

## **Part One - Presentation from Mike Slater and Jonathan Carr on E-Planning facilities**

### General comments

1. At the moment CYC is running a dual system (paper and electronic) which is not particularly effective
2. It is hoped that in the future all three of the Planning Committee meetings will be held at the new West Offices building and that there will be the facility to project plans onto a screen during meetings

### Technical questions/comments

1. Question from Parish Council/Planning Panel: Regarding the link in the letter sent to consultees – would it not be simpler for Parish Councils to receive these documents as one document in PDF format? The link takes you to all of the individual documents which then have to be downloaded independently of each other
  - Also problems with circulating the link as it doesn't always work after it has been forwarded on

Response from officer: intention of the link is to enable consultees to have access to all documents in relation to a planning application

Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: This could be sent as one single PDF
2. Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: If someone is registered on CYC's planning portal then any comment they leave can be found in the 'comments tab'; however, if comments are e-mailed directly to officers then these are uploaded and appear in the 'documents tab'. If all comments are e-mailed then there is no indication that consultees have actually been consulted.

Response from officer: All have been consulted

Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: This needs to be as simple as possible – at the moment it is too complex

3. Question from Parish Council/Planning Panel: What is the minimum technical specification one would need to satisfy a meeting of 20 people?  
Response from officer: Use of a laptop and projector. If the seating is arranged well could use a white wall or white board instead of as screen. However there is no set format
4. Question from Parish Council/Planning Panel: How can you compare one plan with another without bringing them up side by side?  
Response from officer: You can already do this  
Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: In some versions of Word, yes you can bring documents up side by side but you lose some of the details, especially if the larger plans are already scaled down. Hard to look at plans for larger schemes, need to be able to compare plans when revisions have been made so one can clearly see the changes.  
Response from officer: We recognise that there appear to be problems accessing larger plans electronically. To begin with we will only be issuing documentation for smaller schemes electronically. We will continue to issue paper copies for the larger schemes for the time being.
5. Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: Concerns about the accuracy of the website. There were five applications marked for one Parish Council that were in the Ward but not in the Parish.  
Response from officer: We need to look at this and ensure we are uploading the right information  
Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: There have been times when the refusal to grant planning permission notice has not been uploaded to the website.
6. Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: After a decision has been made on a planning application the website frequently indicates that there has been 'no comment' from the

Parish Council when there has been and the comment has been submitted on time.

Response from officer: The comments section is not visible after a decision has been taken. These are removed from public view but are viewable on request.

Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: some comments are seen as non-priority and never put on so the records are incomplete

Response from officer: If you can let us have specific instances where this has happened then we can look at this and make sure that the records are up to date and complete. However, as far as we are aware all comments are there. There was a problem earlier in the year with some documents being missing online

7. Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: The IDOX system allows registered users to track and save searches and an e-mail is sent to the user if any relevant application appears on the site. However the e-mails never seem to arrive and this facility doesn't appear to work

Response from officer: This has been logged and raised with IDOX and we are still talking about ways we can make this work.

8. Question from Parish Council/Planning Panel: How does this process start? How will you inform us when an application that is relevant to us has come in?

Response from officer: An e-mail will be sent to the chosen e-mail address of the Parish Council/Planning Panel.

Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: Ward Councillors are e-mailed a weekly list of applications and some Parish Councils/Planning Panels receive these as well

Response from officer: There is no reason why we cannot e-mail this out to any Parish Council Member/Planning Panel Member that wants to receive it

9. Question from Parish Council/Planning Panel: What happens if the Planning Panel Clerk does not have access to e-mail?  
Response from officer: They could give an e-mail address of another member of the Planning Panel. Making sure the Council has the right mail address is crucial
10. Question from Councillor Runciman: How do Planning Panels work?  
Response from Planning Panel Member(s):
- Planning Panel 1: All members of the Planning Panel meet together to discuss any applications for our area
  - Planning Panel 2: The Chairman decides what business to bring forward to the Panel and/or which to refer to a 'specialist' member of the Panel
  - Parish Council: Each seems to have their own method of operation
11. Question from Parish Council/Planning Panel: Do planning officers have access to full size drawings?  
Response from officer: We use larger screens to view the larger plans on
12. Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: At the moment paper plans are taken to site visits. Once we are only notified electronically then the onus will be on the Parish Council to print plans and take them to the site visit. They may not have printers that can cope with this.  
Response from officer: If Parish Council were to attend site visits then would need to print their own plans or take a laptop along to view them on.  
Initially the planning officers will take paper plans onsite for the actual planning committees but it is hoped to encourage the use of laptops/tablets to view plans on whilst at site visits – this is work in progress. The intention is that this will be a step by step process and CYC would not 'go paperless' overnight

Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: This would be more expensive for Parish Councils. Also on electronic drawings scaling and distances can be a problem

13. Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: Expresses worries about public access to planning documentation for those that are not computer literate.

Question from Parish Council/Planning Panel: If a person does not have access to a computer will paper copies be available?

Response from officer: In the new West Offices there will not be a paper copy at the front desk for members of the public to look at. However, they will be available online and a member of reception staff will be able to assist members of the public to view planning documentation online in West Offices

14. Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: The money saved on posting out paper documents to the Parish Councils could be reinvested to help buy computers/screens/projectors etc for Parish Councils and Planning Panels

15. Question from Parish Council/Planning Panel: Will developers have to submit documents in a certain way?

Response from officer: We are currently talking to some of the regular developers/submitters of plans as to the requirements they will need to meet when submitting documentation. This will include them having to put in scale bars and dimensions on all drawings

16. Question from Councillor Wiseman: On the rare occasions when there are very contentious plans would there be a possibility that a Parish Council/Planning Panel could apply for printed plans to be produced?

Response from officer: Yes, we would try to help and facilitate this but we are very much trying to move away from paper. Viewing large plans on screen can also be problematical for officers as well

Comment from Councillor Wiseman: Smaller villages/Parish Councils do not often have printers - could Parish Councils request printed plans at a cost?

Comment from Councillor Runciman: Very large applications are very difficult, if not impossible, to view electronically

17. Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: When plans are put on the website it would be useful to be able to download these all in one go rather than separately. It is difficult and time consuming to download them all separately and save each one individually.

Response from officer: Some Local Authorities (?) have software which converts all the documents into a single PDF but the IDOX system does not endorse/support this. There would be nothing to stop individual Parish Councils/Planning Panels using this software though

Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: You also would need to have access to the internet to do this

Comment from Haxby Town Council: We currently use this system to download documents. It is an 'unauthorised' piece of software but it is used to get all documents downloaded in one go (not necessarily by converting them into PDF format)

Comment from Parish Council/Planning Panel: Have contacted the developer of this software and you need internet access to use it

Response from officer: there is some disappointment in CYC that the IDOX system does not allow for this – it has been raised with them

Question from Councillor Runciman: Do the Local Council Association (LCA) have any guidance on this?

Response from LCA: Looking at ways Parish Councils can buy equipment at a sensible price and also looking at the national picture around this