

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE
Wednesday, 12th July 2006 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Kansagra (Chair), Councillor Singh (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Dunwell, Hashmi, Hirani, J Long, R Moher and H M Patel

Apologies for absence were given on behalf of Councillors Anwar and Cummins

Councillors D Brown and Van Colle attended the meeting.

1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

2. Future Reports to Planning Committee

The Committee had before them a report which sought Members' comments on the Planning Service's ongoing work with regard to the submission of reports to the Planning Committee in 2006-7.

The Head of Policy & Projects, Dave Carroll informed the Committee that the planning system notably plan making and policy formulation was undergoing a significant change which members ought to know in order to be better informed to consider them. The programme of the Planning Committee dealing with policy and related matters for this financial year 2006/7 set out in Appendix 1 was intended to show how the Planning Service was responding to the new plan making agenda and to give members of the Planning Committee an opportunity to add their priorities for reports. The themes of the reports proposed to be submitted which was intended to be flexible and can be amended to meet member priorities included the following;

- Local Development Framework –Timetable, consultation and issues documents
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)
- Council's Response to Proposed Government guidance and legislation, including the Mayor of London
- Other Project Work concerned with conservation area design and other reports which were considered important in achieving key planning objectives for the council

RESOLVED:-

that the timing and nature of the reports proposed to be brought forward, as detailed in appendix 1 to the report, be agreed

3. Local Development Framework – Draft Core Strategy

The Committee received a report containing a draft Core Strategy which was a key document of the new Local Development Framework (LDF). The report stated the Council was required to consult with the

local community on its 'Preferred Options' for the Core Strategy. The preferred options for the Core strategy had been drawn up after a round of public consultation in September/October 2005 and the options and the alternative options had been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. The Committee's views were sought on the Core Strategy for consideration by the Executive in September.

The Policy Officer, Ken Hullock informed the Committee that the LDF which would replace the Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) would be more strategic and spatial and less of a development control manual. It would be produced in a folder format thus facilitating amendments to it made in future. He drew the Committee's attention to the list of documents that would make up the LDF and the statutory stages that the Council should follow in its preparation. He added that sustainability appraisal which was an integral part of the draft plan had been undertaken together with consultants, Collingwood Environmental Planning, to enable an independent assessment to be made of the policies. The results of the appraisal were attached as Appendix 3 to this report. He drew attention to the key aspects of the plan as set out in the report and the following fourfold strategy of the Core Strategy

- i) Concentration of major housing growth into 5 growth areas, Wembley, South Kilburn, Church End, Alperton and Colindale
- ii) Regeneration of industrial areas, town centres and poor quality estates
- iii) Protection of open space, conservation areas and the best of suburbia
- iv) Local benefits meeting the needs of diverse communities

In conclusion he stated that the Core Strategy would take into account local public opinion and reflect national and regional planning policy as well as conform to the Mayor of London's London Plan.

The Lead Member for Environment & Culture, Councillor Van Colle welcomed the draft document as an excellent starting point and spotlighted the following aspects; He noted that the design policies adopted in Brent's UDP 2004 had enabled the Council to achieve exemplary design quality whilst refusing worst schemes. It was therefore necessary to maintain a high quality design policy as an important consideration in Brent's efforts to make the Borough an attractive place in which to live permanently. He also emphasised the need to develop policies that would assist with modernising industrial premises, attracting investment and protecting jobs within the Borough. He welcomed the establishment of a Design Delivery Protocol but added that membership of the Design Review Panel should be open to Members and officers.

Councillor Van Colle however stated that there would be a presumption against tower blocks in the Borough. He expressed doubts about Brent's ability to provide an additional 11,200 over a 10 year period.

On the policy on affordable housing provision he stressed the need to strike a balance and to stick to the current affordable housing threshold of 15. He also expressed that recycling should be an essential part of normal life in the Borough. The Council should also ensure to incorporate into new build process sustainability agenda including climate change mitigation, solar panelling and ground water management. With regards to the latter, the Council should work more closely with its partner agencies to alleviate flood risk to areas within Wealdstone Brook & River Brent. In noting the policy to reduce the need to travel especially by car, he stated that the Borough should move away from the “anti car policies” and to also ensure that reasonable parking provision was made for new development schemes.

During debate Councillor Dunwell stated that he felt uncomfortable with the parking strategies and height. He added that he had a number of queries which he wished to raise with officers on the report but which he felt impossible to do at the meeting due to time constraints. Mindful of a possible clash with the Mayor of London’s London Plan and the need for all Members who wished to do so to have an opportunity to give their observations to officers, he suggested a report setting out options for consideration and the criteria. He therefore moved an amendment for deferral of the report to enable officers to take on board the views expressed at the meeting. Councillor J Long added that there was a need to encourage “Car Club, improve public transport facilities and improve decrepit sites. She also emphasised the need for a new secondary school in the South of the Borough to relieve pressure on Copland Community School

The Policy Officer Ken Hullock stated that some of the suggestions in particular, parking standards and the threshold for affordable housing, were likely to be in conflict with the Mayor of London’s London Plan

RESOLVED:

- (i) deferred to enable officers to take on board the views and comments expressed at the meeting;
- (ii) that a special meeting be convened to consider an amended report on the proposed Core Strategy.

4. **Section 106 Update**

The Committee received a report updating them on the accumulation and spending of Section 106 (S106) Planning Obligations funds. A s106 Update report was submitted to the Planning Committee at its meeting on 16th March 2006. This updated report sought members’ views on the tables contained in appendix 1.

The Head of Policy and Projects stated that the report was intended to give a broader picture of monies that had been accrued and still to be spent and that further detail could be provided about areas and locations of spend and strategies that underlie spending recommendations. In response to a Member's enquiry to identify the s106 spend hotspots, he stated that that apart from some agreements such as transportation related ones which were specific, most of them such as education were borough wide and therefore would be difficult to identify such spend hotspots.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the proposed allocations of s106 funds as set out in the final column of the table in appendix 1 to the report be noted;

5. **London Plan – Draft Further Alterations**

The Committee had before them a report which contained a summary of the Mayor of London's draft Further Alterations to the London Plan (LP). The report had been drafted primarily for consultation with the London Assembly and GLA functional bodies (Transport for London, London Development Agency, Metropolitan Police Authority and the London Fire & Emergency Authority). However, Boroughs were being given an opportunity to influence the draft before it was made available for public consultation in the autumn this year ('September - December)

In his introduction, the Policy Officer stated the London Plan (LP) adopted in February 2004 was the integrated and strategic policies covering a range of areas including sustainable development, housing, transport, and supporting economic growth. The Mayor had a legal duty to review and update the Plan as well as to ensure that his various strategies were consistent with each other and with national Government policy. He outlined the ten key themes of the review of the London Plan as set out in the report. The most significant alteration to the Plan's current affordable housing strategy was the proposed replacement of the 'no threshold' approach with a new policy requirement for affordable housing "on a site which has a capacity to provide 10 or more homes". Brent's current threshold is 15 units and this would have to be reduced to conform with this amendment if carried through to the adopted London Plan. He added that the new policy on Regional Casinos had identified Greenwich and Wembley as appropriate locations in view of their strategic regeneration and leisure roles

During debate members raised concerns about the reduction of the threshold for affordable housing from 15 to 10. They also expressed concerns about the new policy on regional casinos that identified Wembley as one of the 2 appropriate areas. The legal representative advised that the Council was currently consulting on whether to proceed with the application for Brent to be the location for the proposed regional casino and as such it would be pre-emptive for the Committee to express any views whilst the consultation process was not concluded.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the content and implications of the draft alterations for Brent's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) policy be noted
- (ii) that appropriate representations be made to the Mayor of London based upon the report subject to concerns expressed about the reduction of the threshold level for affordable housing

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee, to consider planning applications, will take place on Wednesday, 26th July 2006 at 7.00 pm. The site visit for this meeting will take place on Saturday, 22nd July 2006 at 9.30 am when the coach leaves from Brent House.

The meeting ended at 9.20 pm.

S KANSAGRA
Chair

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