

Meeting:	Development Control Committee
Date:	26 July 2006
Subject:	Management of the Development Control Committee Agenda
Responsible Officer:	Andy Parsons, Head of Planning
Contact Officer:	Andy Parsons
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Marilyn Ashton
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Public

Section 1: Summary

This report proposes the re-organisation of the business of the Development Control Committee and asks Members to agree to a list of additional dates.

Decision Required

1. To agree to the split between “major” and “minor” applications.
2. To agree the list of proposed additional meetings.
3. To agree and finish each meeting at 10.30pm, or at the completion of the particular item before the Committee.

Reason for report

To start to address the problem of over-long meetings.
To make more effective use of Committee time.
To assist the public attending DC meetings by shortening agendas and making meetings easier to follow.

Benefits

- An intended finish of all meetings before 10.30 pm.
- Less time waiting to reach items for members of the public.
- Better opportunity for members of the public to make representations on major applications.

Cost of Proposals

The same number of applications will have to be determined, but spread over a greater number of meetings.

Some additional cost in holding the extra meetings, by reason of the attendance of Planning, technical and Legal staff at briefings and Committee meetings. These costs will be met from and contained to existing departmental budgets.

Risks

More time available might lead to longer time spent in considering each application and as a result no benefits achieved.

Implications if recommendations rejected

Meetings continue to go on for unreasonable length of time, with health and safety issues relating to attendance beyond statutory limits on working hours.

Unfair on public, officers and Members.

Section 2: Report

- 2.1 At Appendix 1 is a list of all Development Control Committee meetings in the last 4 years. This shows a consistent failure to complete the meeting within 3 hours and the average time was 4 hours. Only on 7 out of 52 meetings was a finish before 10.00pm achieved. On 14 occasions the meeting went on after midnight. The use of the guillotine is not appropriate when dealing with planning applications where members need to be able to demonstrate the proper consideration has been afforded to the individual cases.
- 2.2 There are basically three options to tackle this
- more meetings
 - less items of business ie, increased delegation to officers (minor changes in delegation arrangements in recent years have failed to have any noticeable impact on the length of meetings, but this can be reviewed again)
 - less time spent on each item
- 2.3 The proposal in this report only raises the first of these options. The third option is solely and directly within Member's control.
- 2.4 The Council is under continuing pressure from Government to meet targets for determining applications. This takes the form of both potential intervention in the event of poor performance and the reward through Planning Delivery Grant for good performance. Deferment of an item because of lack of time worsens our statistics. This has significant consequences for PDG funding, and risk of returning to Planning Standards Authority status for any or all of the major, minor and other categories of planning applications.
- 2.5 Possible dates for additional meetings are set out below.

Wednesday 28 June 2006
Wednesday 26 July 2006
Wednesday 6 September 2006
TUESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2006
Wednesday 4 October 2006
TUESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2006
Wednesday 8 November 2006
THURSDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2006
Wednesday 6 December 2006
TUESDAY 19 DECEMBER 2006
Wednesday 10 January 2007
THURSDAY 25 JANUARY 2007
Wednesday 7 February 2007
TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2007
Wednesday 14 March 2007
TUESDAY 29 MARCH 2007
Wednesday 18 April 2007

Note: additional meetings are shown in upper case.

It would no doubt be helpful to everyone to fix these dates as quickly as possible.

2.6 Alternative meetings would consider “major” and “minor” matters.

The definition of a major application is as set out in circular 15/92, namely:

Including: “residential developments (whether by conversion or new build), involving the creation of 10 or more units, or where the number of units is not known, those with a site area of 0.5 hectares or more; or other developments with a floorspace of 1000m² or more or with a site area of 1 hectare or more”

“Minor matters” are defined as “all those matters not being Major matters or matters already delegated for determination by officers”.

If there are no major applications or other matters to be dealt with, that meeting will be cancelled.

Options Considered

Other options are included at paragraph 2.2. These are not alternatives.

Consultation

None.

Financial Implications

The same number of applications will have to be determined, but spread over a greater number of meetings.

Some additional cost in holding the extra meetings, by reason of the attendance of Planning, technical and Legal staff at briefings and Committee meetings. These costs will be met from and contained to existing departmental budgets.

Legal Implications

The Council as local planning authority is directed to determine applications for planning permission and certain other applications within specified statutory time limits. Failure to do so triggers a statutory entitlement to appeal against that non-determination. In certain circumstances, where that failure is considered unreasonable and that unreasonable conduct gives rise to costs that would not otherwise have been incurred it would be open an any such appeal for an award of costs to be made against the Council.

Equalities Impact

More time for consideration for applications should ensure a more equitable approach.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

Increased number of Committees would allow more time for consideration (particularly on Major scheme) and therefore should have a positive impact.

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

Background Documents: Circular 15/92

Appendix

Development Control Committee – Period 2002-2006

APPENDIX

Development Control Committee Period 2002-2006

TOTAL: 54 meetings
TOTAL DURATION:
215 hours 11 minutes

Date of meeting	Start	Finish	Duration
28 June 2006	19:30	24:00	04:30
7 June 2006	19:30	22:40	03:20
11 April 2006	19:30	23:50	04:20
15 March 2006	19:30	01:48	06:18
8 February 2006	19:30	23:56	04:26
11 January 2006	19:30	22:37	03:07
19 December 2005	19:30	21:16	01:46
7 December 2005	19:30	23:08	03:38
16 November 2005	19:30	23:40	04:10
9 November 2005	19:30	02:03	06:33
11 October 2005	19:30	23:30	04:00
7 September 2005	19:42	00:04	04:22
27 July 2006	19:30	23:59	04:29
6 July 2005	19:30	22:02	02:32
15 June 2005	19:30	23:23	03:53
17 May 2005	19:30	23:37	04:07
20 April 2005	19:30	23:42	04:12
15 March 2005	19:30	23:50	04:20
9 February 2005	19:30	23:38	04:08
11 January 2005	19:30	00:25	04:55
8 December 2004	19:30	00:14	04:44
9 November 2004	19:30	23:40	04:10
12 October 2004	19:30	23:20	03:50
7 September 2004	19:30	23:55	04:25
28 July 2004	19:30	23:30	04:00
7 July 2004	19:30	21:58	02:28
15 June 2004	19:30	22:48	03:18
18 May 2004	19:30	23:08	03:38
18 May 2004	18:30	19:17	00:47
21 April 2004	19:30	00:23	04:53
17 March 2004	19:30	00:35	05:05
11 February 2004	19:30	22:24	02:54
14 January 2004	19:30	23:40	04:10
10 December 2003	19:30	22:34	03:04
5 November 2003	19:30	23:09	03:39
15 October 2003	19:30	00:08	04:38
10 September 2003	19:30	23:54	04:24
30 July 2003	19:30	22:45	03:15
9 July 2003	19:30	23:46	04:16
3 June 2003	19:30	23:36	04:06
29 April 2003	19:30	22:52	03:22
9 April 2003	19:30	00:54	05:24
20 March 2003	19:30	22:11	02:41
12 March 2003	19:30	23:43	04:13
12 February 2003	19:30	00:24	04:54
15 January 2003	19:30	00:30	05:00
11 December 2002	19:30	23:40	04:10
6 November 2002	19:30	21:42	02:12
9 October 2002	19:30	00:27	04:57

11 September 2002	19:30	00:10	04:40
3 September 2002	19:30	22:15	02:45
31 July 2002	19:30	00:05	04:35
26 June 2002	19:30	23:24	03:54
30 May 2002	19:30	23:04	03:34