



## Fact Sheet 12 - Ward Planning Panels

Planning panels are made up of local volunteers (ward residents) who come together to discuss and respond to local planning applications. Planning Panels meet locally usually every 3 – 4 weeks depending on the level of local planning applications. Resident volunteers get involved out of an interest in the built environment and how their area looks and develops into the future.

### Membership

Membership of a ward planning panel is through an open selection process at the Annual Residents Forum. Planning Panels operate to a terms of reference document (see attached) which has recently been refreshed to encourage greater interaction with more ward residents and to reflect the use of electronic planning.

Planning panels were established through ward committees to establish a coordinated resident response by ward to planning applications in order to give some sort of parity to parished areas who have the opportunity to coordinate a local response to planning applications through parish councils. However a key distinction is that parish councils are statutory consultees in terms of planning whereas planning panels are not.

Planning panels exist where there is local interest and are connected and have a responsibility to report back to residents through residents' forums. Resident members of the planning panels are 'elected' through residents' forums.

### Administration

Ward planning panels select one of their members to act as 'clerk' for the panel. The ward planning panel clerk is the first point of contact between City of York Council and the panel and coordinates panel meetings.

### Training and Support

Support to the planning panels is through the Communities & Equalities Team e.g. access to training, room hire for meetings and out of pocket expenses for planning panel members.

The amount of support needed by each panel is different, in some cases they meet in a local venue and in others they meet in their own houses e.g. Guildhall Planning Panel has recently started meeting in West Offices which offers them access to a free



of charge meeting room and the relevant IT equipment to facilitate ease of group viewing of electronic plans. Planning panel members are often also members of the Open Planning Forum and through this independent forum can discuss 'big picture issues' with others including parish council representatives.

### **Ward Planning Panels**

Currently there are Planning Panels operational in the following resident forum areas:

**Acomb**  
**Clifton**  
**Dringhouses & Woodthorpe**  
**Fishergate**  
**Guildhall**  
**Heworth**  
**Hull Road**  
**Micklegate**

### **Ward Planning Panels – Terms of Reference**



## 1. General Aims

- 1.1 To scrutinise planning applications on behalf of local residents and to make appropriate comments and recommendations to the planning authority.
- 1.2 To work in partnership with the local Residents Forum.
- 1.3 To report activities of the Planning Panel to the local Residents Forum on at least two occasions each year.

## 2. Membership

- 2.1 Planning panel members should be residents of, or work in, the ward. However in recognition of the valued experience and contribution made by the longer serving planning panel members who do not currently meet this criteria, an exception will be made and they will be eligible to stand in the annual selection process. Any new members **MUST** be resident of, or work in, the ward.
- 2.2 Planning panel members are confirmed at their local annual residents' forum meeting. The names of those selected shall be published on the Council's website following the meeting.
- 2.3 Planning panel members are selected for a period of 12 months and existing members can re-stand for each 12 month period.
- 2.4 The neighbourhood manager / community involvement officer will record membership details in the residents' forum minutes following the selection of the planning panel. The planning panel clerk should notify the neighbourhood manager / community involvement officer of any potential new members during the following 12 months, at least one week prior to the next residents' forum meeting. Selection of new members should then take place at the next annual residents' forum meeting.
- 2.5 Nominations for selection to the panel are to be submitted to the panel clerk at least one week prior to the residents' forum. Nominations will be invited through ward newsletters annually. It is desirable that planning panel membership will include residents from across the ward to represent a cross section of views.



2.6 There are no fixed limits on the numbers of members a panel can have. However, experience has shown that effective meetings are achieved with around 8 residents, so details of 12 residents may be a good number to keep, assuming not all will be able to attend each time.

2.7 Members of the panel shall declare any interest in a particular matter for noting prior to consideration of the relevant application.

### **3. Planning Panel Clerk/Secretary – ‘Job Description’**

3.1 The planning panel clerk should be a resident of, or work in, the ward. However, in recognition of the valued experience and contribution made by the longer standing planning panel clerks that do not currently meet this criteria, an exception will be made until they choose to stand down. Any new clerks **MUST** be resident of, or work in, the ward.

3.2 The planning panel clerk is selected by the planning panel members and is the point of contact for the members of the panel and officers of the planning department. This will involve:

3.2.1 Receiving notification of planning applications, which may include plans, maps, drawings etc., these will be sent by the planning officer.

3.2.2 Formulating a list of planning panel meeting dates and venues to be forewarned to the Communities & Equalities Team for publication on the Council’s website

3.2.3 Working with the residents’ forum in terms of arranging special public meetings to obtain local resident views on more significant planning applications.

3.2.4 Sending the notice of their meetings and views and comments of the panel relating to applications to the City and Environmental Services Directorate.

3.2.5 Sending the notice of their meetings and copies of views and comments of the panel relating to applications to residents forum members and neighbourhood manager / community involvement officer unless otherwise requested.



3.2.6 Receiving feedback on the success / failure of each planning application and reporting back to planning panel members.

3.2.7 Arranging to report back to the residents' forum on a twice per year basis.

3.2.8 Submitting claims for reasonable out of pocket expenses (incurred as a result of participation on the panel) for the planning panel clerk or on behalf of panel members to the City of York Council. Receipts need to be submitted as evidence of expenditure.

3.2.9 The planning panel clerk may also need to obtain further information from planning officers.

#### 4. Expenses procedure

4.1 Expenses are paid for reasonable and legitimate expenses incurred by planning panel members in the course of their work for the planning panel. The basic principle is that members should not be out of pocket as a result of their participation in the planning panel.

4.2 Claims forms should be completed by the claimant and handed to the clerk who will then pass on to the CYC contact address at point 5

#### 5. CYC Contact

5.1 Queries related to Residents Forum Planning Panels should be directed to:

City of York Council

Communities and Equalities, West Offices, Station Rise, YO1 6GA

Tel: 01904 551832

Email: [shapingneighbourhoods@york.gov.uk](mailto:shapingneighbourhoods@york.gov.uk)