

I would like to propose that Planning be the responsibility henceforth not of any one committee, but of the whole Council. I am happy not to specify here how that would be done, although the simplest method would be for Planning to be included in the agenda for the Full Council meeting each month, and perhaps for Full Council to begin at 6.00pm to accommodate this.

My reasons for proposing this are:

- (1) When the present three main committees were established, the one whose components fitted least well together was Events and Planning. These two areas require different skills, knowledge and interests. I would prefer this committee to revert to Events & Tourism, which already has a considerable agenda, which, as “Visit Welshpool” develops, will be certain to expand and develop further.
- (2) I recognise the frustration of our comments seemingly not making the difference we would wish, and this can allow a sense of “It’s hardly worth our while doing this” to creep in when planning issues come before Council, we do have a statutory responsibility to consider and comment on planning matters, and have I believe been getting much better at expressing our concerns in ways that will be taken seriously. This will be further enhanced when we have completed the Place Planning process, assuming our Place Plan is of a standard that means it becomes Supplementary Planning Guidance. I think our electorate expects us to take significant planning applications seriously, and that is best done with the whole council able to participate and vote.
- (3) This is of greater significance when large and controversial planning applications come before Council, and I feel that all Councillors should therefore have the opportunity and right to comment and to vote on these, and of course that applies also to more minor planning matters located within the Ward a particular Councillor represents, and on which they may have personal knowledge or have been approached by residents with questions or anxieties.
- (4) Within our neighbouring Community Councils, planning issues are generally going to be discussed by full council as a matter of course, and it could therefore appear that we are giving planning matters less weight than others do. While this may not be true, there is a public expectation I think that planning should be a priority for us, and appearances therefore do matter.

I would very pleased if Council would examine these issues, and either vote to accept the Resolution given above, or, if felt necessary, defer this matter for consideration in the meantime, to enable further discussion and a decision at the November Full Council meeting.

Cllr Bill Rowell