

Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee

15 July 2025

Part 1 - Public

Matters for Cabinet - Non-key Decision



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Cabinet Member	Cllr Mike Taylor, Cabinet Member for Planning
Responsible Officer	Eleanor Hoyle, Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health
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Planning Technical Consultation Responses

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on technical consultations that have been published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). These relate to improving transparency and monitoring of building out of schemes and to proposed reforms to Planning committees including their size and which types of application can be considered by those committees.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Efficient services for all residents, maintaining an effective Council.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 NOTE the response to the “Implementing measures to improve Build Out transparency: Technical consultation”, which was submitted ahead of the 7 July deadline by the Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning.
- 3.2 ENDORSE the response to the “Reform of Planning Committees: Technical consultation” and RECOMMEND to the Cabinet Member for Planning that he approves submission of the response.

4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 The legislative framework for the proposed changes in these consultations is the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (2023) and the Planning & Infrastructure Bill (2024/25).

- 4.2 Since the current Government was formed last year, they have maintained a fast-paced programme of consultations and updates to the Planning system.

5 Proposal

- 5.1 The submitted response to the “Implementing measures to improve Build Out transparency: Technical consultation” is attached to this report at **Annex 1**. Due to the timescales involved, this response was submitted under delegated powers in consultation with the Cabinet Member. In general, it is encouraging to see that the Government is considering measures to ensure that schemes are commenced and built out in timely manner and provides a framework for this happening.
- 5.2 This consultation also references other forthcoming consultations – of particular note are the proposed changes to Planning Fees regulations, which will be considered and reported to Members in due course.
- 5.3 The proposed draft response to the “Reform of Planning Committees: Technical Consultation” is appended to this report at **Annex 2**. The consultation proposes reforms to the size of Planning Committees, as well as suggesting that Members on a Planning Committee would be required to have a certified programme of training. It also looks at a potential tiering scheme to determine which types of application would be able to be considered by Planning Committee and which would be delegated to officers. Members should note that the consultation does not suggest that everything in the relevant Tier would go to Committee, rather that it would be able to be referred to Committee should it meet certain locally set requirements. Members and Officers of this Council have worked collaboratively to seek agreement on a Call-In protocol to manage this process, which is seemingly not something that is working well in some Local Planning Authorities.
- 5.4 This consultation closes on 23 July 2025 and a draft response could therefore be incorporated into reporting timescales for this committee.

6 Other Options

- 6.1 The Council could decide not to respond to technical consultations when the opportunity arises. However, this would mean that views of local Members, on behalf of their constituents, would not be represented and available to central government for consideration.

7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 7.1 The Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 There is a risk that Government implements changes without consideration for the financial impact on Councils.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 Constitutional changes are likely to be required should the Government implement the proposed changes to Planning Committees.

10 Consultation and Communications

- 10.1 Group Leaders received a draft of the “Implementing measures to improve Build Out transparency: Technical consultation” draft response prior to the submission deadline.

11 Implementation

- 11.1 Subject to recommendations to be made by the Scrutiny Select Committee, a response to the “Reform of Planning Committees: Technical consultation” can be submitted under the Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health’s delegated authority. The response, if approved, would then be submitted via the online portal prior to the deadline.

12 Cross Cutting Issues

- 12.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

12.1.1 Limited or low impact on emissions and environment.

12.1.2 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

- 12.2 Equalities and Diversity

12.2.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Background Papers	None
Annex 1	Implementing measures to improve Build Out transparency: Technical consultation
Annex 2	Reform of Planning Committees: Technical Consultation