was explained that recruiting experienced Planning Officers was difficult, this was why the department were committed to training and developing officers and those at the beginning of their careers at the Council were doing well.

With regards enforcement and the number of breaches, it was difficult to say whether more breaches were taking place or if there was just more reporting. It would not be feasible for the department to send officers to every build to ensure that they were compliant with their planning consent.

It was noted that generally householder applications were not considered at Committee. The Constitution remained static and therefore the reasons applications were considered at Committee remained the same.

It was noted that the average number of days to reach a decision was 98. This had been skewed by 2 applications which took a couple of years to determine due to legal agreements needing to be sought.

The Committee thanked the Planning Team for their continued work and the report was **NOTED**.

#### **7 Any other urgent business**

It was **AGREED** that the borough tour would take place on Saturday 24 June 2023.

Following consultation with the Committee it was **AGREED** that the Planning Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday 19 July 2023 would be rescheduled and take place on Tuesday 25 July 2023.

The meeting finished at 7.56 pm