

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

4th January, 2013

REPORT BY:

Strategic Director - Law and Governance

SUBJECT:

Re-introduction of Shire Planning Committees

REPORT FOR:

Decision

1. At the Montgomeryshire Committee meeting on 14th November, Members discussed the workings of the Regulatory Committee and following a debate asked the Democratic Services Committee to consider the reintroduction of shire planning committees.

2. The minute from the meeting is set out below:

Regulatory Committee (Planning Committee) – although members accepted the need for a consistent approach when considering planning applications (one of the main reasons for having moved from a shire arrangement to one Regulatory/Planning Committee) it was felt that it would be better to revert back to the shire arrangement so that local decisions could be taken about local applications. It was suggested that the move to operating one committee had also had an impact on attendance. It was also felt that the committee should be re-named the Planning Committee for clarity. It was agreed to refer the matter to the Democratic Services Committee.

Cllr. Mrs. Dawn Bailey abstained during a vote to support the motion. Cllr. Wynne Jones requested that the following be recorded in the minutes as his reasons for voting against the motion:

- that this led to a similar situation that historically prevailed, where there was a complete lack of consistency in the decision making process of the area planning committees*
- that this would alert the Wales Audit Office, who recommended the move to a single planning committee, and reverting could lead to intervention in planning matters by Welsh Government*
- that area planning committees would need to be politically balanced.*

3. The above minute refers to a recommendation of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) to establish a single Planning Committee and for ease of

reference a copy of the 2008 WAO report containing that recommendation is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

4. In line with this WAO recommendation the then Principal Scrutiny Committee submitted a report to Council in March 2008 recommending the establishment of a Single Planning Committee. A copy of that report is also attached for ease of reference as Appendix 2.
5. The Council duly agreed to the recommendation and there has been a Single Committee dealing with Planning since May 2008.
6. In May 2012 this committee became styled the Regulatory Committee combining the planning, licensing and rights of way functions. The Committee meets every two weeks, rotating between Welshpool, Llandrindod Wells and Brecon, with occasional meetings in Ystradgynlais. Local members, who are not on the Committee, have an opportunity to speak on applications in their wards.
7. Members involved in Planning are required to receive training and are not allowed to participate as decision makers until they have been trained.
8. The minute of the Shire Committee refers to attendance levels and for members information the average attendance since the elections in May 2012 is 79%. From 2013 the Regulatory Committee will move from a Tuesday to a Thursday which will avoid a clash with the Cabinet which did cause a problem for some members wishing to attend both meetings.

Recommendation	Reason For Recommendation
The instructions of the Committee are sought in relation to this proposal by the Montgomeryshire Committee	To facilitate consideration of the matter.

Person(s) To Action Decision:	Stephen Boyd		
Date By When Decision To Be Actioned:	24 January 2013		
Relevant Policy (ies):			
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Y

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