

To: PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE	Subject: REVISED ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEETINGS OF THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION	
Date: 17 <sup>th</sup> August 2005	Ref:

### 1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to consider revised arrangements for meetings of the Planning and Environment Committee.

### 2. Background

At present there is an average of 6 planning meetings in the 8 week cycle, excluding the two sub committees, ie: the monthly Planning and Environment Committees, and 4 Special meetings of the Committee which are arranged on an ad hoc basis to meet needs. Until recently it has been practice that the Special meetings dealt only with planning applications which were subject of site visits and hearings, except in the recess where other business was accepted. Increasingly however there is demand, in order to meet timescales of applicants, to place applications on these agendas outwith the recess period. Special Committee dates depend on diary availability. This can result in delays due to lack of dates and uncertainty for applicants.

### 3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that, aside from the Sub Committees, there be 4 meetings of the Planning and Environment Committee in the 8 week cycle, in effect one every 2 weeks. These would be on fixed dates in the Council diary so that applications could be targeted and the applicants and objectors advised accordingly, members and officers diaries could be kept free and accommodation could be identified in advance.

3.2 It is further proposed that planning applications would be considered at all 4 meetings thereby speeding up the processing of all applications which require Committee consideration, and that 3 out of the 4 meetings would be available for site visits and hearings, with 1 out of 4 being identified as the main Planning and Environment Committee meeting to take all other business.

3.3 With regard to applications where a request is made for a site visit or hearing and the request is made in advance of the agenda being issued, it is proposed that these applications be merely noted on the index of Planning Applications for Committee determination of the request. In such circumstances in order to minimise duplication it is not

proposed to issue the relevant application report since this will be provided when the application falls to be considered at the site visit / hearing.

3.4 It is proposed that these arrangements be piloted for a twelve month period and the position be reviewed thereafter.

#### **4. Conclusions**

It is considered that if the above proposals are accepted, considerable benefits can be achieved in respect of applications being decided more quickly. There would be certainty of meeting arrangements for applicants, members and officers and therefore easier programming of work. In addition agendas would be more balanced and less paper would be used.

#### **5. Corporate Considerations**

This report has been compiled following consultation involving the Departments of Planning and Environment and Administration.

#### **6. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee approve for a twelve month period

- (i) 4 meetings of the Planning and Environment Committee in the 8 week cycle, with fixed dates.
- (ii) 1 main meeting of the Committee to take all business (except for site visits and/or hearings) and 3 meetings to deal with planning applications and site visits and/or hearings.



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(17<sup>th</sup> August 2005)

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