

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth and Economy

Subject: Response to Government Technical Consultation – Reform of Planning Committees

Date: 23rd July 2025

Author: Assistant Director – Development

Wards Affected

Borough-wide

Purpose

To gain Portfolio Holder endorsement of Gedling Borough Council’s proposed response contained in **Appendix 1** to the Government consultation on proposed reforms to Planning Committees. The consultation response is required to be submitted by 23rd July 2025

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

The Portfolio Holder approves the proposed response to the consultation on proposed reforms to Planning Committees – as set out under the relevant questions reproduced in Appendix 1.

1 Background

1.1 The Government launched a consultation on changes to how Planning Committees function on 28th May 2025. It is open for responses from anyone (individuals and groups) until 23rd July 2025. The consultation follows last year’s election of the new Government, who made a number of commitments around removing barriers to development, including a pledge

	to build 1.5 million homes during this Parliament.
1.2	The consultation acknowledges that planning decisions are principally made locally, and states that the government recognises that planning committees have an 'integral role in providing local democratic oversight of planning decisions'. However, the consultation says it is vital that 'planning committees operate as effectively as possible, focusing on those applications which require member input and not revisiting the same decisions'.
	<u>Proposed Changes to Planning Committees</u>
1.3	<p>The consultation is considering three main actions to reform planning committees nationally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introducing a national scheme of delegation so there is greater consistency and certainty about which decisions go to committee; - requiring separate, smaller committees for strategic development so there is more professional consideration of key developments as well as limiting the size of committees; and - introducing a requirement for mandatory training for all planning committee members so they are more informed about key planning principles. - The consultation also considers a fourth area around the quality of decisions – changing how Councils are measured in terms of quality of decision making (the number of decisions which are subsequently overturned at appeal).
1.4	<p>The Government have indicated that they would welcome views on the options set out in their Paper - and in particular they are seeking views in respect of the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you think this package of reforms would help to improve decision making by planning committees? - Do you have views on which of the options we have set out with regard to national schemes of delegation would be most effective? Are there any aspects which could be improved? - We could take a hybrid approach to any of the options listed. Do you think, for instance, we should introduce a size threshold for applications to go to committees, or delegate all reserved matters applications? - Are there advantages in giving further consideration to a model based on objections? - Do you agree that targeted planning committees for strategic

	<p>development could facilitate better decision making?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you have a view on the size of these targeted committees? - How should we define strategic developments? - Do you think the approach to mandatory training is the right one?
	<u>Implications</u>
1.5	<p>In terms of any implications for Gedling Borough Council's Planning Committee, officers have reviewed the applications considered by committee over 2024-25 against the measures set out in the consultation to help guide the Council's response. 13 applications were considered by the Council's Planning Committee over that 12-month period, of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 7 applications were 'Major' applications. Some of these would have been subject to a 'triage' discussion between the Chair of Planning Committee and Head of Place Development to decide if they should be considered by Planning Committee as outlined within the question responses within Appendix 1. - 6 applications were smaller applications (generally 'Minor' applications for up to ten residential units) called in by Members, or made the Council. These would be affected by the changes i.e. they would have been delegated for determination by planning officers rather than determined at planning committee. Of the 6 applications, 1 was a Member overturn (i.e. officer recommendation for approval but Planning Committee refused the application) which was not subject to an appeal and 5 were applications where Planning Committee agreed with the officer recommendation.
1.5	<p>Although it is not yet clear which of the proposed changes the government will make, were the proposals to be implemented in full, then none of the 6 minor applications would be considered by Planning Committee, reducing the overall number of items by almost 50% and potentially resulting in a fewer number of Planning Committee meetings</p>
2	Proposal
2.1	<p>It is proposed that the Council responds to the Reform of Planning Committees Technical consultation with the responses to the questions on changes to plan making as set out in Appendix 1.</p>
3	Alternative Options
3.1	<p>The alternative options are for Gedling Borough Council not to respond to the consultation or to amend the drafted response. There is no requirement for the Council to respond to this public consultation but doing so will inform the Government's planning reform proposals from the Council's perspective. The draft response provided has been informed by the relevant Council Officers and can be amended if the Portfolio Holder</p>

	considers it necessary to do so.
4	Financial Implications
4.1	No financial implications. Cost of officer time drafting the response is met from existing budgets. Given the proposed changes are draft, it is not possible to quantify the financial implications of the proposals at this time.
5	Legal Implications
5.1	None. This is an opportunity to comment on potential Planning Committee reforms, which have not yet come into force.
6	Equalities Implications
6.1	None. This is an opportunity to comment on potential planning reforms which have not yet come into force. The consultation questions include an opportunity to comment on the potential equality implications of the proposals.
7	Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications
7.1	None. This is an opportunity to comment on potential planning reforms, which have not yet come into force. There is an opportunity, through comments on the consultation questions, to comment on the potential carbon reduction / environmental sustainability implications of the proposals.
8	Appendices
8.1	Appendix 1 - Proposed consultation response to the implementation of Planning Committee Reforms
9	Background Papers
9.1	Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Reform of planning committees: technical consultation https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reform-of-planning-committees-technical-consultation
10	Reasons for Recommendations
10.1	To inform the Government of the Council's perspective on proposed planning reforms.

Statutory Officer approval

**Approved by: Scott Anderson
(Deputy S151 Officer)**

**Date: 23/07/2025
On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer**

**Approved by: Natalie Osei (Deputy
Monitoring Officer)**

**Date: 23/07/2025
On behalf of the Monitoring Officer**