

AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE (DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Introduction

The Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) is a newly appointed Committee which shall be one of the advisory consultees dealing with agriculture planning applications in Outside Development Zones. This committee will not substitute the Department of Agriculture and any other entity which is consulted in relation to agriculture development applications.

Objectives

The objective for the establishment of this committee is to have an independent body which is made up of persons of integrity and experts who may take reasoned decisions leading to recommendations on certain development applications. The AAC shall make recommendations to the MEPA or its successors with regards to planning applications related to policies arising from the ODZ policy.

Functions of the Committee

It shall be the function of the Committee to:

- (a) advise MEPA or its successors on planning applications related to agriculture development in the outside development zone;
- (b) assess the genuine need of certain proposed agriculture development;
- (c) safeguard agriculture from industrial development;
- (d) preserve agricultural land;
- (e) determine on whether there is scope for change of use from an agriculture activity to non agriculture use
- (f) decide whether the change of use into anything which is not agriculture may be recommended and shall be supported by a sound justification.
- (g) assist new entrants into the agriculture sector to identify vacant agricultural farms or land that may be developed into agricultural buildings;

The Committee **shall** be consulted with regards to applications concerning new dwellings for livestock farmers, and conversions of buildings to dwellings for arable farmers. It **shall** also be consulted and shall make recommendations to the MEPA or its successors with regards to planning applications which require redevelopment (including consolidation) and change of use of permitted buildings into a new use which was not the legally established, had a permitted use, or which is not one of the permitted uses (with the respective criteria) in the ODZ policy document.

The committee **may** also be consulted in other matters concerning general policies which are related to agriculture.