

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 June 2020		
TITLE:	OUTCOME FOR APPLICATIONS THAT PREVIOUSLY MIGHT HAVE COME TO COMMITTEE BUT WERE DETERMINED BY OFFICERS UNDER NEW DELEGATED AUTHORITY		
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1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the outcome for those applications that, following the agreement at Policy Committee on 27 April to extend the delegated authority to the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport & Regulatory Services to determine applications and to manage “called in” applications, have now been decided by officers.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That you note the report and the decisions made.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A report was presented at Policy Committee held on 27 April to explain that Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and ‘The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020’ enables Council meetings to take place online during the current Covid-19 pandemic. The report provided revised protocols for running meetings to help manage online events and included a proposal to extend the delegated authority for making decisions on planning applications to reduce the work handled by Planning Applications Committee.
- 3.2 Policy Committee agreed that the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services delegated authority to determine planning applications and Tree Preservation Orders should be extended (see Appendix to the report) to help reduce the number of reports coming to the meeting.
- 3.3 Councillors can ask for an application that is delegated to officers to determine to be considered by Planning Applications Committee instead - known as “calling in” an application. This ability remains but councillors are now requested to seek advice from the Planning Manager and Chair of Planning when considering a “call in” so that a judgement can be made on the merits of bringing the application to Committee. For example; if the application is clearly failing a number of policies and having a debate about it at committee is not going to change that it would be more efficient for the officer to be left to press on and refuse the application within the target timescale than to delay the decision by having to bring a committee report to this meeting.
- 3.4 It was agreed at Policy Committee that a schedule of those applications affected by the change in delegations be presented to each Planning Applications Committee for

information. Officers have also included in the list those applications that had been called in but then agreed by the relevant councillors could be decided by officers.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 4.1 The Planning Service contributes to the Council's strategic aims in terms of:
- Seeking to meet the 2019 Corporate Plan objectives for "Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active."
 - Seeking to meet the 2019 Corporate Plan objectives for "Providing homes for those in most need."
 - Seeking to meet the 2019 Corporate Plan objectives for "Providing infrastructure to support the economy."

5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2 The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods. As a team we work hard to reduce the amount of resources (paper and printing) we use to carry out our work so reducing the number of committee reports produced will also help.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The changes to delegations do not change the need for statutory and non-statutory consultation on all planning applications.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Where appropriate the Council must have regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, to have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 7.2 There are no direct implications arising from the proposals.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None arising from this Report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no financial implications as a result of adopting these arrangements for determining applications.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

27th May 2020 Policy Committee

Table 1 - Applications decided since 29th April 2020

Application type	Application reference number	Called in or extended delegation	Address	Ward	Proposal	Date Received	Decision Date	Decision
Outline Planning Approval	191603	Called in by Cllr R Williams	112 London Street, Reading, RG1 4SJ	Katesgrove	Demolition of existing nightclub building and construction of a 3 storey building containing 6 self-contained C3 residential flats	03/10/2019	07/05/2020	Application Refused

APPENDIX

The table below sets out those applications that the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services is currently not authorised to exercise delegated powers and how officers consider these could be changed to reduce the number of cases coming to Planning Applications Committee. Instead it would be possible to present a schedule of those applications where delegations are changed to each PAC so the decisions can be discussed if needed or simply noted.

	Pre April 2020	Proposed
Applications “called -in” by a member	Determination of applications where a member has requested that an application be referred to Planning Applications Committee for a decision within 3 weeks of the application appearing on the weekly list of planning applications.	Members to use their discretion in call-ins to support the strategic objectives of the Council in the pandemic and recovery. Members are requested to seek advice from the Planning Manager and Chair of Planning before notifying a call in to the Planning Manager instead of the case officer.
Planning Applications Committee re-referral	Where Planning Applications Committee has resolved that a matter be referred to Planning Applications Committee for a decision	No change
Serving or former councillors and employees of the Council and their close friends and relatives	Power to determine an application for planning permission, approval of reserved matters, variations of conditions, variations of legal agreements or planning obligations, advertisement consent, listed building or conservation area consent, works affecting trees covered by tree preservation order and certificates of existing or proposed lawful use or development made by serving councillors and any member of the Corporate Management Team and any person employed or engaged by Planning and Legal Services.	No change but amend the description to: <i>Applications submitted by serving councillors and some employees of the Council (those on Corporate Management Team and any person employed or engaged by Planning and Legal Services).</i>
Council developments	Power to determine an application for planning permission made by the Council alone or jointly with another person under Section 316 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 (S.I. 1992/1492) (Para 6) and the determination of applications	No change

	made by the Council for listed building or conservation area consent.	
Applications to develop land without compliance with conditions attached by Committee	Determine applications to develop land without compliance with conditions under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 where those conditions were previously attached by Committee, without first agreeing the method of determination with the Chair of Planning Applications Committee and Ward members.	Delegated and no need to agree method with Cllrs.
Departures from the Development Plan.	Any development which is considered by the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to be a departure from the provisions of the adopted development plan and where the application is recommended for approval.	No change - rarely happens
'Major' Applications.	<p>Major development, i.e.: building or engineering work; or Building or engineering work involving change of use comprising:</p> <p>(i) residential development of 10 or more dwellings or residential development on an application site of 0.5 ha or more or</p> <p>(ii) in the case of other uses (not comprising minor or other development as described above), 1,000 sq m or more of gross floorspace, or an application site of 1 ha or more.</p>	<p>No change when the recommendation is to approve.</p> <p>Delegated when the recommendation is to refuse</p>
Conservation area consent / listed building consent	Only where the proposals also require planning permission for development which is classed as "Major"	No change
Tree Preservation Orders / Trees in conservation areas	Where an objection to a Tree Preservation Order has been received or where the proposal has been submitted by or on behalf of the Council	Delegated.