

Middleton-on-Sea Association
www.middleton-on-sea.org.uk
(Founded 1937)

Neil Crowther
Group Head of Planning
Arun District Council
Arun Civic Centre
Maltravers Road
Littlehampton
West Sussex BN17 5LF



Cornerways
36 Sea Lane
Middleton-on-Sea
West Sussex
PO22 7RT

18 August 2017

Your Ref NC/SDB

Dear Mr Crowther,

Thank you for your letter dated 15 August concerning planning application M/42/17/HH and for your assurance that Officers were correctly applying the scheme of delegation approved in June 2016. Thank you also for confirming that there is no clear distinction between new build and extensions for householder developments.

I am sure you are well aware of the many concerns that have been raised by residents, Resident Associations and Parish Councils regarding that scheme of delegation. Specifically, (a) the total exclusion of District Councillors from any involvement in the most contentious householder applications - even if they wished to be involved, (b) the absolute power that Planning Officers now have to decide a whole class of planning applications regardless of the circumstances and (c) the greatly reduced influence and status of Parish Councils in such cases.

You state in your letter that a report will be presented to the Development Control Committee(DCC) in October 2017 to consider whether that Committee wish to see any amendments to the scheme and that the report will be copied to Parish Councils.

Will Parish Councils be invited to make any comment or be consulted prior to the drafting that report?

In view of the interest shown by members of this Association, will a copy of that report be made available to MOSA for comment in advance of the meeting?

Although you confirm that Parishes were notified of the changes to the scheme of delegation in June 2016, were they consulted before those changes were made?

Enquiries we have made of Parish Councils and Resident Associations have revealed considerable dissatisfaction and dismay at the scope of the revised delegated powers. Further, we do not believe that District Councillors were provided with the best information

before approving the changes that have been made. For example, although Councillors were told that another District Council (Mid Sussex) had made similar changes, it was not made clear that those Councillors had retained the right to demand an application be considered by the Development Control Committee in very contentious cases. In addition, they were not told that a Planning Officer could, in view of the circumstances of a particular application including the planning history, local feeling etc., refer that application to the DCC for decision.

This Association welcomes the fact that the Scheme of Delegation is to be reviewed in October this year.

A reduction in the number of planning applications hitherto presented to District Councillors at the DCC may well have been needed, but we suggest that there must be a better and more equitable way than that introduced in June 2016.

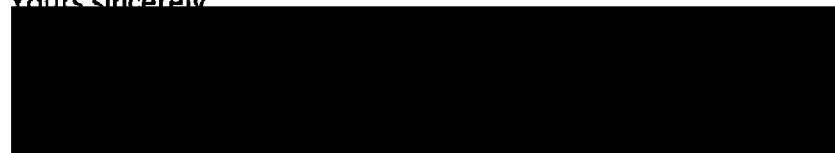
For example, all householder applications could be determined by Planning Officers unless the Parish Council, supported by at least one District Councillor objected to the application and sought a determination by the DCC.

This would enable District Councillors with a particular interest in certain contentious applications to seek and achieve a determination by the DCC. It would largely maintain the reduction in 'workload' achieved by the revised scheme of delegation. It would retain some influence for Parish Councils. It would increase transparency and, crucially, give the public the assurance of an involvement of elected representatives in those most contentious cases.

On behalf of residents and members of this Association, I hope you are able to support this suggested change to the scheme of delegation.

I would be very 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

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