



Member Engagement in Planning – Scoping Document

Recommendation	
<p>1. A Member Planning Handbook should be produced to provide members with practical information that will assist them in dealing with local planning casework.</p>	<p>The Member Planning Handbook will include the following chapters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning Applications – types of application• Consultee and Public Access – viewing and commenting on planning applications, weekly lists and tracking cases• Determining Planning Applications – delegated decisions, call in, committees• Permitted Development rights• Planning Appeals• Planning Enforcement (inc. Gypsies and Travellers)• Planning Policy – national, local, neighbourhood plans and 5 year housing land supply• Section 106 and CIL – identifying mitigation, securing mitigation, CIL, how CIL is spent• Acronyms• Planning Induction for new members – including training and attending a planning committee <p>Draft will be agreed with Cabinet Member. Draft will be circulated to Member Development Committee for approval.</p> <p>The Member Planning Handbook will be updated and resent as part of Member refresher training programme annually.</p> <p>This will be made available through the Source expanding on existing content: https://internal.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/members-area/guidance-training-2021/member-involvement-planning-applications/</p>

	<p>Officers: Christine Urry (Head of Planning and Development) and Beverley Radway-Bright (Planning Business Support Team Leader)</p>
<p>2. All members should be able to access and receive training on how to use a GIS map to enable them to look up planning application details and other useful information such as flood plains, conservation areas etc to help them respond to planning queries from residents.</p>	<p>This will be subject to a separate business case to be developed with IT services. This will require the Council to move onto one front facing GIS system.</p> <p>Officers: Alastair Nicholson (Planning Business and Improvement Manager) and Keith Shearman (ICT Information Systems Manager)</p>
<p>3. A short guidance note should be provided for officers and members explaining the benefits of working in partnership, to enable public participation in planning and promote a wider understanding of the process. This should set out reasonable expectations in terms of how queries will be managed, including timescales.</p>	<p>The guidance note will contain the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member and Officer Roles in Planning – a brief description of the role that members and officers play in the planning process, including policy development, planning applications and enforcement. • Collaborative Working – the benefits of member officer partnership • Communication Channels – including surgeries, strategic sites working group, email, and phone. Turnaround times will be set out for emails and returning phone calls to members. The focus will however be on the use of surgeries for casework rather than on emails.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Planning Protocol (appendix to the Council’s Constitution) will be appended in full (https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s35416/CouncilConstitution.pdf) • Draft will be agreed with Cabinet Member. • Draft will be circulated to Member Development Committee for approval • Once finalised the Guidance Note will be issued to all P&E staff and included in the Leader’s email to local members. <p>Officers: Christine Urry (Head of Planning and Development) and Beverley Radway-Bright (Planning Business Support Team Leader)</p>
<p>4. A series of ‘informal’ Meet the Planners events should be held to enable members and officers to meet and chat in a relaxed atmosphere, to help to cultivate trust and collaboration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly in person events tied in with updates/trainings on key areas (e.g., Permitted Development, Planning Appeals, AONB, Enforcement, Green Belt, Call-ins etc) • 30-minute presentation, 10-minute Q&A, followed by teas and coffees/networking • This will be part of a revised training offer to all members, moving away from generic ‘planning training’ and instead providing more focussed sessions on areas of planning that are important to local ward members. • This will be reviewed, taking into account feedback from attendees. <p>Officers: Christine Urry (Head of Planning and Development) and Catherine MacKenzie (Democratic Services)</p>
<p>5. Political Awareness training should be offered to planning staff to support them in working effectively with Members. This could be facilitated by the Democratic Services team, who would work with the Head of Planning and Development to agree content and delivery timescales.</p>	<p>Proposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold six sessions in person with 25 delegates on each • Peter Strachan as Cabinet Member introduces the session • First section - 10 mins with a member (potentially a non-Buckinghamshire member through the LGA) with experience of Planning. Ask them to talk about what brought them into politics, what an average week is like as a Councillor and their experience with Planning casework. Also what officers can do to help them and what they might be able to do to help officers. • 10 mins for follow up questions • Then the member leaves so officers only in the room • Second section - led by Dem Services – Short slide deck around political make-up of the Council, decision making and governance structures, member/officer protocol and

	<p>opportunity for officers to share their previous experiences with members. Will cover how best to engage with members, managing expectations, building trusting relationships and emphasising collaborative approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also input from Planning Managers who can give examples of when they have worked well with members. <p>Timing and Logistics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like to deliver the sessions during September but need to avoid planning committee dates and the publications dates for those agendas (discounts 11 days in the month) • Would like to hold in a central location – suggested Princes Risborough Community Centre or Green Park, so need enough lead in time to get venue booked and issue invitations • Might be useful to book sessions via eventbrite or similar <p>Officers: Christine Urry (Head of Planning and Development) and Kelly Sutherland (Scrutiny Manager)</p>
<p>6. There should be a review of the new Member Surgeries in June 2022 to consider the level of participation and feedback from both members and officers regarding their effectiveness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of planning staff and members regarding the effectiveness of planning surgeries (to be included in the Leader’s email to local members). • Review number of surgeries and attendance by members and officers. • Recommendation on how to proceed to be agreed by Cabinet member <p>Officers: Beverley Radway-Bright (Planning Business Support Team Leader)</p>