



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 7th November, 2019**, Rooms 18.01 & 18.03, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Melvyn Caplan (Chairman), Geoff Barraclough, David Boothroyd, Peter Freeman, Jim Glen, Elizabeth Hitchcock, Louise Hyams, Matt Noble, Tim Roca, James Spencer and Eoghain Murphy

Also Present: Councillor Richard Beddoe

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Robert Rigby

1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Robert Rigby

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 MINUTES

3.1 That the Minutes of the Planning and City Development Committee meeting held on 20 June 2019 be approved.

4 UPDATE ON THE PLANNING REVIEW

4.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of Place Shaping and Town Planning providing an update on the Planning Review programme of work to deliver improvements to the processes and practices of the planning service to address the findings of the review carried out by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), which informed the recommendations that

made to Cabinet on 25 October 2018, and which the Cabinet resolved to endorse. The progress on the implementation of the Planning Review programme was previously reported to the Planning and City Development Committee on 20 June 2019. These included: -

4.2 Review of Public Speaking at Planning Applications Sub-Committees

- Members welcomed the findings following the review of public speaking at the Planning Applications Sub-Committees and noted that the feedback provided were largely positive and that speakers understood the procedures and process. The Sub-Committee was advised that a visible clock which enable speakers to gauge the time remaining to speak was to be introduced. Members were informed that the speaking procedure rules would be amended to allow previous speakers to be given priority to address the Sub-Committees on Applications that had previously been deferred.
- Members agreed that all the Sub-Committees should have two speaking slots for both Objectors and Supporters. This is to ensure that interested persons are given the full allocated time to address the Sub-Committee and reduce occurrences where a single 'speakers' slot was shared between two or more speakers. Members noted that speakers who supported an Application addressed the Sub-Committee first and some commented whether this should be amended to allow objectors to be the first speaker, but the majority of the committee agreed to continue with the current position.

4.3 Live Streaming at Sub-Committees

- The live streaming of the Planning Applications Sub-Committees will start in February 2020. The requisite equipment for streaming meetings has been installed in the Committee Rooms at 64 Victoria Street. Members commented that the live streaming of meeting may affect the number of requests to make verbal representation at the Sub-Committees and requested that this be reviewed and reported back at the next Committee.

4.4 Pre-Application Community And Ward Member Engagement

- Members noted that the Pre-Application Community And Ward Member Engagement schemes was still in the preliminary stages and urged that the process is made informal. The Sub-Committee noted that the forums would be multi-disciplinary and would comprise of residents, officers and councillors. These bodies would also provide better opportunities for lobbying and ensure that all Ward Councillors are involved in the early stages of the planning applications and allow interested parties to influence decisions. The Forum will provide a mechanism which enables developers to test the viability of their application before entering the formal planning statutory process.
- The proposed scheme would encourage early engagement from planning developers and help to formalise this process. Members commented that at some Sub-Committee's it was clear that some developers had not engaged with interested parties. The Committee noted that developers may wish to

engage with stakeholders independently and that a 'hybrid system' would be in operation.

Resolved:

1. That the recommendations of the 6-month review of public speaking and the ongoing work on Planning Review programme to implement measures pursuant to the recommendations endorsed by Cabinet in 2018 to make the planning service more proactive, transparent and focused on the delivery of shared strategic and corporate objectives be agreed.
2. That the Chairman be given discretion in exceptional circumstances to allow a greater number of speakers to speak in relation to applications which are both of strategic importance and exceptionally high public interest value.
3. That Public speaking be permitted on all previously deferred applications with previous speakers who have addressed the Sub-Committee on the same application be given priority, prior to speaking slots being offered to new speakers.
4. That Neighbourhood Forums be included with Amenity Societies as bodies that may receive a separate public speaking 'slot' on each item.
5. That a timer visibly displaying the remaining time for public speakers be provided to assist those addressing the Sub-Committee.
6. That there be two speaking slots for both Objectors and Supporters on all Planning Applications Sub-Committees.
7. That the amendments to the Speakers Protocol be implemented from January 2020.

5 REVISED GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS MAKING PLANNING DECISIONS

- 5.1 The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the revised 'Guidance for Members Making Planning Decisions' document, which is designed to help Members of the Planning Applications Sub-Committees to understand their responsibilities and to enable them to make robust and consistent planning decisions. The guidance document was revised and updated by the Legal Services in early 2019 following the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Review of the planning service in 2018 and the recommendations made by Cabinet on 25 October 2018, following the conclusion of the PAS Review. The revised and updated guidance document was reported to the Standards Committee on 12 July 2019, which endorsed the updated document, with only minor amendments recommended which have now been incorporated.

Resolved:

That the Planning And City Development Committee have regard to the revised

And updated 'Guidance for Members Making Planning Decisions' dated 31 July 2019 when carrying out their role as member of one of the Planning Applications Sub-Committees.

6 DRAFT LONDON PLAN UPDATE

- 6.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of Place Shaping and Town Planning providing an update on the draft London Plan, which is expected to be adopted in February/ March 2020. Following adoption, the draft London Plan will form part of the development plan for Westminster and will be a significant material consideration in the assessment of planning applications within the City. Where current UDP and City Plan policies are in conflict with the new London Plan, greater weight would be attributable to the London Plan as it would be the more recently adopted policy document.
- 6.2 Members were advised that the City Plan must refer to the London City Plan and that there were currently no contentions with the latter. There is however scope to divert from some policies in areas where a local approach is deemed more appropriate
- 6.3 Members noted that the Inspectors Panel were critical over the volume of the draft London Plan and that the document contained over 500 pages. There have been recommendations on how the document could be reduced and suggestions were made that there be more focus on 'strategic outcomes' rather than 'implementation'. Members suggested that this approach should also be adopted for the City Plan.
- 6.4 The Sub-Committee was advised that the London Mayor was not required to adopt the recommendations made by the EIP and was required to provide reasons for departing from them to the Secretary of State.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report be noted.

7 ESTABLISHMENT OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE (3)

- 7.1 The Committee received a report which sought approval to establish a further Planning Applications Sub-Committee - Planning Applications Sub-Committee (3) from 1 January 2020. The new Sub-Committee will have the same Terms of Reference as the existing Planning Applications Sub-Committees.
- 7.2 Members noted that the additional Planning Application Sub-Committee will ensure greater flexibility in the planning decision making process and minimise occurrences where sub-committee members deliberate on planning applications which are situated in their Wards.

Resolved:

1. That a Planning Application Sub-Committee (3) be established from 1 January

2020.

2. That the Terms of Reference for the existing Planning Applications Sub-Committees be applied to Planning Application Sub-Committee (3) and that the Constitution be updated to reflect the additional sub-committee.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

- 8.1 The Committee were informed that the Members' Code of Conduct was being reviewed and that the revised protocol would be brought to a future meeting.

The Meeting ended at 8.00 pm

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____