

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Full Council | Tuesday 15 July 2025

Planning Committee Reform

Question

The recent technical consultation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government regarding the reform of planning committees is a cause for concern. The consultation seeks views on 3 issues:

- Introducing a national scheme of delegation so there is a greater consistency and certainty about which decisions go to committee;
- Requiring separate, smaller committees for strategic development so there is more professional consideration of key developments; and
- Introducing a requirement for mandatory training for all planning committee members so they are more informed about key planning principles.

The 3rd item regarding training is not that much of an issue as I believe both the Borough and County Councils have mandatory planning training.

There is already an issue for Members concerning what applications should be delegated and what should go before the planning committee, having clarity at a national level would be helpful. But the danger is that localism gets swept away by giving planning officers greater powers over delegation.

The call for smaller committees and a more professional approach is of great concern; Members are just ordinary residents elected by their peers to represent them at the Council and to make sure their concerns are addressed - particularly with contentious planning applications.

So, my questions are:

1. Is the Council responding to this consultation?
2. And if so, are Members views included?

Councillor M H Charlesworth

Questioner

The above question was duly received by the Legal & Democratic Services Manager / Monitoring Officer on 28 June 2025 in accordance with Rule 13, Section 1 of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

In accordance with Rule 13, Section 1 of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, the questioner may ask one supplementary question without notice which must arise directly out of the original question or reply.