

MEETING:	COUNCIL
MEETING DATE:	18 JULY 2014
TITLE OF REPORT:	ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE
REPORT BY:	PLANNING COMMITTEE

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To inform Council of the work undertaken by the Planning Committee from March 2013 to May 2014.

Recommendation(s)

THAT: the report be noted.

Alternative Options

- 1 There are no alternative options as the report is for information.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 To comply with the requirement in the council's constitution that Council will receive annual reports from committees.

Key Considerations

- 3 This report summarises the work of the Planning Committee between the annual Council meetings held on 24 May 2013 and 23 May 2014.
- 4 The committee has continued to operate on a three week cycle throughout the year.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
T Brown, Democratic Services Officer, on Tel (01432) 260239

Sixteen meetings were held during the reporting period

Planning Applications

- 5 During the year the committee approved a number of large applications:
- Land at Kingstone - Erection of 150 dwellings (mix of 1-5 bed), new employment (commercial and live work units), community building, 1.4 hectares of public open space, community orchards and allotments, play areas, cycle and footpaths, bus stop and pedestrian crossing.
 - Leominster infant and junior schools - Development of a new primary school on three levels, located on an existing playing field followed by the demolition of the existing infants and junior schools.
 - Land at Merton Meadow, Edgar Street, Hereford: Redevelopment of site, including demolition works to provide residential development comprising up to 192 units including a 60 bed extra care home and ancillary uses, new public realm and landscaping.
 - The Oval Hereford: Proposed demolition and regeneration to include 259 new build flats/houses, external refurbishment works to the existing flats above the Oval shops, landscaping and associated works. The committee also approved the construction of new Community Hub.
 - Former Whitecross High School, Baggally Street, Hereford: Development for 65 new dwellings with public open space & associated infrastructure.
- 6 The committee also refused an application for a Class A 1 food store, petrol filling station and associated parking and servicing facilities, resizing and refurbishment of two Class B units and associated highway works in Southern Avenue Leominster; and an application for the part demolition of existing buildings and structures and mixed use development of the site to provide a retail store, petrol filling station, residential and associated works at Mill Street, Leominster.
- 7 The committee dealt with the applications referred to it at its meetings from 15 May 2013 to 14 May 2014 as follows (the comparative totals for the full preceding year 16 May 2012 to May 2013 are included in brackets):
- approved as recommended – 53 (44)
 - approved contrary to recommendation – 5 (11)
 - refused as recommended – 5 (4)
 - refused contrary to recommendation – 7 (13)

Planning Policy

- 8 The National Planning Policy Framework was published by the Government on 27 March 2012 replacing previous national planning policy and guidance.
- 9 One of the major policy issues the committee has had to address in determining applications is that the NPPF provides that authorities allocate sufficient housing land

to meet 5 years worth of their requirement with an additional 5% buffer. Where the existence of a five year land supply of deliverable housing sites cannot be demonstrated, there must be a presumption in favour of granting planning permission for new housing unless the development can be shown to cause demonstrable harm to other factors that outweigh the need for new housing.

- 10 The Inspector at the Public Inquiry in November 2013 for Home Farm, Belmont judged that on the basis of the council's housing requirement it does not have a five year supply, is significantly short of being able to do so, and persistent under-delivery over the last 5 years would render the authority liable to provide a 20% buffer.
- 11 A briefing note was sent to all members in May 2014 on work to address the shortfall.
- 12 The council is not alone amongst local authorities in finding the application of this part of the NPPF testing, i.e. not currently benefitting from a five year housing land supply. It has made representations along with other authorities to the Government, to date without success.

Planning Training

- 13 An in-house session designed specifically for new members joining the committee, but attended by the majority of committee members, was held on 4 December 2013. This was well attended and also explained the new structures within Planning Services.
- 14 An externally led session open to all councillors entitled 'Making Decisions On Planning Applications – The Presumption In Favour Of Sustainable Development' was held on 22 April 2014. This particularly focussed on the five year housing land supply test frequently faced by the committee.

Appeals

- 15 The committee has received information reports in respect of the determination of 63 planning appeals for the period between the annual Council meetings on 24 May 2013 and 23 May 2014. Of these 32 appeals were dismissed, 25 were allowed and 6 were withdrawn.
- 16 Applications for costs in respect of the appeals were awarded to the appellant on 6 occasions (including partial awards) and refused on 5 occasions. No costs were awarded to the council.
- 17 The external cost for defending appeal payments of total costs against the council for the last financial year 2013/14 has been calculated at £56,918.20.

Planning Enforcement

- 18 In December 2013, the planning enforcement section transferred to Environmental Health & Trading Standards with the aim of better joined up working as well as improved economies of scale by utilising the environmental protection enforcement officers here.
- 19 The planning enforcement officers received 372 requests for service and served 53 statutory notices. This equates to 14% of all cases resulting in formal action.

Background Papers

- None identified.