

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

14 JULY 2022

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL, HR, REGULATORY SERVICES AND CORPORATE POLICY

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE SITE VISIT PANEL

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for the Development Control Committee to consider nominating three Members to form the Committee's Site Visit Panel, which is to comprise of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and a third Member and to also nominate a reserve Member to sit on the Panel, should any of the three nominated Panel Members be unavailable.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives / other corporate priorities

This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** – taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions for all people in the county borough.
- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 At a meeting of the Development Control Committee on 9 June 2016, the Committee agreed to establish a Site Visit Panel. The Committee at that meeting appointed four of its Members to form the Panel, in order to undertake visits of planning application sites, with the composition of this Panel being the Committee Chairperson, and the Vice-Chairperson, together with the two other Members.

4. Current situation / proposal

- 4.1 The Annual Meeting of Council of 18 May 2022, approved the membership of the Development Control Committee and the Committee is now recommended to consider the membership of the Site Visit Panel moving forward.

4.2 Although Site Visit Panel meetings have not taken place since prior to March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions, it is likely that at some point in the future, Development Control Committee site visits will recommence as part of the consideration of the processing of planning applications.

4.3 At its meeting on 17th September 2020 the Committee agreed to amend the Planning Code of Practice on Site Visits as set out below(Minute 413):-

“During times of restriction and in order to comply with social distancing protocols, full Committee site visits will be suspended. Where site visits are deemed by the Chair to be essential they shall be in the form of a Panel or an Expanded Panel. The Expanded Panel will comprise of the normal Panel (Chair, Vice and third Member) as well as up to three additional members to be drawn from a pool of volunteers from the DC Committee. It is reiterated that an Expanded Panel visit should only be necessary in exceptional circumstances and where a Panel visit would not be sufficient however, the ability to undertake site visits may be overridden by any subsequent national or local restrictions imposed as the result of national emergency or public safety”.

4.4 Committee agreed to extend this arrangement for a further 12 months or until Covid restrictions are fully lifted at its meeting on October 28th 2021(Minute 538).

4.5 It is proposed that these temporary arrangements are continued on the same basis as agreed by Committee in October 2021.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 This report accords with the Council Procedure Rules as set out in Part 4 of the Authority’s Constitution.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Implications

7.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report:

- Long-term - The approval of this report will assist in the long term planning of the business associated with one of the Council’s Regulatory Committees, in both the short term and in the long-term;
- Prevention - Having a Development Control Site Visit Panel, assists in promoting good governance;
- Integration - The report supports all the Council’s well-being objectives.
- Collaboration - The composition of a Development Control Committee Site Visit Panel will in due course, help assist the Committee in achieving increased effective decision making;

- Involvement - Establishing a Site Visit Panel allows Members to be fully apprised of planning applications to be considered by Committee, in the presence of key representatives, for example local Members, Town/Community representatives, objectors from the local community, applicants/their agents, together with representation from any other key statutory undertakers, where appropriate.

8. Financial implications

8.1 The cost implications relating to the report will be met within existing budgets allocated for Members allowances.

9. Recommendation

9.1 That the Development Control Committee nominate Members to sit as its Site Visit Panel to include:

- The Chairperson of the Development Control Committee;
- The Vice-Chairperson of the Development Control Committee;
- A third Member;
- A reserve Member (to sit on the Panel should any of the above be unavailable).
- To set up expanded site visit Panels where necessary and to authorise the Group Manager Planning and Development Services and the Development and Building Control Manager to make the necessary arrangements in conjunction with the Chairperson.

K Watson

**CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL, HR, REGULATORY SERVICES AND CORPORATE POLICY
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Background documents:

None