



DELEGATED DECISION POLICY ON PLANNING MATTERS

Contents

1. Purpose and Scope.....	3
2. Policy Statement	3
3. Procedures.....	3
Routine Planning Applications	3
4. Councillor Rights and Responsibilities.....	3
5. Governance Constraints.....	4
6. Planning Considerations	4
Material Planning Considerations	4
Non-Material Planning Considerations	5
7. Policy Review.....	5

This Delegated Decisions Policy on Planning Matters was adopted by the council at its meeting held on 20th May 2025.

1. Purpose and Scope

Ashington Town Council recognises the importance of maintaining an active role in the planning process while ensuring efficient governance procedures. This policy establishes a framework for responding to planning applications through delegated authority, balancing the need for democratic oversight with administrative efficiency.

2. Policy Statement

Ashington Town Council will ensure that planning applications of strategic importance or significant public interest are brought before the Full Council for consideration and response. All other planning applications will be processed via delegated powers to the Executive Officer, in consultation with relevant Ward Councillors.

3. Procedures

Routine Planning Applications

1. Planning applications shall be received by the Executive Officer (or officer delegated by the Executive Officer) who will distribute details to the relevant Ward Councillors.
2. Ward Councillors are expected to respond to the Executive Officer (or officer delegated by the Executive Officer) within the designated timeframe. Timely responses from Ward Councillors are essential to the effective operation of this policy.
3. Where no queries or concerns are raised by the joint decision of all Ward Councillors consulted **(with responses received)**, the Executive Officer (or officer delegated by the Executive Officer) shall submit a response of 'support' to the Planning Department within the allocated timeframe.
4. Where concerns or objections that constitute material planning considerations are raised, the Executive Officer (or officer delegated by the Executive Officer) shall submit a response of 'object' to the Planning Department within the allocated timeframe, clearly stating the material reasons for objection.
5. In the absence of responses from Ward Councillors, despite reasonable attempts to obtain feedback, Ashington Town Council's response will be registered as 'No Comment'.
6. All Councillors will report directly to the Executive Officer (or officer delegated by the Executive Officer), avoiding discussion between members that could compromise the process.

4. Councillor Rights and Responsibilities

Any Councillor has the right to request that a planning application be brought to a Council meeting for consideration, provided:

- The request is made promptly upon receiving details of the application
- There are clear reasons why the matter requires Council deliberation
- The request is made directly to the Executive Officer

The Executive Officer, in consultation with the Chair, will bring the application to Council, based on strategic importance and public interest considerations.

Ward Councillors are expected to:

- Respond to planning application consultations within the specified timeframe
- Consider material planning considerations in their responses
- Alert the Executive Officer promptly if they believe an application should be considered by Full Council

5. Governance Constraints

As statute provides, decisions can only be delegated to Officers or Committees. Planning matters are delegated to the Executive Officer, in consultation with Ward Councillors, subject to the following conditions:

1. Members will not comment on planning applications if they sit on the Planning Committee at Northumberland County Council.
2. Members will not comment on planning applications if there is any likelihood that there will be a request for the application to be brought to a Council meeting, as this could be considered pre-determination.
3. Members will not comment on planning applications for which they have a declarable interest.

6. Planning Considerations

Material Planning Considerations

Northumberland County Council considers the following material planning considerations when determining applications:

- Local and national policies
- Contamination
- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Loss of outlook or overshadowing
- Parking, highway access, safety and traffic
- Noise/smell
- Capacity of physical and social infrastructure
- Impact on listed buildings and conservation areas
- Layout and density of development
- Design, appearance and materials
- Nature conservation/loss of trees
- Other material planning considerations

Non-Material Planning Considerations

The following matters should not be taken into account when determining planning applications:

- Loss of light/view
- Perceived impact on property value
- Land ownership or restrictive covenant
- Applicant's personal circumstances
- Business competition
- Matters controlled by building regulations/environmental protection act or other non-planning legislation
- Issues between neighbours

7. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or when changes in legislation or best practice require.

Any changes will be brought before the council.