

# Planning

Deputy Chief Executive – Place

Suzanne Malcolm



23 April 2026

## Response to consultation on Planning Committees and National Scheme of Delegation – draft Regulations and guidance

### Question 1

#### **Do you have any comments on the draft Regulations?**

We welcome the clarification that Section 73 applications are to be treated as Schedule 2 applications.

It remains our view that ward councillors' ability to call in applications is a vital principle of local democracy and transparency. It does not create undue work pressures, nor does it result in a high number of inappropriate items being brought before committee; rather, it supports positive working relationships between officers and councillors.

If the call-in power is to be removed, we suggest that a process is introduced to allow Schedule 1 applications to be referred to committee. This could apply in exceptional circumstances, or by reference to a clear set of criteria similar to those proposed for Schedule 2 applications.

Notwithstanding our comments on call-ins and on a process for referring Schedule 1 applications to committee, we have no further comments on the draft Regulations.

### Question 2

#### **Do you agree with our proposed approach to phased reserved matters applications? If not, do you think we should return to the original position of reserved matters on phased development being delegated in all circumstances or should we instead consider delegating certain types of phased reserved matters applications?**

We strongly support reserved matters for phased development falling in Schedule 2. Phased development schemes often give rise to economic, social or environmental issues of significance to the local area and, as a result, can attract a high level of

local interest. The proposed approach for phased developments is therefore appropriate, as it will enable democratic oversight where this is justified.

It remains our view that all reserved matters applications on major applications should fall within Schedule 2 so that complex matters that are of significant local interest can be referred to committee in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of nominated officers and members.

### **Question 3**

#### **Do you have comments on the draft guidance?**

Paragraph 8 of the draft guidance states that current practices such as call in powers for ward councillors will not be possible and constitutions will need to be amended to align with the national scheme of delegation.

South Oxfordshire currently has additional provisions in their constitution where an application with a recommendation that is in direct conflict with the clear and unambiguous of the parish and town council may be considered by committee if so agreed by nominated officers and members. Clarification on other practices such as this would be helpful.

It is assumed that the new Regulations will apply to all decisions made from 30 September 2026, but we would welcome clarification on any transitional arrangements.

Notwithstanding our comments on call ins, other processes in our constitution and our disagreement with the automatic delegation of Schedule 1 applications, we have no further comments to make on the draft guidance.