

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE: 26 AUGUST 2003

REVIEW OF SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Report by Director of Development Services

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of the outcome of a review of the Scheme of Delegation and recommend alterations that, if supported, will require to be presented to Council for approval.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Although the current Scheme of Delegation was reconsidered in June 2001 no substantive alterations have been made since its inception in 1996. Since the last review, considerable progress has been made as regards the planning policy framework. In particular, the adoption of the East Ayrshire Local Plan which, along with the approved Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan, imposes an up-to-date development plan against which planning applications are assessed and the approval of the Design Guidance.

- 2.2 There has been an unprecedented increase in the number of planning applications being submitted:

- 22% increase in applications received between April 2000-March 2001 and April 2002 and April-March 2003
- 26% increase in the number of Committee reports over the same period

Given the lead-in times to Committee and this background of increasing workload, the Council's performance in meeting the statutory timescales for determination of applications within 8 weeks is beginning to diverge from the Scottish average.

- 2.3 A review of the applications being submitted to the Local Planning Committees reveals that a number of reports are being prepared for relatively minor planning matters (often involving neighbour disputes) and non-controversial applications that are contrary to the development plan and recommended for refusal as a consequence of the current Scheme of Delegation. Committee processing of these reports adds around 4 weeks, and reduces staff time available for processing other applications.

- 2.4 To improve the Council's performance it is recommended that the Scheme of Delegation should be altered to allow officer delegation in the following circumstances.

- All applications for topping, lopping or felling of a tree covered by a TPO
- All householder applications for fences, garages and extensions where the recommendation is in accordance with the development plan including the approved Design Guidance and which are subject to no more than 2 objections
- Applications where the only objection(s) received is(are) from the amenity bodies and the recommendation is in accordance with the development plan including the approved Design Guidance
- Applications where the recommendation is to approve partial or complete demolition of C Class Listed Buildings
- Extending the threshold from 5 to 10 houses for “minor developments” (e.g. substitute of house types) which are not subject to objections and are in accordance with the development plan
- Approval or refusal of Applications for mobile phone masts which are not subject to objection and where the officer recommendation is in line with policy

It should be noted that the Members’ ability to request that an application be “re-routed” following receipt of the weekly list would continue to apply.

3 FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no financial or legal implications.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 If the proposed alterations to the approved Scheme of Delegation are supported they will require to be reported to Council for approval.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) agrees that the Scheme of Delegation be amended as set out in para 2.4 above; and
- (b) refers the agreed amendments to the Council for incorporation into the Scheme of Delegation.

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Director of Development Services
31 July 2003
AN/SA

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information on the report contact Alan Neish, Head of Planning and Building Control, on 01563 576767

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