ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING BOARD

DEFERMENTS

- Planning applications which have been reported on the Planning Board Agenda should not be deferred on request without justification.

- Justification for deferring a decision can arise from a number of matters:-

  (a) Members may require further information which has not previously been obtained.

  (b) Members may require further discussions between the applicant and officers over a specific issue.

  (c) Members may require a visit to the site.

  (d) Members may delegate to the Assistant Director of the Service the detailed wording of a reason for refusal or a planning condition.

  (e) Members may wish to ensure that an applicant or objector is not denied the opportunity to exercise the “Right to Speak”.

- Any requests for deferments from Members must be justified in Planning terms and approved by the Board. The reason for deferring must be clearly set out by the Proposing Member and be recorded in the minutes.

- The Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transport or the applicant may also request the deferment of an application, which must be justified in planning terms and approved by the Board.

SITE VISITS

- Requests for the Planning Board to visit a site come from a variety of sources:- the applicant, objectors, the Parish Council, local Ward Councillors, Board Members or sometimes from the Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transport.

- Site visits should only be considered necessary if the impact of the proposed development is difficult to assess from the application plans and supporting information provided with the officer's written report; if the application is particularly contentious or the application has an element that cannot be adequately expressed in writing by the applicant or objector. Site visits can cause delay and additional cost to a project or development and should only be used where fully justified.

- The reasons why a site visit is called should be specified by the Board and recorded.

- Normally the visit will be programmed by Democratic Services to precede the next Board meeting (i.e. within three weeks) to minimise any delay.

- The visit will normally comprise of the Members of the Planning Board and appropriate officers. Ward Members are notified of visits within their Ward.

- All applicants and representees are notified of the date and approximate time of the visit. As far as possible Members should keep to the schedule of visits set out by Committee Services on the Board meeting agenda.

- Normally the visit will be accessed by coach. Members and officers are required to observe the site directly when making the visit, although the item will be occasioned by a short presentation by officers as an introduction on the coach before alighting. Ward Members present will be invited on the coach for this introduction.

- On site the Chair and Vice-Chair will be made known to the applicant and representees and will lead the visit allowing questions, views and discussions. The applicant and representees are free to make points on the nature and impact of the development proposal as well as factual matters in relation to the site, however, the purpose of the visit is not to promote a full debate of all the issues involved with the application. Members must conduct the visit as a group in a manner which is open, impartial and equitable and should endeavour to ensure that they hear all points made by the applicant and representees.

- At the conclusion of the visit the Chair should explain the next steps. The applicant and representees should be informed that the decision on the application will normally be made later that day at the Board meeting subject to the normal procedure and that they will be welcome to attend and exercise their "Right to Speak" as appropriate.