

**REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF AN ITEM FOR
CONSIDERATION – PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Strategic Priorities: SP5 Attractive and Inclusive City

**Corporate Priorities: CIO1: Delivering Customer Focused Services, CIO4:
Improving partnership working to deliver 'One City'**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the inclusion of an additional item in the Scrutiny Committee work programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 Protocol 1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Handbook provides a procedure for members to follow when requesting items to be considered by a Scrutiny Committee (see also the Council's Constitution Part 4 Section 5 Rules of Procedures Paragraph 9).
- 2.2 In July 2010, the Scrutiny Committee received a detailed report regarding the Planning Application Consultation Process, following a request from five members.
- 2.3 Mr. Keith Lowes, Head of Planning and Environment presented a report which outlined the council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) adopted on 22 November 2006.
- 2.4 The SCI sets out how the Council proposes to engage communities and stakeholders in not only the preparation of local development documents but also the consideration of planning applications. The SCI was prepared in the light of consultation with community groups, other organisations and stakeholders. The SCI was tested for soundness at an examination by an Independent Inspector and incorporates binding recommendations.
- 2.5 An extract from the SCI covering the principles of consultation and publicity in respect of planning applications was highlighted to the Committee and a full debate was subsequently held around the issue.

3. Item Requested

- 3.1 At the end of the municipal year 2010/2011, five members requested that consideration be given to the following item:

Public Consultation – Planning Applications

- 3.2 The request asks that the Environment and Attractive City Scrutiny Committee look into:-

‘the current delegated powers for planning application decisions, together with recommendations for potentially removing delegated powers where planning applications of obvious public interest are involved. Additionally could members receive a scrutiny report explaining why public consultation was not performed prior to the planning application “11/00127/FUL – Wind Turbine St Robert of Newminster School” being submitted as “undertaking pre-application community consultation is best practice and it is something that the Planning and Environment Service actively encourages but isn’t obligatory”’.

4. Framework for Consideration of Submissions

- 4.1 In accordance with the Council’s Constitution and with Protocol 1, the Committee may choose to respond within the following framework:

- (1) The Scrutiny Committee may determine that the item is not relevant to the functions of the Committee. In these circumstances the Committee can resolve to take no action or may refer the item to another Scrutiny Committee.
- (2) If the issue is linked to an existing work programme item (within the next two cycles) then it should be discussed as part of that item and included in any officer report.
- (3) If the issue is a new item of business within the remit of the Committee, the Scrutiny Committee may:
 - (a) Request a response in writing (with copies to all Members of the Review Committee) or
 - (b) Request a presentation to a future Scrutiny Committee meeting, or
 - (c) Request a report to a future Scrutiny Committee meeting or
 - (d) Decide that the issue raised does not merit any response beyond noting the matter or

- (e) Decide to express a view or make a recommendation, by resolving accordingly, if the Committee considers it has sufficient information to make a fully informed decision.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to consider the request and determine from the framework set out in Section 4 of this report which option to pursue.

6. Background Papers

- Sunderland City Council Constitution
- Overview and Scrutiny Handbook

Contact Officer: Helen Lancaster (0191 5611233)
Helen.lancaster@sunderland.gov.uk