
Development Control Panel

Report of the meetings held on 20th December 2004
and 17th January 2005

Matters for Information

18. TREE PRESERVATION ORDER

The Panel has confirmed a tree preservation order to protect a sycamore tree situated in the rear garden of 13 Thrapston Road, Kimbolton having been satisfied by the Environment Agency that the tree presents neither a flood hazard nor will impede maintenance works to the banks of the River Kym.

19. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Following a review and in the light of operational experience, the Panel has considered several issues relating to the current scheme of delegated powers. Previous revisions to the scheme have enabled the Head of Planning Services to determine a greater volume of applications thereby achieving national development control performance standards and meeting targets established by the Government's best value performance indicators.

Three specific changes to the Scheme of Delegation have now been approved by the Panel which will apply with immediate effect. These concern proposals to increase from £50,000 to £100,000 the value which can be negotiated under Section 106 Agreements by the Head of Planning Services without recourse to the Members Advisory Group, to update the schedule of delegated powers to reflect the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 and to clarify the wording in relation to the issue, service and withdrawal of Enforcement and Completion Notices.

To deal more effectively with the determination of tree preservation orders and to allow Members to receive specialist advice directly from tree and landscape officers, the Panel also has established a Tree Preservation Order Sub-Group with a quorum of three Members for a trial period of 12 months. The Sub-Group shall comprise the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Panel, Councillors P L E Bucknell, C J Stephens and G S E Thorpe plus the appropriate Ward Councillor(s) and will meet as and when required to consider objections received to and determine proposed Orders.

**20. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ACTIVITIES –
1ST JULY TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2004**

In noting a statistical report on the performance of the Development Control Section of the Planning Division over the period 1st July – 30th September 2004, the Panel has acknowledged that 81% of major, minor commercial and industrial applications received during the quarter and 93.8% of householder type applications had been determined within the required time period.

21. SUMMARY OF ENFORCEMENT ACTION

The Panel has noted the extent of enforcement activity undertaken by the Enforcement Team in the Planning Division during 2004 and has endorsed five key objectives identified for the service in 2005. The objectives seek to improve the efficiency of current working practices, to continue the reduction in the number of outstanding cases and to implement a system for monitoring occupancy conditions.

Referring to the performance of the team in 2004, the Panel has congratulated the Enforcement Officers on their achievement in reducing the number of outstanding cases by 19% and in closing a number of files which were more than two years old. Having been advised of an impending vacancy in the Section and anxious that progress in reducing caseloads would not be lost, the Panel has requested that consideration be given to the release of resources from elsewhere in the Development Control Division to cover the vacancy.

22. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Over two meetings, the Panel has determined a total of twenty-six applications of which fifteen were approved and eleven refused.

On the recommendation of the Section 106 Advisory Group, the Panel has approved an application for eleven dwellings on a site at 3 East Street, Colne subject to conditions. The terms of a Section 106 Agreement associated with the development will secure three affordable housing units and a contribution towards open space and play provision.

P G Mitchell
Chairman