

MEETING:	GENERAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	11 FEBRUARY 2013
TITLE OF REPORT:	PLANNING SYSTEM REVIEW – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL AND THE OPERATION OF THE CONSTITUTION - UPDATE
REPORT BY:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENT & CULTURAL SERVICES

1. Classification

Open

2. Key Decision

This is not a key decision

3. Wards Affected

County-wide

4. Purpose

To consider a progress report on the Executive's response to the scrutiny planning system review – development control and the operation of the Constitution.

5. Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) the report be noted, subject to any comments the Committee wishes to make; and**
- (b) the Committee considers the content and frequency of any further progress reports it wishes to receive.**

6. Key Points Summary

- The Constitution is subject to amendment
- Direct links from website to planning applications
- Ward Member briefings

- Planning Officer and Member Training

7. Alternative Options

- 7.1 None

8. Reasons for Recommendations

- 8.1 The executive response was brought to Overview & Scrutiny in July 2012 and it was agreed that an updated position would be brought back to the Committee six months after the initial report.

9. Introduction and Background

- 9.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Task and Finish Group to undertake a Planning System Review- 'Development Control and the Operation of the Constitution' the review was undertaken last year and the sixteen recommendations were forwarded to the Council's Executive. Fifteen of the recommendations were approved.
- 9.2 The Committee noted the Executive's response to the findings of the reviews and agreed that a further report on progress in response to the Review be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.
- 9.3 Appendix 1 to the report identifies the progress made together with proposed further actions.

10. Key Considerations

- 10.1 Progress has been made on the working relationship between members and officers with greater emphasis on briefings particularly relating to major planning applications. In addition multi member wards have received equality of service and where appropriate member briefings are held to ensure continuity. The Council website has been enhanced with now a direct link to planning applications and enhanced self-service.
- 10.2 Amendments to the Constitution are to be progressed in the near future and forthcoming member training events will encompass further enhanced training.

11. Community Impact

- 11.1 The findings and recommendations from the review are in accordance with the Herefordshire Community Strategy in that it: relates to the themes of promoting self-reliant local communities and the long term outcome of enhanced local democracy and community engagement and the theme of commissioning the right services and the long term outcome of streamlined working practices.

12. Equality and Human Rights

- 12.1 The resultant changes to the Constitution which formed part of the recommendations will be assessed against the Equality Analysis and be reported to Cabinet, Audit and Governance Committee and Council.

13. Financial Implications

13.1 None as a result of this report.

14. Legal Implications

14.1 The Constitution reflects the statutory requirements and guidance, the proposed changes to the Constitution are subject to legal scrutiny.

15. Risk Management

15.1 There are no risk management issues other than the need to ensure legal compliance.

16. Consultees

16.1 As part of this review input has been received from Mike Willmont Head of Neighbourhood Planning and Paul James Demographic Services Officer.

17. Appendices

17.1 Response to Task and Finish Group on Planning Service Review.

18. Background Papers

18.1 Task and Finish Group Report - Planning System Review - Development Control and the Operation of the Constitution 23 April 2013.