

Minutes of Standards Committee on 3 March

S18 PROBITY IN PLANNING

The committee considered changes to the delegation procedures for certain planning applications.

It was explained that currently to ensure transparency, all planning applications made by councillors, ex-councillors, employees and ex-employees were referred to the Planning Committee rather than being dealt with under delegated powers. This placed an administrative burden on the planning department when this practice was probably not necessary in all cases.

The Committee agreed that granting planning permission under delegated powers could be seen by the public as a benefit to the applicant, but this didn't apply to an officer recommendation of refusal.

- It was suggested that all recommendations for refusal for planning applications submitted by councillors and employees, both past and present, could if appropriate be dealt with under delegated powers.

In terms of ex councillors and ex-employees, members considered over what period of time a link with the council would become so tenuous that the issue of partiality would not arise. It was agreed that an appropriate period of time was a councillor's term of office, which was 4 years.

- It was suggested that after a period of 4 years all applications, (with a recommendation of approval or refusal) from ex-employees and ex councillors should if appropriate be dealt with under delegated powers.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council the protocol for dealing with employee and councillor applications as set out above.