

Agenda Item 7

Planning Committee
18th February 2016

Time limits for the implementation of planning permissions

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to discuss the idea of providing three years to implement planning permissions rather than the five years currently granted.

Context

In 2004, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act reduced the time limit for the implementation of planning permissions from five years to three. This was subsequently amended in the 2008 Planning Act to provide a default position of three years, but also giving planning authorities the discretion to use a longer period if they were so minded.

At this point, given the economic climate at the time, and the fact that we were renewing numerous planning consents that were lapsing, the decision was taken to revert back to a five year implementation period, the justification being to give greater flexibility for developers in what was an unpredictable climate, but also to reduce the number of applications being submitted to the Authority.

The five-year period has remained our default position since 2008 but in recent times, has been subject to increased scrutiny. In light of this, officers have reviewed the position and consider that it would now be entirely suitable for the Authority to fall back in line with the national position and revert to a three-year implementation period.

It is recognised that the implementation of certain planning permissions can remain challenging for developers but the economic justification for giving a longer period for implementation no longer remains.

Officers do not anticipate a significant number of applications to renew consents on the back of this change and therefore there would appear to be little by way of negative implications for the Authority.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members support the reduction in time to implement a planning permission from five years to three years, and that this change commences on 1st March 2016.

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