

PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PARK DIRECTION AND PLANNING

**SUBJECT: THE PROVISION OF PLANS AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION TO
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Purpose of report

To advise Members of the options considered, with regard to making available plans and supporting information in relation to planning applications being dealt with by Committee.

Background

Members have raised concerns that there is lack of clarity on the plans reduced to A4 size that are contained within the Development Management Committee papers.

Current situation

Members are provided 5 days before Development Management Committee, with an A4 hard copy of the papers, posted to their home address. Each planning application agenda item would invariably consist of the officer report together with plans of the application, if appropriate. These plans would normally consist of a location plan, floorplan(s) and elevations. In more complex applications there could also be plans showing site levels, cross sections, or street scenes for example. The plans that are included in the papers are selected by the case officer from the application file.

These plans are normally provided to the Authority on paper sizes ranging from A3 up to A0, with few plans actually provided at A4 size. For the Committee papers the plans are normally scanned and then reduced to fit to A4 size. This has resulted in loss of detail and also contains detail too small to read on some planning applications, but not all. Officers are aware that this is an issue. On major or controversial applications officers recommend that Members undertake site visits where the plans are made available on site.

A full set of plans are delivered to Community Councils for their consideration. A set of proposals can also be made available in our satellite offices on request – Tenby or Newport for example. Plans are also available to view in Llanion.

Options

1. Do nothing

This would maintain the status quo and the onus would be on individual Members to make themselves fully aware of the application details. Members can come into the planning office and see the full application including the plans. Members can set up meetings with the planning case officer to go through planning applications and the plans to gain a better understanding of the proposal.

2. Provide paper copies of all plans at original sizing for all applications

This would be the most expensive and time consuming option, with copying and postage costs being more than at present. It would also require that Committee

papers were completed earlier, and we are already completing reports earlier to enable legal advisors to peruse the papers prior to printing. In addition, some plans can be reduced to A4 size without any detail/clarity being compromised.

3. Provide email attachments of plans or upload documents onto website
In the longer term this is the best option. We are currently scoping the introduction of a document management system, which will give us the capacity to present all our planning information on a single website in the same way as Pembrokeshire County Council. However, implementation is about 18 months away – this is a very large new project and there are many different possible solutions.

However, in the short-term we could trial a temporary solution. There are a number of different ways of doing this, but the best solution would be a separate website area that contains the drawings for the next Committee. Members could click on each drawing and view on-screen, or they could save them to their own computer. It is not a particularly elegant solution and would require a short instruction sheet, but it would bridge the gap until we get a proper system set up. The drawback to this option is that we are aware that not all of our Members have good broadband connections, and some of the drawings will be large files.

4. On day of meeting put up plans of applications for viewing prior to meeting
This would allow Members to come in to see plans that require some clarity. Officers could also be made available to fully explain any scaling etc. It would also ensure that Members would be aware of the full application, including material not made in plan form, e.g. Design and Access statements, assessments, studies, etc. To enable this to happen it may be necessary to move the Development Management Committee to a slightly later start.
5. Provide paper copies of relevant plans at original size for some but not all applications
This option would need to be at the discretion of the Head of Development Management. The issue here would be what plans would need to be provided and the perception may be held by applicants that that the officers had deliberately put forward (or withheld) plans for this detailed consideration.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Option 3 above be adopted.

Background documents:

None

(For further information, please contact Jane Gibson, Director of Park Direction and Planning)

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Consultees: Head of Development Management and administration staff