

**Subject:** FW: SR1014669 - Changes to Planning Scheme of Delegation

**From:** Nancy Jamieson

**Sent:** 26 April 2018 11:13

**To:** Steve Burgess <[Steve.Burgess@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:Steve.Burgess@edinburgh.gov.uk)>; Planning VIP <[planning.vip@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:planning.vip@edinburgh.gov.uk)>

**Cc:** Neil Gardiner <[Neil.Gardiner@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:Neil.Gardiner@edinburgh.gov.uk)>; Daniel Lodge <[Daniel.Lodge@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:Daniel.Lodge@edinburgh.gov.uk)>; David Leslie <[David.Leslie@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:David.Leslie@edinburgh.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** SR1014669 - Changes to Planning Scheme of Delegation

Dear Councillor Burgess

Thank you for forwarding on the Grange Association's letter regarding the Council's scheme of delegation. As a bit of background, I have attached an email I sent to community councils on this matter which will hopefully explain the position.

It is the case that there was no public consultation on the scheme of delegation changes but Planning Committee members were aware of this when they made their decision at Planning Committee on 14 March. This was a pragmatic decision to reduce the number of householder applications at Committee to ensure time was better spent on those applications of more significance. It also reflected their understanding that greater delegation of householder applications would help to improve planning performance by creating service efficiencies and increase customer satisfaction. Whilst I understand that community councils and other groups may see as a dilution of democratic accountability, there are still sufficient safeguards in the scheme of delegation to ensure that householder applications can go to committee if necessary. I would also add that the Planning Committee is very clear that it is the quality and content of the comments rather than the number of comments that can be of greater significance.

In terms of the Planning Committee not being aware of the implications of the changes, I can confirm that a workshop was held before committee to go through all the changes and the implications and it was members who came up with the final changes after much discussion.

I do have some concerns that community groups see this as about numbers. In particular, the phrase '*will lead to unhelpful and non-productive bureaucracy and letter writing, in which Associations will canvas active members to submit broadly similar objections simply to achieve the necessary numbers.*' This seems to me to be contrary to the spirit of public participation in the planning process which is about giving individuals the opportunity to look at the proposals and make their own decision as to whether they want to comment or not. Surely the role of Associations and community councils is to canvass opinion not to canvass people to submit the same objections. I am sure if individuals feel as strongly as the association about these matters they will make their own comments.

The issue about what 'unresolved' means is a minor point. Basically if there is an outstanding objection and approval is recommended, the Committee will decide the application. It will not be open to wide interpretation as it is usually clear where objections have been resolved.

In terms of actions requested, the report to Planning Committee set out the data in the appendix. If the changes are approved at Council in June, we will ensure officers are fully trained on them but I would not support a system whereby officers have to agree with the community council whether an objection is resolved or not. We will err on the side of caution using our professional expertise and integrity as required by our professional code of conduct. Finally, ward councillors are not statutory consultees on planning applications. I am not sure if this is a mistake in the letter? Planning legislation sets out who statutory consultees are and they include Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Natural heritage etc. Community councils can also be statutory consultees. The scheme of delegation does not change the statutory basis for being a statutory consultee.

I hope this helps. I have copied in Councillor Gardiner who I am sure will be happy to discuss any concerns you have about the Planning Committee's decision.

*Nancy Jamieson  
Planning Team Manager  
Appeals and Review*