



WNDC Board Report

Report by Director of Planning Services

Paper Reference: 2011-02-08-02

Agenda Item: 8

14 March 2011

Subject: Planning Scheme of Delegation

Advice: That the Board:

1. Approve the revised Scheme of Delegation

Summary:

- In the light of the staff restructuring of the Corporation last year, in particular the Planning Team and the return of certain planning powers to the local planning authorities scheduled for April 1st 2011 it is necessary to amend the existing Scheme of Delegation to reflect these changes.

1. Background

1.1 The Board has already provided for the delegation of planning functions to the WNDC Planning Committees. As an exception to that general delegation the existing Scheme of Delegation details the specified planning functions to nominated officers of the Corporation in the specific circumstances set out in the current Scheme. The Scheme was initially drafted to avoid the need to present items and planning applications to the Board and the appointed committees which are non-controversial or not significant by reason of their size, location, scale and/or impact. This Scheme has been in place for a number of years and was last reviewed in September 2008. A copy is attached at Appendix A.

2. Changed circumstances

2.1 The existing Scheme of Delegation contains named officer posts which no longer exist. In September 2010 the Corporation introduced a revised staff structure. With regard to the planning team this saw the creation of a new structure immediately below the Director of Planning Services (formally the Director of Planning and Development), made up of the Head of Development Management and Development Team Manager. Below this senior management team are three Principal Development Managers. It is this group of officers which are the named officers in the recommended revised Scheme of Delegation.

2.2 The outcome of the quinquennial review of the Corporation included the announcement by Government that planning powers would be returned to the relevant Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) over a phased period. The first phase is to be effective from the 1st April 2011 when a new amended Order becomes operational, detailing changes to the thresholds that set out the type and scale of planning application the Corporation will deal with going forward. It should be noted no timescale has been firmly fixed for the return of the remaining planning powers.

2.3 In line with the Government's stated intention the amended Order sees the return of applications for 'small scale' development plus proposals for waste and recycling development. The thrust of the amendments is to change the Corporation's planning function to one of dealing with the 'larger scale', more strategic developments within

the urban development area. Consequently the amended Order in part sees the return of all, what are classified as ‘minor’ and ‘other’ applications in Northampton Town Centre, along with increasing the threshold for residential proposals from 50 to 200 units. The Scheme of Delegation therefore needs to be revised to reflect the changes in the amended Order.

2.4 Attached at Appendix B is the proposed revised Scheme of Delegation which the Board are requested to consider.

3. Appendices

Appendix A – Existing Scheme of Delegation

Appendix B – Proposed Revised Scheme of Delegation