Top Tips for Making Decisions at Planning Committee

- **Always** read the papers before the meeting. If you haven't had time to read them, you should not sit at that meeting
- Ask technical clarification questions of the case officer in advance of the meeting so that they can come prepared with the answers
- Don't be swayed by the *number* of objections, focus on any *material planning considerations* raised
- Focus on the application before you, not the one you would *like* to have seen before you
- Keep questions and debate concise and on matters relevant to the planning decision you will be making
- Avoid relaying personal stories, general or political views or guessing what might happen in the future
- Trust the responses and evidence that you have been given by specialist officers
- Listen carefully to the weight officers suggest you give to different policies
- Be especially aware of the impact of a lack of an up-to-date local plan or 5-year housing land supply on decision making
- Don't be afraid to ask officers to justify their conclusions but do so in a professional manner

- Base your decisions on clear evidence and not hunch
- Work with officers to reach a sound decision – you are not expected to know all the policies in detail but officers do
- Listen to officer advice on which decisions are defendable
- Remember that you are being watched by others from outside your authority and always behave professionally. Treat each other, officers, speakers and applicants with respect both during and outside of the meeting.
- For more information and guidance for members on the operation and conduct of planning committee, how member site visits are undertaken and pre-application briefings see the following web-pages: Planning committee guidance