

From: Hunt, Sally (SPF&P - Cabinet Division) **On Behalf Of** PS Minister For Housing And Regeneration
Sent: 15 April 2013 12:39
To: Davies, Teresa (ESH - Planning)
Cc: Thomas, Rosemary F (ESH - Planning); Stirling, Tamsin (Special Policy Advisor)
Subject: RE: Follow up to meeting with the Minister 10 April

Thank you Teresa

The Minister is content with these proposals.

Cofion / Regards
Sally

From: Davies, Teresa (ESH - Planning)
Sent: 11 April 2013 15:02
To: Hunt, Sally (SPF&P - Cabinet Division); Stirling, Tamsin (Special Policy Advisor); PS Minister For Housing And Regeneration
Cc: Thomas, Rosemary F (ESH - Planning)
Subject: Follow up to meeting with the Minister 10 April

Sally,

Rosemary Thomas, Steve Jones and I from Planning Division met with the Minister yesterday afternoon to discuss a number of issues relating to taking planning decisions. We raised the issue of MB/CS/1420/13, which is currently before the Minister and which sets out our recommendations for handling call-in requests and other planning decisions. In particular we discussed what type of decision would be referred to the Minister. The Minister advised that he was particularly concerned about the time taken to process decisions and that he would like to familiarise himself with the nature of the decisions and the decisions process itself before coming to a view on those that can be handled by officials on his behalf. The conversation focussed primarily on decisions on call-in requests.

We explained to the Minister the previous arrangements (set out in MB/CS/1420/13) whereby, those cases where we intend not to call in an application were handled by officials, and those cases where we were recommending an application is called in were referred to the Minister for a decision. We explained to the Minister the process for issuing "stoppers" that prevent local planning authorities issuing a consent to provide sufficient time for the Welsh Government to consider call-in requests. The Minister has asked that, to assist him in his consideration of the process to be adopted, for the time being he should see all the call-in decisions that are handled by my branch.

A local planning authority is not obliged to publish its report on an application until 3 days before it is due to be considered at Planning Committee. This is often the first time the public has an indication of the likely outcome of the application. Requests for the Welsh Ministers to call in an application are often made after the report is made public. An application cannot be called in after a consent has been issued by an authority and therefore there is often a very short time in which to make a decision on the call-in request. Because of this we are likely to need to issue a stopper in those cases where we provide a submission for the Minister's decision. We would not wish to increase the number of stoppers issued by the Division as this can slow down the decision making process. To avoid that situation we suggest we proceed as follows:

- A submission will be prepared in the usual way for any decision where officials are recommending that the Minister calls in an application
- For those decisions where call-in is not recommended Decisions branch will set out in an email to private office the details of the application and the issues involved. The Minister will be given the opportunity to request that he make the decision and a submission will be prepared for his consideration in those cases.
- Any call-in request that falls within the Minister's constituency will be notified to the Minister by way of an email as above but the decision will be taken either by officials where call-in is not recommended or by the First Minister where call-in is recommended.

In this way the Minister will be aware of all the decisions being made on call-in requests and can take the decision on those as he considers appropriate. In addition, as requested by the Minister, we will add an extra column to the Minister's weekly list of all planning and other consents that are likely to issue the following week to show what the likely outcome will be.

We also agreed with the Minister that letters sent by him on constituency matters will be replied to by Rosemary Thomas. Drafts of letters will be cleared with the Minister before they are sent.

Could you please let me know if the Minister is content for us to proceed on this basis.

Many thanks

Teresa
Teresa Davies
Cangen Benderfyniadau - Decisions Branch
Llywodraeth Cymru - Welsh Government