



**CITY OF WESTMINSTER**

# **MINUTES**

## **Planning & City Development Committee**

### **MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Planning & City Development Committee** Committee held on **Thursday 28th September, 2017**, Room 3.1, 3rd Floor, 5 Strand, London, WC2 5HR.

**Members Present:** Councillors Richard Beddoe (Chairman), David Boothroyd, Susie Burbridge, Ruth Bush, Melvyn Caplan, Paul Church, Jonathan Glanz, Tim Mitchell, Gotz Mohindra, Robert Rigby, Andrew Smith and Jason Williams

#### **1 MEMBERSHIP**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Iain Bott, Barbara Grahame, Angela Harvey and Louise Hyams.

#### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 2.1 Cllr David Boothroyd declared that he was Head of Research and Psephology for Thorncliffe, whose clients were companies applying for planning permission from various local authorities. No current schemes were in Westminster; if there were he would be precluded from working on them under the company's code of conduct.

#### **3 WESTMINSTER CITY PLAN - DIRECTION OF TRAVEL**

- 3.1 The Committee received a report from the Head of City Policy and Strategy which provided an update on progress of the revised City Plan at the post-Regulation 18 Notification/pre-Regulation 19 Notification stage. It informed the Committee of the broad direction of travel of the new Plan and sought its views on key policy areas.
- 3.2 The Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Realm and the Head of City Policy and Strategy joined the meeting for the debate on this item and answered members' questions in connection with the report.
- 3.3 The Committee discussed in detail the following issues:
- Policy Designations and Boundaries for the West End – There were a number of existing strategies and policies in place which impacted on planning in the West End. The importance of the City Plan reflecting and

refining what already existed was stressed in order to avoid the confusion of creating another definition of the West End.

- **New Approach to Housing Delivery: Application of Adopted City Plan Policies** – The Committee considered how the approach to different policy areas of the City Plan would change according to different needs and circumstances. In the interim a new approach would be implemented based on existing City Plan policies but containing new elements. Members would have the opportunity to comment on the new City Plan in due course.
- **Unallocated Residential Parking** – In response to clarity on future car parking requirements for new developments it was suggested the City Plan would bring a greater flexibility to determine what parking was required based on each particular application. This would include a less rigid adherence to minimum parking requirements.
- **The Impact of the Night-time Economy on Public Safety** – Concern was expressed with regards to the effects an increase in night-time activity would have on the mental health of local residents. The Sub-Committee was informed that the Council was aware of such issues and in response Councillor Paul Church had recently been appointed the Council's mental health champion. Adult social care representatives formed part of the task group currently looking at the City Plan and the Head of City Policy and Strategy would ensure the issue of mental health would be raised at its next meeting.
- **Affordable Housing** – The importance of ensuring the delivery of affordable housing was recognised and discussions with developers were underway with regards to improving on-site delivery. The Sub-Committee discussed the aim of the City Plan to ensure the full viable affordable housing requirements for future developments would be met.
- **The City Plan's Flexibility** - Whilst it was recognised bringing a degree of flexibility into the City Plan was beneficial concern was expressed that this could have the effect of making it difficult in future to refuse planning applications based on planning grounds. The Committee was assured that this area of concern had been recognised and efforts to address this were reflected in the very prescriptive approach recently taken when drafting the new growth/tall/higher buildings policies.
- **Evening and Night-time Economy** – The Committee discussed a proposal that 'Stress Areas' should differentiate between evening uses, e.g. restaurants and theatres, and late night uses, e.g. clubs and music venues, and take into account the different impacts they had on local areas. It was noted that it was important to find the correct balance between increasing the vitality of town centres and protecting the amenity of neighbouring residents. These were issues that required addressing in the City Plan whilst ensuring at the same time the policies aimed at preventing cumulative impact in current stress areas were not relaxed.

- Transport Infrastructure – With regards to transport hubs the Council now had more sophisticated processes in place to assess what infrastructure was already in place when considering what developments were suitable for such sites and any potential impact they may have. With regards to transport it was noted in the report that references to ‘Pedestrian Movement and Sustainable Transport’ were to be removed. The Cabinet Member agreed to provide an update on this to the Committee following the meeting.
- Open Spaces – The Committee was interested to learn if the City Plan would encourage applications for large developments to include a green space provision within them? Members noted that health and safety issues over public access to green spaces located on rooftops had been encountered however negotiations would continue in ensuring green spaces at ground floor level were provided for any large developments. The old Post office site on Oxford Street was cited as an example of new public realm space being provided with a new development.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the broad direction of travel for the Full Revision to the Westminster City Plan be noted; and
- 2) That the views provided by the Committee on the Westminster City Plan Review - Regulation 18 consultation responses be noted.

**4 PLANNING APPLICATIONS REPORTED TO COMMITTEE - TRENDS AND ISSUES**

- 4.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of Planning which provided a summary of the applications considered by the Planning Applications Sub-Committees following their restructuring in February 2017.
- 4.2 The Director of Planning was invited to join the meeting for the debate on this item and answered members’ questions in connection with the report. The Committee noted that there was a consistency in decision making amongst the four Planning Sub-Committees. The Chairman of Planning had also requested that a more even balance of major applications be reported across all four Sub-Committees in future.
- 4.3 The Committee was of the opinion that there was currently a lack of visibility regarding applications refused by Sub-Committees and the outcomes of any subsequent appeals. Following a suggestion from the Director of Planning the Committee agreed it would be beneficial for a summary of applications be provided to Planning members in future.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## **5 WHEN TO DECLARE INTERESTS AT MEETINGS OF THE PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEES**

- 5.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of Law which provided guidance to members on when it was appropriate to declare an interest in matters being considered at committee.
- 5.2 The Manager and Principal Solicitor of the Planning, Highways and Licensing Team and the Principal Solicitor (Litigation and Social Care) were invited to join the meeting for the debate on this item and answered members' questions in connection with the report.
- 5.3 The Committee noted the two distinct types of interests which were required to be declared at meetings, (i) disclosable pecuniary interests and (ii) the disclosure of "other interests" in certain circumstances. Clarification on what interests it was not always necessary to disclose at meetings was also provided. Training sessions on the declaration of interests had been provided as part of the Member Development Programme and members were requested to contact Legal Services prior to a Planning Sub-Committee if they had any questions relating to the declaring of interests.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

## **6 ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

- 6.1 There was no other business to report.

The Meeting ended at 7.56 pm

**CHAIRMAN:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_