

PLANNING, PUBLIC PROTECTION AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE TEAM

PROTOCOL FOR MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ON PLANNING MATTERS

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that Members have an up to date and relevant knowledge on planning issues so as to ensure that the Council's Planning Committee makes robust and defensible decisions on development proposals and other issues.

1. All Members of the County Council will be encouraged to undertake relevant training and development on planning matters.
2. Members will be expected to attend a minimum of 2no. Officer arranged Planning training events in any Council Year or provide evidence of alternative learning and development as set out in Paragraph 6 below.
3. In Council election years, the first planning training event will always be held prior to the first planning committee of the new Council. This initial session will be focused on the functions and responsibilities of the Local Planning Authority and how planning decisions are made. This initial session will be a face to face event unless circumstances require it to be virtual.
4. All newly elected Members will be required to attend the initial planning training event should they be required to vote at the first Planning Committee meeting or thereafter.
5. Re-elected Members with a shortfall of agreed planning training in the previous Council year will also need to attend the initial planning training event specified in paragraph 4.
6. It will be necessary for Members, who have not attended specific Officer arranged Planning training events, to submit their alternative training and development proposals to the Development Manager. Alternative sources of training could include:-
 - (i) Attendance at a relevant event organised by the WLGA, another Local Authority or any external provider.
 - (ii) Distance learning or evidenced reading using an approved planning based website
 - (iii) Direct involvement in planning appeals and/or major planning applications where the Member has demonstrated an understanding of planning issues as agreed with the Development Manager.
 - (iv) Planning Aid seminars/events/virtual training
 - (v) Attendance at other relevant Council events or training where the subject matter is linked to the development process (e.g. housing, ecology, local development plan, highways)

(vi) Attendance at 9 or more Planning Committee meetings in the previous Council Year.

(vii) Any other learning and development as agreed in writing with the Development Manager and Chair of Planning Committee.

Written proof of any relevant, alternative learning and development must be submitted to the Development Manager and agreed with the Development Manager and Chair of Planning Committee.

7. Officers will record Members attendance at Officer arranged training events. It will be a Members responsibility to ensure any alternative learning and development as set out in Paragraph 6 is submitted, agreed and recorded.

8. Prior to the March Planning Committee in any Council year Officers will share the Members learning and development records for that year with Group Leaders and the Chair of Planning Committee. This will be to ensure Members who may seek to vote at Planning Committee in the following year have the chance to meet the Protocol requirements.

9. Any Members who may wish to join and vote at Planning Committee within a Council year will be required to have met the Protocol requirements.

Note:

Should a Planning Committee Member choose to vote on any item at Planning Committee without having met the Protocol requirements this could put the Council at risk. This could be at any subsequent planning appeal or through a legal challenge. Officers will always seek to work with Members to ensure they meet the Protocol Requirements.

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