



**SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CODE OF PLANNING PRACTICE**

**PLANNING CONTROL**

**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT GROUP**

**NOVEMBER 2008**

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Protocol sets out the practices and procedures that Members and Officers of Somerset County Council should follow when dealing with planning applications and related matters. The Protocol provides guidance and is intended to strengthen the trust between the County Council (as decision maker) and those who are affected by planning decisions. The Protocol covers both the pre-application arena as well as the actual determination of applications.

## 2. Basic Principles

- 2.1 The basis of the planning system is to regulate proposals for the use and development of land and balances the wider public interest against private interests.
- 2.2 Somerset County Council, as part of the two-tier local government system that exists in Somerset, is responsible for “county matter” applications, which relate to waste, minerals and its own development proposals.
- 2.3 Planning is often contentious because planning decisions affect the private interests of individuals, landowners and developers. The successful operation of the planning system relies on ensuring that Officers and Members act in a way which is not only fair, but also is clearly seen to be so. **The County Council is committed to open and transparent decision-making.** Planning decisions should be made impartially and for justifiable planning reasons.
- 2.4 The **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004** states, in Section 38(6), that all applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. It is necessary to exercise planning judgement on the issues, in some instances balancing conflicting elements, and taking account of responses to consultations with interested parties and the public dealing with those issues.
- 2.5 It is essential that decisions are made solely on proper planning grounds and are made impartially, in a clear and open manner which can be easily understood by all, and which does not give rise to public suspicion or mistrust.
- 2.6 Following the Nolan Committee report on “Standard of Conduct in Local Government”, and advice given by the Local Government Association, each Local Authority is required to adopt a code of planning practice to show how national guidance notes on conduct are to be applied locally. This document sets out the County Council’s code of planning practice to provide a clear statement of the expectation of conduct by both Members and Officers, and procedures to be followed, so that decisions are made – and can be seen to have been made – in a proper manner.
- 2.7 **Members have a duty to represent their constituents, but an overriding**

**duty to the wider community.** Whilst Regulation Committee Members may take account of the opinions of others, their decisions must not discriminate in favour of any individual, group, company or locality, nor appear to do so. Decisions should be clearly based upon policy, guidance and any relevant material planning considerations.

- 2.8 A Planning Officer is appointed as case officer to process each planning application. Their role is to advise and assist Members in the determination of planning applications by providing impartial and professional advice in a clear and objective report. They will ensure that all the necessary information for a decision to be made is provided together with an accurate analysis of the issues including the identification of the policy issues, including the relevant development plan policies and all other material considerations. All reports to Members will contain a summary and a recommendation supported by reasons. Members should take the report and recommendation made by Officers as their primary reference.
- 2.9 The Members of the County Council's Regulation Committee make the planning decisions except where applications or other matters have been delegated to the Corporate Director (Environment) or Head of Environmental Management and Regeneration, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation or a Regulation Committee resolution. Members will consider the merits of each case in a non-partisan and apolitical manner, with no prior agreement on the part of any party or group on the way in which Members will vote.
- 2.10 Somerset County Council endorses the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Code of Conduct (Appendix A), and in particular that RTPI Members shall not make or subscribe to statements or reports which are contrary to their own professional opinion. All Officers within Somerset County Council providing planning advice are expected to act in accordance with the RTPI Code whether or not they are RTPI members.
- 2.11 Members may raise with Officers any planning issues points they consider to be relevant to the merits of an application the County Council is to determine. However, Members should not otherwise seek to influence Officers regarding particular Officer recommendations.
- 2.12 Members and Officers will act in accordance with the County Council's "Protocol on Member/Officer Relations". Members and Officers will treat each other with respect at all times, and not engage in personal criticism in the course of any meeting. Any concerns about Officer conduct should be addressed to the Head of Environmental Management and Regeneration. Concerns about the conduct of Members should be addressed to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer.
- 2.13 Planning applications submitted by the County Council for its own development (known as Regulation 3 applications) will be treated in the same impartial, professional and transparent way as those submitted by private developers, both in terms of procedures and the assessment of policy,

guidance and material planning considerations.

- 2.14 Should an application be submitted by or on behalf of anyone involved in the planning process, or a member of the family of such a person, or where an Officer or Member believes they have a personal and prejudicial interest in a planning application, the person concerned will inform the Head of Environmental Management and Regeneration and will take no further part in the processing or determination of the application. Further advice on interests is contained in Section 9.

### **3. Pre-application discussions**

- 3.1 Pre-application discussions between potential applicants and a Planning Control Officer can be of considerable benefit to both parties and are encouraged.
- 3.2 Planning Control has adopted a “Pre-Application Advice Protocol”, contained in Appendix 1 of this document, which provides comprehensive guidance on this important part of the planning process. The Protocol sets out what Somerset County Council can do for applicants, and what applicants themselves need to do to make sure the process is as worthwhile as possible.
- 3.3 It must be clear however that pre-application discussions do not bind the Officer to make a particular recommendation or the County Council to make a particular decision.
- 3.4 Members of Regulation Committee need to preserve their role as impartial decision makers and generally should not give pre-application advice to applicants and/or agents regarding development proposals. Should there be occasions when Members are involved in giving pre-application advice, it should be part of a structured arrangement agreed in advance with either the Head of Environmental Management and Regeneration or the Group Manager (Environmental Management), and with a Planning Officer in attendance. A note of any meeting/discussions should be made immediately after the event and recorded on the Parish File held by Planning Control. When Members become involved in pre-application discussions, they must consider whether or not their involvement or statements are such as to indicate a personal or prejudicial interest or to create a situation in which there may be bias or predetermination and thus prevent them taking an impartial view of the application when it comes to be determined. In such a case a Member should not take part as a member of the Committee in the debate on the application and should not vote. (see Section 5 and the Code of Conduct for more guidance).
- 3.5 Members should not negotiate with applicants, for example by trying to secure an amendment to overcome an objection, and have no legal authority to commit the Council to a course of action. In the case of any such approaches by applicants or agents to Members they should refer the matter to a Planning Officer via the Planning Control Team Leader as soon as possible.

## **4. Consultation and information on planning applications**

- 4.1 The County Council must publicise all planning applications and scoping requests (relating to the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations) it receives. The type of publicity varies depending upon the nature of the development proposed and will be carried out in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (or any subsequent updates to this Order).
- 4.2 All publicity relating to planning applications will be accompanied by information on how to make representations to the County Council.
- 4.3 The Local Member will be informed of any planning applications that are to be determined by County Council as soon as practicable following the receipt of the application. The Member will be advised of the Case Officer processing the application and the intended determination date. If it is likely the matter will need to be determined by the Regulation Committee the likely date for reporting will be provided. The Planning Control website and Regulation Newsletter contain brief details of all applications received by the County Council.
- 4.4 The County Council will endeavour to determine as many applications as possible within their target time period (which is either 8 or 13 weeks depending on the type of application), unless a Planning Performance Agreement is in place which may set a different timescale for determination.
- 4.5 If amendments are submitted during the period when a valid application is being processed, in most cases, where it is possible to determine the application within its target time period, further consultation will be carried out with relevant consultees and any members of the public who have previously made representations. In some cases – for example where amendments are so significant that they constitute a fundamental change to the application – applicants/agents may be requested to consider submitting a fresh, revised application.
- 4.6 Planning applications, subsequent amendments, relevant correspondence from consultees, any letters of representation, planning decisions, conditions, reasons for refusal and any completed planning obligation will be available for public inspection at County Hall during normal office hours. Copies of certain documents will also be available for public inspection at the relevant District Council offices during normal office hours, and on the County Council website.

## **5 Lobbying and Bias or Predetermination**

- 5.1. Lobbying is a normal and legitimate part of the political process. Lobbying can be oral or by the circulation of letters or other documents. Those who may be affected by a proposal will often seek to influence the decision by an approach to their local Member or to Members of the Regulation Committee.

However, expressions of support or opposition can lead to the impartiality of a Member being called into question and may mean that the Member is unable to take part in taking a decision on the application because of the risk of bias or predetermination of the matter. Members should bear in mind that information provided by lobbyists may represent a selective and incomplete picture of the relevant considerations and in some cases misleading or incorrect information may be given. A decision on the matter should not be taken until the Member has attended the meeting and so has had access to all of the available information and has heard the officers' representations, the views of any members of the public who speak at Committee and the views of the other Committee members.

- 5.2. Members are free to listen to any point of view about a planning proposal and to provide procedural advice (for example, the right to address the Regulation Committee, or how to make representations). Members of the Committee should not express any opinion which might suggest that they are intending to vote in a particular way, or that they or the Council has reached a final decision on a planning application before it has been considered by Regulation Committee.
- 5.3. The fact that a member of the Regulation Committee is also local Member for the area of the application site does not debar the member from taking part in the decision on the application provided the member has not already made up his or her mind on the matter and does not have a personal and prejudicial interest. A Local Member may pass on the views of a particular body of local opinion to the Committee, making it clear that he/she has come to the debate with an open mind.(also see point 5.5 below).
- 5.4. A Member may voice his or her concerns publicly or express support for a particular view before the matter comes to Regulation Committee but should make it clear that he will not reach a final view until all the relevant information, evidence and arguments have been put at Regulation Committee. A member should not take part in making a decision if they have been involved in any campaign either for or against the proposal.
- 5.5. Any Member of the Regulation Committee who expresses publicly a final view whether an individual planning application should be approved or not prior to the Committee meeting at which a decision is to be taken has predetermined the matter and should not take part in the discussion or vote on the item. Decisions of the Regulation Committee may be challenged by way of Judicial Review for a number of reasons including that of bias or the appearance of bias or predetermination of the issue on the part of one or more members. It is important that the County Council is seen to be conducting its decision making transparently and impartially to reduce the risk of challenge to its decisions and the resulting uncertainty in the planning process, loss of reputation and potential expense for the Authority.
- 5.6. Copies of letters or other correspondence received by Members that are relevant to a planning application should be passed to the Head of Environmental Management and Regeneration or the Group Manager

(Environmental Management) to ensure the contents are taken into account during the processing of the application and the drafting of any report to the Regulation Committee. Copies of letters or other correspondence received prior to the Regulation Committee but after the production of the report should also be drawn to Officers attention.

- 5.7. Members should not place themselves in a position that could lead to the public thinking they are seeking preferential treatment for themselves, for friends or relatives or any firm or body with which they are personally connected.
- 5.8. Membership of a District, Parish or Town Council which has expressed a view on an application does not prevent a Regulation Committee Member taking part when it comes to be considered by the County Council as the decision making body. The Member must approach the matter afresh and if unable to do so, should not take part. Where an application comes before Regulation Committee on more than one occasion or where repeat applications are considered, Members should approach the decision-making process afresh on each occasion.
- 5.9. Members who are concerned about their position in relation to a particular application, should seek the advice of the Council's Monitoring Officer, the County Solicitor before the meeting of the Regulation Committee at which the application is to be considered.

## **6. Visual Presentations and Site Visits**

- 6.1. Presentations – The Case Officer or other Senior Officer will present a summary of the key issues for each application before it is considered by the Regulation Committee. Visual aids will be used as part of this presentation to assist with an understanding of the site, its surroundings and the planning issues. This may include the use of video, photographs, maps, plans, policy statements, and any other information which Officers feel will help Members to reach a fully informed decision.
- 6.2. In instances when Members are aware of a particular issue they can request that specific visual aids be used in the presentation to the Committee in order to assist their consideration of the matter. In such cases Members should contact the Case Officer as soon as possible prior to the date of the Regulation Committee to ensure this is incorporated in the Officer's presentation.
- 6.3. Site Visits – In some cases, in order to understand the planning issues involved in the proposal, a formal site visit by Members of the Regulation Committee may be organised. Normally this will take place when the proposal is contentious or complex, and/or the impact is difficult to visualise or assess from plans, photographs, video(s) or other supporting information. The decision to hold a site visit will be made by the Regulation Committee or by the Chairman and Vice Chairman in consultation with the Head of Environmental Management and Regeneration or the Group Manager



(Environmental Management). The Local Member will be informed of the site visit, and whilst they have the opportunity to attend they cannot lobby Members of the Committee at the visit. Where an adjoining division is also potentially significantly affected by a proposal, that Local Member will also be invited to attend the visit. The visit will take place before the application is considered by Committee.

- 6.4. The purpose of a Members' site visit is to view the site and its surroundings. Site visits are fact-finding exercises and there should be no discussion on the merits of the application nor should any decision be taken.
- 6.5. In some cases the Chairman and Vice Chairman will be asked by Officers to visit particular sites at which development is proposed in order to familiarise themselves with it. This may be because the issues do not appear to justify a visit by the whole Committee. However, all Committee Members will be made aware of the visit and can attend if they wish. The Local Member will also be informed of these visits.
- 6.6. Committee Members and accompanying Officers will arrive at the site as close as practicable to the scheduled time and will assemble at an agreed location. The Chairman will firstly explain the purpose of the site visit and the procedure to be followed. The Members will then be guided by either the Case Officer or another Senior Officer. The Officer will provide a short summary of the application, refer to relevant policies and point out those aspects of the site and its location which are relevant in the determination of the application. Other specialist officers may advise on particular aspects of the proposal. Members have the opportunity to ask questions and to seek clarification of any issues which become apparent during the visit. The Chairman will end the visit once it is clear that Members have had a full opportunity to see the site and identify relevant features and will give information about the date of the Regulation Committee meeting at which the application is to be considered.
- 6.7. If access to private land is necessary, Officers will secure the prior agreement of the applicant. If not the landowner, the applicant will be expected to secure the owner's agreement. Access to the site should be provided in accordance with good health and safety practice.
- 6.8. Applicants, owners, agents, objectors and other interested parties are not permitted to participate in site visits but are able to attend and observe. There should be no communication between the observers and the Committee members unless, exceptionally, the Chairman or Vice Chairman has agreed in order to obtain information. Depending on the nature of the comments invited, others attending may also be invited to comment so that the interested parties are offered an equal chance to participate so far as that is possible and in order to avoid the appearance of bias.
- 6.9. If no formal visit is being arranged, Members may still wish to visit a site on their own. They will need the permission of the owner if they wish to go onto the land and should inform the Head of Environmental Management and

Regeneration or the Group Manager (Environmental Management) and the Chairman of Regulation Committee, of their intention. **Members are encouraged to attend the formal site visit whenever possible, and if they are visiting a site on their own they should ensure that all the guidance above is observed.**

## **7. Public Meetings**

- 7.1 In exceptional circumstances the County Council, as planning authority, may arrange a public meeting if a major proposal has resulted in a significant number of representations from local residents or groups.
- 7.2 Public meetings will be given wide publicity. The applicant, owner if different and all interested parties, including the Parish or Town Council, the local member and those making representations on an application will be individually notified of the meeting.
- 7.3 The Chairman (normally the Chairman of Regulation Committee) will begin the public meeting by explaining the purpose and procedures so that all those attending are aware that it provides an opportunity for the application to be explained and for the public to ask questions and make their views known. The Chairman will explain that no decision will be made at the public meeting and will inform those attending when the application is likely to be determined.
- 7.4 Members may be invited to attend other public meetings, for example, those organised by parish councils, local action groups and by the applicant, regarding a particular planning application. When attending such meetings, members should be mindful of the advice in section 5 of this Code.

## **8. Delegated Decisions**

- 8.1 The Regulation Committee determines planning applications and makes other planning decisions, unless the decision is one delegated to the Corporate Director (Environment) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, which is set out in the Council's Constitution, or by resolution of the Regulation Committee.
- 8.2 The following paragraphs apply to all types of planning application.
- 8.3 Applications which are determined under delegated powers are uncontentious proposals to which no significant planning objection has been made. The same level of professionalism, care and attention is given to these applications, including full reasons for decision. The officer assessment of the proposal is set out in a report in the same way as a report to Committee, identifying relevant planning policy and any other material considerations. There is a recommendation supported by reasons and suggested conditions in the case of a recommendation for approval. The report is signed by the officer exercising the delegated power if the recommendation is to be followed..

- 8.4 If an objection to an application is received and Officers do not consider it to be significant, the Scheme of Delegation requires the Case Officer to secure the agreement of the Local Member(s), Regulation Committee Chairman and Opposition spokesperson to use of the delegated power. The Officer will write to them summarising the objection and reasons why it is not considered to be significant. A copy of the Officer's delegated report and any copies of plans or photographs will be also be provided in order to assist the Members come to a view. If any one of the Members does not agree, the application will be referred to the Regulation Committee for determination.
- 8.5 If the Officer recommendation is to refuse planning permission, the application will not be dealt with under delegated powers, even if there have been no objections. There are potential appeal and cost implications of the decision to refuse and as such the application will be referred to the Regulation Committee for determination.**
- 8.6 The Corporate Director (Environment) has delegated powers to take some decisions relating to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, to approve details or schemes in accordance with conditions, applications for Certificates of Lawfulness of an existing or proposed use, and other areas of planning legislation.

## **9. Regulation Committee Decisions**

### **Committee Papers and Minutes**

- 9.1 Regulation Committee papers will normally be available at least five working days before the Meeting.
- 9.2 All applications submitted to the Committee will have a full written report from Officers which will include the following:-
- the name and contact details of the Case Officer, local member, reference number and grid reference;
  - a description of the site and the proposal, including reference to any amendments submitted;
  - summary of the planning history of the site;
  - an accurate summary of the responses to consultation and other representations received;
  - reference to relevant policies and other material considerations and whether the proposal constitutes a departure from the Development Plan;
  - details of the Environmental Impact Assessment, if required
  - analysis and assessment of the proposal; and
  - the recommendation together with reasons whether it is for approval or refusal, by reference to planning policy and any other material considerations, and if it is a recommendation to grant planning permission, proposed conditions and whether there is the need for the completion of a planning obligation before the grant of permission

- 9.3 Late papers received after the report has been produced will be circulated before the application is considered by the Committee, and the Chairman may give Members time to read late papers before the item is discussed.
- 9.4 If the report's recommendation is contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan, the material considerations that justify this will be set out and the reasons for decision given.
- 9.5 The minutes of the Committee meeting will summarise the main points of discussion and refer to the information on which this was based. Any new matters raised in late papers or oral presentations to the Committee will be minuted.

### **Decisions contrary to officer recommendation**

- 9.6 The Officer report to the Regulation Committee contains a recommendation but the decision is that of the Committee on the planning merits of the proposal. The Officer's report will have described the planning issues and the reasons for the Officer's recommendation. There will be cases when Members do not agree with the Officer recommendation and such an event the Committee should formulate its reasons for the decision. These will be the basis of the decision notice, which must give clear reasons for the decision to the applicant. The Head of Environmental Management and Regeneration, the Group Manager or Solicitor advising the Committee will advise on the formulation of reasons for decision and if the decision is to grant planning permission, on appropriate conditions and any need for a planning obligation. This will be minuted.
- 9.7 If there is an appeal against a decision to refuse planning permission, it is necessary to support the refusal by showing good planning reasons which will need to be supported by evidence. If it is not possible to do this and the appeal is upheld, the Council is at risk of having a costs award made against it if it cannot show that its reasons for refusal were not unreasonable. They will be unreasonable if they are not material planning considerations or if they are not supported by adequate evidence. It is essential, therefore, that the reasons for decision are either in accordance with planning policy or there are other material planning considerations which support the decision..

### **Free from political instruction**

- 9.8 Planning decisions by the Regulation Committee should not be made for any reason other than sound planning reasons. There should be no prior agreement on how representatives of a political party or any other grouping will vote.

### **Declarations of Interest**

- 9.9 The Code of Conduct sets out requirements and guidance for members on declaring personal and prejudicial interests and the consequences of having such an interest. The Code must be observed and Members should be alert

to any changes in their personal circumstances which might affect their interests. Members should act with propriety and should also take care to avoid behaving in a way which might give the appearance of or grounds for suspicion of improper behaviour.

- 9.10 If a Member decides that they have a personal interest in respect of a particular planning matter they must disclose the existence and nature of that interest in the meeting. If a Member decides that their interest in the matter is also a prejudicial interest, then, unless they have received a dispensation from the Council's Standards Committee, they should leave the meeting room while the item is considered. A Member with a personal and prejudicial interest in a particular matter may make representations to the meeting under paragraphs 9.13 to 9.16 of this Code but must leave the meeting room when the Chairman has decided that public speaking has ended. The responsibility for deciding whether they have a prejudicial interest in a particular case rests with each Member. **Advice can be obtained from the County Solicitor, if required, in advance of a Committee meeting.** A flowchart reproduced from the Association of Council Secretaries and Solicitor's "Model Members' Planning Code of Conduct" is included in Appendix A to assist Members.

#### **Requests by Members for information**

- 9.11 Whenever possible Members should give notice in advance of the meeting of additional information which they consider is needed in order to determine the application or matters which they intend to challenge. This enables Officers to assist with the information before Committee and may avoid a deferral of the matter. At least 24 hours' notice gives officers the chance to respond fully.

#### **Making representation to Regulation Committee on an application**

- 9.12 Applicants, owners, agents, Local Members and others who have made representations will be notified of the date and time of the Regulation Committee meeting considering the application.
- 9.13 It is helpful if Members of the public wishing to speak at the Committee meeting contact Democratic Services beforehand, however any member of the public can ask to speak at the meeting.
- 9.14 Speakers should address comments to the Chairman. Members of the public may only speak during their allocated time and may not take part in the debate The Chairman can invite Officers to respond to any matters which are raised.
- 9.15 The amount of time people will have to address the Committee will normally be restricted to two minutes. If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people wishing to speak, the Chairman may encourage them to elect a spokesperson(s) who may be allowed to speak for longer.
- 9.16 The Chairman will decide when the public speaking will end. Speakers will be encouraged to avoid repetition of points made by earlier speakers. The

Chairman has discretion on issues relating to the making of oral representations at Committee.

- 9.17 If Members of the public interrupt the meeting or attempt to intervene, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting until the atmosphere is calmer.

### **Member Attendance**

- 9.18 It is important that the Members' decision takes into account all relevant issues, not solely those in the Officers report but also those which may be presented orally or otherwise during the meeting. Therefore, any Member absent from any part of the meeting during consideration of an application should not vote on that application. This does not apply to site visits which are not part of the formal process of determination.

### **Deferral of Decisions**

- 9.19 A decision to defer should occur infrequently and only in circumstances in which all the information needed is not available at the meeting. In the absence of any other considerations, the inability to attend the meeting by any interested person is not a reason to defer.

### **Public Question Time**

- 9.20 At the Chairman's invitation, members of the public may ask questions and/or make statements in respect of any matter on the Committee's agenda. Petitions may also be presented on any matter within the Committee's remit. Questions or statements about matters on the agenda will normally be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

## **10. Issuing Decisions following Regulation Committee**

- 10.1 Where an application is determined by Committee the planning permission or notice of refusal will normally be posted within 10 working days of the date of the Committee Meeting.
- 10.2 Where an application is approved subject to the prior completion of a legal agreement, the decision notice, which constitutes the grant of planning permission, will not be issued until the agreement has been completed.

## **11. Action taken following the Decision**

- 11.1 Members of the public who have made representations on an application will be informed of the County Council's decision, and specific consultees such as the District and Town/Parish Councils will be sent copies of the decision notice. The Regulation Committee newsletter contains details of all decision notices issued.
- 11.2 Most planning permissions are granted subject to conditions. In the case of an outline permission, details submitted in respect of reserved matters may be forwarded to specialist officers/bodies for their views but they are not

subject to further public consultation. Once the development has been commenced it will be monitored to ensure it proceeds in accordance with the conditions imposed and the approved details.

## **Breaches of Planning Control**

- 11.3 Planning Authorities have a wide range of enforcement powers with which to deal with breaches of planning control, which includes breaches of condition as well as unauthorised development. A planning authority has a discretion whether to take enforcement action and should do so only if it is expedient. The Council recognises the importance of responding to breaches of planning control and there is further information in the County Council's policy document "The Enforcement and Monitoring of Planning Control".
- 11.4 If a Member receives complaints about possible cases of unauthorised development or breaches of condition the Member should inform the Planning Enforcement Officer who will investigate and ensure that the Member is kept informed and notified of the outcome.

## **12. Member Training**

- 12.1 The need for all Members of the Regulation Committee to receive training on the planning system and on the issues set out in this Protocol is stressed in the advice issued by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, the Local Government Association and the Royal Town Planning Institute.
- 12.2 All Members of Regulation Committee must have received core planning training before sitting on the Committee. Only Members who have received basic planning training are eligible to act as substitute Members on the Committee.
- 12.3 The Head of Environmental Management and Regeneration or the Group Manager (Environmental Management) will organise training events for all Members of the Regulation Committee and trained substitutes, including other Members who wish to attend. The training will aim to be as accessible as possible to members and will offer review, updates and sessions on specific topics.
- 12.4 As part of their training Members are encouraged to visit a number of development sites on which the Committee decided planning permission should be granted and where the permission has been implemented. It is hoped that this will be helpful in improving the quality and consistency of decision-making and will inform reviews of planning policy. Visits to planning sites are organised annually. Review site visits are open to members of the Regulation Committee, substitutes, the relevant local member and appropriate Officers. The landowner/applicant may be present if access to the site is required, but will not take part in discussion.

## APPENDIX A Declaration of Interests Flowchart – Guidance for Members

