



**GUIDANCE NOTE PRODUCED FOR PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF 19 DECEMBER 2023**

REPORT ON APPLICATION

“Note for guidance of the Committee where the decision of the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee is contrary to the recommendations of the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) in respect to a Planning Application.”

Any Councillor putting forward a motion to refuse an application, contrary to recommendation, shall clearly state the reasons for refusal. These reasons should be based on policies contained in the approved National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), Local Development Plan or some other material consideration. Time should be allowed to ensure that these reasons are carefully noted for minuting purposes.

Where Councillors put forward a motion to approve an application, contrary to recommendation, an indication should be given of any specific matters which should be subject of conditions along with reasons which should be based on policies in the approved Local Development Plan or some other appropriate consideration.

Note for guidance where the decision of the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee is to depart from the Development Plan (NPF4 and or Local Development Plan)

Where a Councillor is convinced that there is reason to depart from Development Plan policy; then the Councillor's reasons for making the motion should be clearly stated for minuting purposes. Any matters which should be subject to conditions drafted subsequently by the **Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance)** should be indicated. If the Committee remains of a mind to approve such an application then the whole matter will be subject to statutory procedures as apply. In such cases, Councillors should be aware that the application may require to be advertised as a departure and any objections reported to the next available meeting of the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee. It also may be necessary to convene a hearing to consider the views of objectors.

There are three potential consequences if Committee takes a decision where the proper procedures have not been followed in whole or in part. Firstly, the person aggrieved by a decision may apply to the Supreme Courts in Scotland for an Order either compelling the Council to act according to law, quashing the decision altogether or declaring a decision to be unlawful coupled with an order to prevent the decision being implemented. A referral to the Supreme Courts in these circumstances is known as applying for Judicial Review.

Secondly, in addition to the application for Judicial Review when questions of alleged failure, negligence or misconduct by individuals or local authorities in the management of public funds arise and are raised either by or with the External Auditor of the Council and where an individual can be blamed the sanctions available are:-

Censure of a Councillor or an Officer
Suspension of a Councillor for up to one year
Disqualification of a Councillor for up to five years

In the case of the Council being to blame, recommendations may be made to the Scottish Ministers about rectification of the authority's accounts. Ministers can make an order giving effect to these recommendations.

Thirdly, whilst the Ombudsman accepts that Planning authorities have the freedom to determine planning applications as they wish procedural impropriety may be interpreted as maladministration. This can also lead to recommendations by the Ombudsman that compensation be paid.

Consistent implementation of departure procedures maintains public confidence in the planning system and is consistent with the time and effort invested in preparing the **NPF4 and Local Development Plan**.