

WHPC Meeting 7th July 2026

Agenda Item 26/189

National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Function

1. **Purpose of this Item:** To receive a report on the new National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Function coming into force on 31st October 2026.

2. **Background**

The National Scheme of Delegation of Planning Functions, and associated rules on the size of planning committees, is due to come into force in England on 31 October 2026. The new statutory framework standardises which planning applications must be determined by Planning Officers and which can be referred to a Planning Committee of elected members.

Introduced through the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 the changes are intended to bring greater speed and consistency to local decision making and reduce the number of applications being considered by committees. The changes apply to all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in England.

3. **Summary of the New Scheme of Delegation**

Under the new scheme Planning Officers become the default decision-makers. By exception, applications will be referred to a Committee only where justified. The new regulations also cap the size of a planning committee at 13 members and sets out mandatory training requirements for members.

The scheme divides development into two main tiers of planning applications:

- Schedule 1 applications must be delegated to officers.
 - Examples: Householder applications, small housing developments, minor commercial proposals, certificates of lawfulness.
- Schedule 2 application, where there is a presumption in favour of delegation to a Planning Officer, unless a nominated officer and nominated member agree the application satisfies a defined “gateway test” and should be referred to a planning committee. As a result, it is expected that far fewer applications would be decided at Committee.
 - Example criteria for referral to Committee: Significant economic, social, or environmental impact, important planning policy issues.

Appendix 1 provides further information on types of Schedule 1 and 2 applications.

Under the new scheme, Ward Members can no longer ‘call-in’ an application to be decided by Committee.

4. **Impact on Town and Parish Councils**

Under the new Scheme Town and Parish Councils retain their statutory consultation rights.

As fewer applications will be decided by a Planning Committee, Town/Parish Council consultee comments on applications gain greater importance.

Schedule 1 Applications (Must Be Delegated)

- householder development ((e.g., home extensions))
- minor commercial development
- minor residential development (which includes development of up to nine dwellings on sites below 0.5 hectares)
- section 73 applications where the related planning permission was a Schedule 1 planning permission
- reserved matters approval where the outline planning permission is for fewer than 500 dwellings or less than 50,000 square metres of floorspace
- discharge of conditions
- prior approval applications
- permission in principle
- non-material amendments
- section 106A applications where a planning obligation is connected to a Schedule 1 planning permission
- Biodiversity Gain Plans
- Certificates of Appropriate Alternative Development
- Certificates of lawfulness of existing/proposed use or development, and certificates of lawfulness for proposed works to listed buildings

Schedule 2 Applications: larger, strategic and more sensitive categories of application, including:

- planning applications which are not householder, minor commercial or minor residential applications
- section 73 applications where the related planning permission was a Schedule 2 planning permission
- reserved matters applications relating to large outline permissions (500+ dwellings or 50,000+ square metres of floorspace)
- section 106A applications where a planning obligation is connected to a Schedule 2 planning permission
- listed building consent (LBC) applications (including variation or discharge of conditions on an LBC, and S73 applications on planning applications connected to LBC applications)
- advertisement consents
- tree preservation order consents