

## SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Report of:** Robert Walker, Executive Director, Place  
**To:** Performance Monitoring Panel – 8 November 2016  
**Author:** Phil Norman, Principal Planning Officer  
**Subject:** Review of Implemented Planning Decisions  
**Purpose:** To report on the review and to consider the findings

### **Recommendations:**

- 1) That the Panel gives consideration to the report and that conclusions from the tour of implemented planning decisions be reported to the Planning Committee; and
- 2) That the Panel considers how often it wishes to undertake future reviews of implemented planning decisions

### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Probity in Planning guidance, issued by the Local Government Association, highlights that the report of the Audit Commission 'Building in Quality' recommends that councillors should revisit a sample of implemented planning permissions to assess the quality of the decisions. Such a review should improve the quality and consistency of decision-making, strengthening public confidence in the planning system, and can also help with reviews of planning policy. It further states that reviews by the Panel should include examples of a broad range of categories, such as major and minor development, permitted departures, upheld appeals, listed building works and enforcement cases.
- 1.2 At South Holland District Council, this review is undertaken by the Performance Monitoring Panel. Part 3, Section D (Delegations to Committees) of the Constitution states that the Performance Monitoring Panel shall 'revisit a number of implemented planning decisions'. Prior to 2010, the review was undertaken on an annual basis. However, following the tour undertaken on 30 September 2010, the Performance Monitoring Panel agreed with the suggestion of the Planning Committee that the review should continue, but on a biennial basis.
- 1.3 The Panel last carried out a tour of the District on 21 May 2013.

### **2.0 THE 2016 TOUR**

- 2.1 The latest tour took place on 15 September 2016 and was programmed as one session taking in the different areas of the district. Eleven Members took part and were present for the whole day.
- 2.2 Sites were chosen to represent a range of types and sizes of development and decisions in accordance with the Protocol. These included a range of large and small-scale residential developments, at differing stages of completion, as well as a completed solar farm and single wind turbine.

- 2.3 An initial selection of sites was provided by Officers in consultation with the Panel Chair. Members were asked to submit any further sites they wished to visit, although none were put forward. Ten sites were programmed in total, although due to time constraints one site was not visited on the day of the tour.
- 2.4 Members were provided with feedback sheets for each site, which contained a number of site-specific 'key issues'. Where appropriate Officer's also provided Members with printed plans and provided verbal assistance on site.
- 2.5 A debriefing was held after the tour to review the day and draw conclusions.

### 3.0 **CONCLUSIONS**

3.1 The main conclusions drawn from the exercise were that the choice of sites illustrated a range of development which varied in its quality. As well as good quality schemes, there were still instances of development being let down by a lack of attention to detail and lack of forethought. There were also concerns over the construction stage, enforcement and applications for variations to approved schemes. It was considered that the range of sites visited was interesting and varied and that the tour was of benefit and should continue. Members also felt that in certain instances a site visit at the time of determining the application may have resulted in a different outcome.

3.2 The following actions are recommended to Planning Committee:

- That consideration of evidence on viability of housing schemes is more transparent and robustly challenged to ensure the delivery of schemes as originally approved. It is suggested that the District Valuer (or equivalent) is contacted with a view to exploring Member training on viability.
- That greater consideration is given to the design and layout of housing development through the exploration of the potential for a specific Supplementary Planning Document to be produced as part of the emerging Local Plan. This should also seek to address design responses to increased floor levels on the basis of flood risk.
- That consideration is given to effective long-term open space management and the mechanisms for successfully delivering off-site contributions in lieu of on-site provision. This could be achieved through a revised Supplementary Planning Document on Open Space, as part of the emerging Local Plan, as well as through the Council's commercialisation agenda.
- That planning conditions are reviewed to ensure that they are precise and enforceable. For example, there is concern as to at what point developers should complete the finished surfacing of roads that serve development.
- That an up-to-date 'Enforcement Plan' is produced with a view to supporting effective and timely enforcement.
- That Members are encouraged to undertake their own, or exceptionally, request Committee undertake site visits, where there is considered to be a significant impact, for example wind and solar farms.

3.3 The Panel is also requested to consider whether it wishes to continue undertaking future reviews of implemented planning decisions on a biennial basis.

### 4.0 **OPTIONS**

4.1 That the Panel considers the report and recommends the conclusions for consideration by the Planning Committee.

4.2 That the conclusions are not recommended for consideration by the Planning Committee.

4.3 That the Panel does nothing.

## 5.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 In order to inform the Performance Monitoring Panel and the Planning Committee of the conclusions.

5.2 To consider the frequency of future reviews of implemented planning decisions.

## 6.0 EXPECTED BENEFITS AND TIMELINES

6.1 To continue to monitor implemented planning decisions in order to ensure the quality of development within South Holland on an ongoing basis.

## 7.0 IMPLICATIONS

### 7.1 Corporate Priorities

7.1.1 The review of implemented planning decisions relates to the following corporate priorities:

- To develop safer, stronger, healthier and more independent communities while protecting the most vulnerable;
- To have pride in South Holland by supporting the district and residents to develop and thrive.

## 8.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

8.1 There are no wards or communities affected.

## 9 ACRONYMS

9.1 Not applicable

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Background papers:- None

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**Key Decision:** No

**Exempt Decision:** No

**This report refers to a Discretionary Service**