

## Appendix B

### Procedure Note - Householder Applications

Following the outcome of a recent Ombudsman case where we were found at fault, we were required to review the use of standard paragraphs in case officer reports to ensure that site specific details and reasons are included. The procedure note therefore identifies those actions and how we need to embed them into our reports. The Ombudsman case was in response to a householder application, however, it is good practice to use this across all reports.

In this case, the issue of concern was a rear extension but, more predominantly, a rather large balcony. This had not been referred to at all in the officer report. The complainant also had concern with the fact he was not consulted, however, we were not found at fault on that point as he lived two doors away and the Ombudsman considered that we had fulfilled our legislative duty.

The Ombudsman concluded that there was no way of knowing that the balcony and its impact had been considered in light of it not being mentioned in the officer report. We argued that householder reports are very light touch and only address any parts of the proposal that have been highlighted in objections or could be seen as an issue, but this was not accepted. The Ombudsman required that within three months of his decision, we were to review the use of standard paragraphs in case officer reports to ensure that site specific details and reasons are included.

The procedure note below therefore address this point and should be noted by **all** officers. Although this is specifically directed at householder reports, it should be incorporated into all reports containing an appraisal of a planning application.

#### **Householder Officer Report Procedure Note:**

Householder officer reports should be light touch and be kept simple and concise. They must, however, include the following as standard:

- All relevant Local Plan policies
- All relevant Neighbourhood Plan policies
- A summary of any objections received
- The Appraisal element of the report should contain short paragraphs on:
  - Principle of Development (including Green Belt, Open Countryside, AONB, Conservation Area etc)
  - Design and visual impact
  - Impact on residential amenity
  - Highways and Parking (where applicable)
  - Ecology (where applicable)

- Listed Buildings (where applicable)
  
- The objections should be addressed within the appraisal section along with any other notable matters of interest, and which policies they are to be considered against. Some commentary should be provided as to whether the objections are material planning considerations and if/how any impacts can be mitigated

The conclusion should state that all representations have been considered and the proposal assessed against national and local plan policy to form a recommendation of approval/refusal.