



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 14 September 2020

STRUCTURE AND PROCESS OF THE REFERRAL PANEL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides an update to Members on the Referral Process following the Strategic Planning Committee meeting in June 2020

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Member:	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning and Coastal Management
Supporting Officer:	Liz Beighton Planning Manager (Development Management) 01394 444778 Liz.beighton@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Members on the Referral Process following the Strategic Planning Committee meeting in June 2020.

2 THE REFERRAL PROCESS

- 2.1 The Strategic Planning Committee in June 2020 considered a report by the Planning Portfolio Holder which provided a review and analysis of all the decisions in the year from April 2019 to April 2020.
- 2.2 The contents of the report were noted and accepted by the Committee. It was also agreed that a yearly report on the Referral Process would be presented on a yearly basis to the Committee.
- 2.3 At the same Committee meeting, Members considered a report on the Future Work Programme of the Strategic Planning Committee. The minutes of that discussion recorded the following:

It was proposed by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Ritchie, that a report looking at the structure and process of the Referral Panel should come back to Committee to address any issues that had been previously raised.

- 2.4 The following work has been undertaken since the June 2020 meeting with regards to the referral process to proactively deal with some of the issues which were raised by Members of the Committee.
- 2.5 All Ward Members are notified of items within their wards which are being considered by the Referral Panel in advance of the meeting and invited to attend and listen in to the meeting should they wish. To join the meeting Members will need to make contact with the planning officers to be provided with the Skype details.
- 2.6 Remote training has been provided to all Town and Parish Councils (and also circulated to all Members) on how best to frame consultation responses to stand the best chance possible of the Referral Panel to consider referring the item to the Planning Committee.
- 2.7 Member training was held virtually on the 6 August 2020 at which the Head of Planning Services and Planning Manager re-affirmed the referral process to Members and positively encouraged their engagement in the consultation process and also attending and viewing the Panels. For record, from the 12 May 2020 until the 25 August, there have been four instances of Members commenting on planning applications within the prescribed consultation period out of the 62 items which has been considered. During the same time period, the Panel have referred 12 items to the Planning Committee for consideration.
- 2.8 Parish Councils and Ward Members are being notified of the Referral Panel outcome once the meeting has been concluded with a record of the communication being uploaded electronically for public inspection. Likewise, the copies of the reports and PowerPoint presentations are also being uploaded electronically.

3 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 This report is for information only.

RECOMMENDATION

That the content of the report is noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None