

Middleton-on-Sea Association

www.middleton-on-sea.org.uk

(Founded 1937)

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Your Ref M/42/17/HH-NC/SDB

26th July 2017

Dear Mr Crowther,

Thank you for your letter dated 24 July.

I think it is helpful that Planning Application M/42/17 has exposed what the Management Committee of this Association believes are fundamental flaws in the scheme of delegation approved in June 2016.

I am grateful for the copy of the 'e mail that you state confirms Parish Councils were informed. However, it does not give detail of the 'report regarding amendments to the Scheme of Delegation'. Was this the full 200+ page report or a simplified extract regarding the Scheme of Delegation? Could I have a copy please? Also, was there any other contact with Parish Councils to ensure they were fully aware of the true implications.

Why was the advice on the Arun District Council Website, for a period of approximately 12 months, so unclear as to actually mislead? Although I note the advice was changed on or about 20 July 2017, before that date it made no mention whatever of 'Householder' applications.

You state that 100% of 'householder' applications will be dealt with under delegated powers. This, as I understand it, relates to 'extensions' rather than new builds. Can you confirm this please, and provide a definition for an 'extension' to a dwelling?

You will be aware that the planning history for M/42/17 shows repeated attempts to gain permission for a new dwelling. Those applications were generally unsuccessful as Councillors sought to protect the 'spacious layout' in this Area of Special Character. Their refusals were repeatedly upheld by the Planning Inspector.

However, this new scheme of delegation has allowed M/42/17 - an application for an 'extension' - to be approved by a Planning Officer. The existing and proposed plans strains credibility when describing the proposed development as an 'extension'. The Planning Officers report concedes that the development would be contrary to Policy DEV19(ii) in that it would not be subservient to the host dwelling.

One of the many potential implications of the new scheme of delegation is that applications may be submitted for a very modest 'new build', but once approved, any and all applications to extend will only be considered by a Planning Officer.

This denies Councillors the opportunity to consider contentious cases and the opportunity of residents to voice objections directly to their elected representatives. It also provides every opportunity for unsuitable or inappropriate developments to be approved, 'piecemeal'. Indeed, it will encourage that approach – giving Planning Officer greatly increased power.

The new policy reduces the importance of representations being made to the Parish Council and reduces the importance, power and involvement of District Councillors in planning matters. It is too widely drafted so as to include Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Areas of Special Character, without any limiting criteria to provide for reference to District Councillors.

It also increases the opportunities to achieve unsuitable developments by stealth and a piece meal approach by developers.

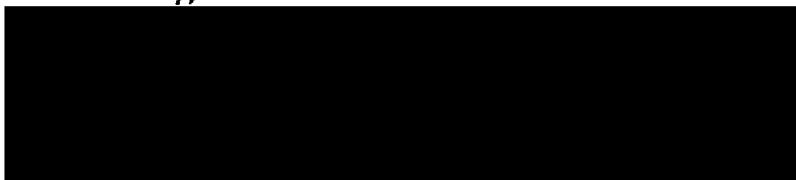
I understand that there may be good grounds for seeking to reduce the number of applications previously dealt with by the Development Control Committee. But the limiting criteria as it was understood from your Website – that the Parish Council must object before reference to the DCC – seemed

most effective. I believe that M/42/17 was the only application that met that criteria.

Could you please inform me as to (a) whether the scheme of delegation policy will now be reviewed, (b) if so, when that will take place and (c) what measures will be taken to ensure proper consultation so that Councillors are aware of the strength of feeling from many residents.

I would be grateful if you could address these issues without delay and reply to me as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Leete
Chairman of Middleton-on-Sea Association



cc:-

District Councillor Barbara Oakley
District Councillor Jacky Pendleton
District Councillor Paul Wotherspoon
District Councillor Ricky Bower

