

Submitted to Reform of planning committees: technical consultation
Submitted on 2025-07-11 12:54:57

Respondent Details

1 What is your name?

Name:
Ringmer Parish Council

2 What is your email address?

Email:
clerk@ringmerparishcouncil.gov.uk

3 What is the name of your organisation?

Free text:
Ringmer Parish Council

4 Please indicate in what capacity you are responding to this consultation (please only select one)

Neighbourhood planning body, parish or town council

National scheme of delegation

5 Question 1: Do you agree with the principle of having a two tier structure for the national scheme of delegation?

Disagree

Please explain your answer:

Small planning applications especially in rural areas can be much more damaging to the community, than larger applications especially in urban areas. Decisions to which applications should go to the planning committee, should be left to local decision makers who have local knowledge. Central imposition of national rules assumes that one size fits all, which is incorrect.

6 Question 2: Do you agree the following application types should fall within Tier A? a) applications for planning permission for Householder development, minor commercial development and minor residential development b) applications for reserved matter approvals c) applications for non-material amendments to planning permissions d) applications for the approval of conditions including Schedule 5 mineral planning condition e) applications for approval of the BNG Plan f) applications for approval of prior approval (for permitted development rights) g) applications for lawful development certificates h) applications for a Certificate of Appropriate Alternative Development

Disagree

Please explain your answer:

Especially in rural areas "minor applications" can have major impacts. In practice the great majority of applications in these categories would be delegated, but one size does not fit all.

7 Question 3: Do you think, further to the working paper on revising development thresholds, we should consider including some applications for medium residential development (10- 50 dwellings) within Tier A? If so, what types of application?

No

Please explain your answer:

10 - 50 dwellings in Westminster maybe a minor matter, in a country village such an application would cause a major change. Local democracy requires such decisions to be made by elected Councillors.

8 Question 4: Are there further types of application which should fall within Tier A?

Not Answered

If yes, which application types?:

Please refer to answer in question 1

9 Question 5: Do you think there should be a mechanism to bring a Tier A application to committee in exceptional circumstances? If so, what would those circumstances be and how would the mechanism operate?

Yes

Free text:

In our view there should not be a centrally imposed Tier A. If this is imposed, there should certainly be provision for exceptions.

10 Question 6: Do you think the gateway test which requires agreement between the chief planner and the chair of the planning committee is suitable? If not, what other mechanism would you suggest?

No

Free text:

It would be extremely unwise and undemocratic for the chief planner to be able to veto the wishes of the elected chair of the planning committee.

11 Question 7: Do you agree that the following types of application should fall within Tier B? a) Applications for planning permission aside from householder applications, minor commercial applications, minor residential development applications b) notwithstanding a), any application for planning permission where the applicant is the local authority, a councillor or officer c) applications for s73 applications to vary conditions

Not Answered

Free text:

In our view there should not be a centrally imposed Tier B.

12 Question 8: Are there further types of application which should fall within Tier B?

Not Answered

Free text:

In our view there should not be a centrally imposed Tier B.

13 Question 9: – Do you consider that special control applications should be included in: a) Tier A or b) Tier B?

Not Answered

Free text:

In our view there should not be a centrally imposed Tier B.

14 Question 10: Do you think that all section 106 decisions should follow the treatment of the associated planning applications? For section 106 decisions not linked to a planning application should they be in Tier A or Tier B, or treated in some other way?

Free text:

In our view there should not be a centrally imposed Tier B.

15 Question 11: – Do you think that enforcement decisions should be in Tier A or Tier B, or treated in some other way?

Not Answered

Please explain your answer:

In our view there should not be a centrally imposed Tier B. Planning enforcement is generally very weak and needs to be strengthened.

Size and composition of committees

16 Question 12: Do you agree that the regulations should set a maximum for planning committees of 11 members?

Disagree

Free text:

For central government to seek to micro manage the activities of elected local authorities would be undemocratic.

17 Question 13: If you do not agree, what if any alternative size restrictions should be placed on committees?

Free text:

None

18 Question 14: Do you think the regulations should additionally set a minimum size requirement?

Free text:

No

Mandatory training for planning committee members

19 Question 15: Do you agree that certification of planning committee members, and of other relevant decisions makers, should be administered at a national level?

Disagree

Free text:

Thousands of new Councillors would require training and certification immediately after every set of elections, before the first committee could be held. It would be completely undemocratic if only returning Councillors were eligible. Would a central certification be sufficiently responsive.

Delegated decision making

20 Question 16: Do you think we should consider reviewing the thresholds for quality of decision making in the performance regime to ensure the highest standards of decision making are maintained?

No

Free text:

21 Question 17: For quality of decision making the current threshold is 10% for major and non-major applications. We are proposing that in the future the threshold could be lowered to 5% for both. Do you agree?

Disagree

Free text:

Absolutely not. It benefits no one when a Council is in special measures.

Public Sector Equality Duty and Environmental Principles

22 Question 18:- Do you have any views on the implications of the proposals in this consultation for you, or the group or business you represent, and on anyone with a relevant protected characteristic? If so, please explain who, which groups, including those with protected characteristics, or which businesses may be impacted and how.

Free text:

No

23 Question 19: Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impact identified?

Free text:

24 Question 20: Do you have any views on the implications of these proposals for the considerations of the 5 environmental principles identified in the Environment Act 2021?

Free text:

No.