

Planning Committee: 25.07.12**Report of Head of Planning Service (DFJ)**

Recommendation; that members note the decision to suspend the practice of acknowledging and individually notifying third parties of decisions on wind turbine or associated development applications.

Background and context; Representations received in respect of wind turbine or associated developments by third parties.

Members will be aware of the high numbers of wind turbine and related applications submitted recently. These applications have resulted in an unprecedented level of public interest and in turn have resulted in a high volume of representations being sent to the Planning Service; individual applications can often attract hundreds of letters.

The current practice of the Planning Service is to acknowledge receipt of each individual letter received and thereafter inform the writer of the eventual decision. Members will appreciate that this is a costly and time consuming exercise which is diverting valuable and increasingly constrained resources away from front line service delivery.

It has been decided therefore that the current practice of acknowledging and advising third parties of decisions relating to wind turbine and associated development applications will cease until further notice.

In reaching this decision the Planning Service has been mindful of the advice contained in Circular 32/92 "Publicity for Planning Applications" together with that contained in the "Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure)(Wales) Order 2012". There is clearly no statutory requirement on local planning authorities to acknowledge and notify third parties individually of decisions.

The Planning Service has sought to go beyond this statutory requirement recognising that keeping third parties individually informed is both courteous and good practice. Nevertheless, a realistic approach has to be taken; paragraph 26 of the circular makes it clear that "*In reaching this decision however, the costs involved will need to be taken into account*".

The Planning Service will continue to ensure that all statutory requirements in respect of publicising these applications will continue as present, either in the form of site notices, neighbour notifications or publishing a notice in a local newspaper. Likewise, each letter received will be placed on the appropriate planning file and taken into account by the case officer. A data base of the names and addresses of writers will also be created.

Members will also be aware that the Head of Service has also recently decided that wind turbine applications or associated developments will no longer be dealt with under delegated powers (with the exception of domestic wind turbines). These applications will therefore be determined at committee and the officers reports will indicate the amount of representations received by third parties and deal with the issues raised.

Each decision made at committee and will be publically available in the form of formal minutes and in addition a list of each decision made will continue to be available to view on the Council's website.