

Planning Committee/Delegations Review

Here are the comments for your review from Westerleigh Parish Council:

1. The first comments are based on the recent application P18/4565/F and its progress through site visit, and Development Management Committee. The officer recommendation was approval despite the Parish Council and residents strong objections.

The Parish Council was represented at the site visit by the Chair of the Parish Council and he was able to speak.

The application was 'called in' by a District Councillor and at the DMC meeting he spoke and so did a representative of residents opposing the scheme. Despite the representations the DMC upheld the Officer recommendation.

IF the decision had been different and this had gone to Strategic Planning Committee it would have been an overly bureaucratic and possibly unnecessary step. If a decision had been reached by DMC that supported residents and Parish Council views then the SDC could have overturned that without any further representation being able to be aired in that forum. Could representation by Cllrs or residents at SPC meetings be considered in such cases?

2. Site visits

Some Parish Councils are very small. For example Westerleigh PC has just 6 Cllrs and many work full time. The concern is if no Parish Councillor was available to attend a site visit where important aspects were needed to be pointed out to the Officer or DMC. A suggestion would be that a member of public can be nominated by the Parish Council to speak and explain with their local knowledge, if a Cllr is not present.

3. At a meeting of the DMC it seems that where no prior site visit has taken place the discussion can possibly get deferred to the next meeting to allow a site visit. That means members of public and Parish Councillors may have travelled to a DMC meeting unnecessarily, costing time, fuel and inconvenience. (Not very climate emergency friendly!)

Is it possible that where required all site visits have taken place prior to an application being on the agenda?

Hope these comments are helpful and tweak the system to make it fair for representation.