

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 6

meeting date: 2 AUGUST 2018
title: PLANNING APPLICATION CALL IN PROCEDURES
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: JOHN MACHOLC, HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To request Committee to amend the Call-In procedure in relation to planning applications by removing the request in relation to Householder applications.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
 - Community Objectives - To ensure the Council is a well managed and efficient authority.
 - Corporate Priorities - To ensure the Council is a well managed and efficient authority.
 - Other Considerations – To ensure the Council is a well managed and efficient authority.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The procedure was first introduced as part of the revised Delegation scheme in 2009 and gave the opportunity for Members to ask for a planning application to be determined by the Planning and Development Committee rather than as a delegated decision made by the appropriate Director.
- 2.2 The original scheme allowed the Ward member to request a call in that was subject to formal ratification of the Chair of Planning or Vice Chair in their absence. It is now the case that the ward member can request without such ratification.
- 2.3 The call in must be made on the appropriate with a reason highlighted and received by the Planning Service within 14 days of the application first published on the weekly list of planning applications.
- 2.4 Members will be aware that a report in relation to Call-in procedures was taken to Planning and Development Committee on the 8 March 2018. Following discussion it was resolved that the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Planning and Development Committee continue to review the "Call-in" arrangements and if necessary report back to Committee with suggested changes.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 Members may remember that the report detailed the number and type of applications called in and one of the findings was the high number of household applications being called in. It was agreed that these would have been unlikely to have generated significant public interest and in most cases have been the result of a request from the

applicant or consultant representing the applicant. It is often the case that the request is a result of an expectation that Committee are more likely to approve the scheme than the officer or it has been previously refused. (Appendix 1 includes an email trail showing an example from a local planning agent).

- 3.2 Following discussion with the Chair and Vice Chair it has been agreed that Household applications should be excluded from the call in arrangements. This would be in accordance with the general purpose of call ins which was to allow the opportunity for Members to request key applications and ones that may have a strategic interest to be determined by Committee. It would also have the benefit of removing an element of potential lobbying on such applications as it is clear from the previous report to Committee that some Planning Agents are active in requesting Councillors to call in applications and in some instances even suggest reasons. This is clearly wrong and puts undue pressure on Councillors and devalues the purpose of the Call-in arrangements.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – No impact on existing resources
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – No direct implications
- Political – No direct implications
- Reputation – No direct implications.
- Equality & Diversity – No issues identified in relation to this report

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 That Household applications are exempt from the Call-in procedure and the Delegation scheme be amended accordingly.

JOHN MACHOLC
HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

JOHN HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

For further information please ask for John Macholc, extension 4502.