

Joint Standards Committee

1 February 2017

Report of the Monitoring Officer

Planning Panels

Summary

1. This report updates the Committee on discussions which have taken place with Officers who support Planning panels.

Background

2. At their last meeting the Committee discussed the ethical governance issues which arise from the use of Planning Panels. These are a forum developed in York for providing consultation responses to planning applications made outside of the parished areas.
3. At the last meeting Members asked that consideration be given to a number of suggestions and asked for the views of Officers who support the Panels. Members suggested:
 - *Making the work of the planning panels more transparent e.g. ensuring that its membership was known and making public the agendas and minutes of meetings.*

Officers supported the principle but confirmed that currently there is no administrative support or budget to support the work of planning panels and that this recommendation would therefore be difficult to implement. They did point out that the planning panels are established at the annual Ward Committee which is a public meeting with minutes available through the Council's website. By way of example the Holgate Ward Committee minutes are attached:

<http://modgov.york.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=41537>

- *Developing the role of ward committees in ensuring that planning panels were functioning effectively – this could involve the planning panel presenting an annual report to the ward committee.*

Officers considered that without administrative support the preparation of an annual report might be difficult to achieve.

- *Strongly encouraging planning panel members and clerks to take part in the training opportunities that were to be made available.*

Officers firmly support this recommendation although did confirm that the Panels do not have Clerks. Training is currently being arranged by the Neighbourhoods and Planning teams.

- Putting in place a simplified version of the Code of Conduct in respect of planning panel members.

Officers agree that a simple and practical code covering basic do's and don'ts would be helpful and the Monitoring Officer has agreed to assist with its preparation.

Recommendations

4. Members are recommended to:

1) Note the report

Reason: To ensure that the Committee is aware of current levels of activity.

Contact Details

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Report Date 23/1/17
Approved

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all* All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None