

PLANNING AND PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICES

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL AND COMPLIANCE TEAM

PROTOCOL FOR MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ON PLANNING MATTERS

The protocol was first approved at Full Council on 8th April 2008 to ensure that Members were kept up to date on the processes and procedures used within the Planning system and to also keep Members informed of any relevant changes in legislation.

1. All Members of the County Council will be encouraged to undertake training and development sessions on planning matters.
2. To facilitate this, a minimum of 4 no. training/development events will be organised by Officers within each Council year (May to April).
3. In Council election years, a minimum of 6 no. training/development events will be organised by Officers. The first 2 no. events will always be held prior to the first planning committee of the new Council.
4. All newly elected Members will be required to attend the 2 no. initial training events organised after the commencement of the new Council and before the first Planning Committee of that new Council year.
5. Re-elected Members with a shortfall of development events in a previous Council year may attend the 2 no. events as specified within paragraph 4 above.
6. In each consecutive Council year (May to April), all Members will be required to attend at least 2 no. training/development events.
7. It will be necessary for Members who have not attended Officer arranged training events to submit their alternative training proposals to the Head of Planning and Public Protection Services or the Development Control and Compliance Manager. Alternative sources of training could include:-
 - (i) Attendance at an event organised by the WLGA, another local Authority or an external provider.
 - (ii) Distance learning using an approved planning based website

- (iii) Direct involvement in planning appeals and/or planning proposals where the Member has demonstrated an understanding of planning issues as agreed with the Development Control and Compliance Manager.
8. Members attendance for training will be monitored by the Head of Planning and Public Protection Services who will report on a six monthly basis to the Corporate Governance Committee. Reports will normally be at the end of the Council year (March/April) and after six months of the Council year (Nov/Dec).
 9. Prior to the final 2 no. training events in any one Council year letters will be sent to Group Leaders outlining the number of events that their members need to attend for that year with a reminder of the agreed protocol and the forthcoming training events.
 10. Members will need to have fulfilled the training requirement for the Council year by the 30th April in any one year. Members who fail to fulfill the training requirements by this date would be able to discuss/debate planning related matters but would be prohibited from voting on any planning related matters at Planning Committee and Full Council during the following Council year, unless
 - a) They were Planning Committee Members in the previous Council year and had attended a minimum of 8 Planning Committee meetings that year and had also attended at least 1 no. training/development event.
 - b) They attend two organised officer events in the current Council year.
 - c) They have had agreement to vote at Planning Committee and Full Council by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Planning and Public Protection Services.

Note:

This protocol is not designed to prevent Members from voting on Planning matters at Planning Committee and/or Full Council. The purpose of the protocol is to provide Members with appropriate training/development opportunities.

Those Members who do not meet the training/development criteria laid down in the protocol will be advised as such before all relevant meetings and will be advised/requested not to vote on Planning matters.

Whether the Member chooses to vote or not under such circumstances is a matter for each individual Member, but if they do vote, they run the risk of officers advising Corporate Governance Committee and/or Standards Committee. They also run the risk of a third party reporting them to the Local Government Ombudsman.

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