

EXTRACT OF THE PLANNING CODE OF PRACTICE

Purpose of this Code

The Planning Code of Practice has been adopted by Brent Council to regulate the performance of its planning function. Its major objectives are to guide Members and officers of the Council in dealing with planning related matters and to inform potential developers and the public generally of the standards adopted by the Council in the exercise of its planning powers. The Planning Code of Practice is in addition to the Brent Members Code of Conduct adopted by the Council under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000. The provisions of this code are designed to ensure that planning decisions are taken on proper planning grounds, are applied in a consistent and open manner and that Members making such decisions are, and are perceived as being, accountable for those decisions. Extracts from the Code and the Standing Orders are reproduced below as a reminder of their content.

Accountability and Interests

4. If an approach is made to a Member of the Planning Committee from an applicant or agent or other interested party in relation to a particular planning application or any matter which may give rise to a planning application, the Member shall:
 - a) inform the person making such an approach that such matters should be addressed to officers or to Members who are not Members of the Planning Committee;
 - b) disclose the fact and nature of such an approach at any meeting of the Planning Committee where the planning application or matter in question is considered.
7. If the Chair decides to allow a non-member of the Committee to speak, the non-member shall state the reason for wishing to speak. Such a Member shall disclose the fact he/she has been in contact with the applicant, agent or interested party if this be the case.
8. When the circumstances of any elected Member are such that they have
 - (i) a personal interest in any planning application or other matter, then the Member, if present, shall declare a personal interest at any meeting where the particular application or other matter is considered, and if the interest is also a prejudicial interest shall withdraw from the room where the meeting is being held and not take part in the discussion or vote on the application or other matter.
11. If any Member of the Council requests a Site Visit, prior to the debate at Planning Committee, their name shall be recorded. They shall provide and a

record kept of, their reason for the request and whether or not they have been approached concerning the application or other matter and if so, by whom.

Meetings of the Planning Committee

24. If the Planning Committee wishes to grant planning permission contrary to officers' recommendation the application shall be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee for further consideration. Following a resolution of "minded to grant contrary to the officers' recommendation", the Chair shall put to the meeting for approval a statement of why the officers recommendation for refusal should be overturned, which, when approved, shall then be formally recorded in the minutes. When a planning application has been deferred, following a resolution of "minded to grant contrary to the officers' recommendation", then at the subsequent meeting the responsible officer shall have the opportunity to respond both in a further written report and orally to the reasons formulated by the Committee for granting permission. If the Planning Committee is still of the same view, then it shall again consider its reasons for granting permission, and a summary of the planning reasons for that decision shall be given, which reasons shall then be formally recorded in the Minutes of the meeting.
25. When the Planning Committee vote to refuse an application contrary to the recommendation of officers, the Chair shall put to the meeting for approval a statement of the planning reasons for refusal of the application, which if approved shall be entered into the Minutes of that meeting. Where the reason for refusal proposed by the Chair is not approved by the meeting, or where in the Chair's view it is not then possible to formulate planning reasons for refusal, the application shall be deferred for further consideration at the next meeting of the Committee. At the next meeting of the Committee the application shall be accompanied by a further written report from officers, in which the officers shall advise on possible planning reasons for refusal and the evidence that would be available to substantiate those reasons. If the Committee is still of the same view then it shall again consider its reasons for refusing permission which shall be recorded in the Minutes of the Meeting.
29. The Minutes of the Planning Committee shall record the names of those voting in favour, against or abstaining:
 - (i) on any resolution of "Minded to Grant or minded to refuse contrary to Officers Recommendation";
 - (ii) on any approval or refusal of an application referred to a subsequent meeting following such a resolution.

STANDING ORDER 62 SPEAKING RIGHTS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

- (a) At meetings of the Planning Committee when reports are being considered on applications for planning permission any member of the public other than the applicant or his agent or representative who wishes to object to or support the grant of permission or support or oppose the imposition of conditions may do

so for a maximum of 2 minutes. Where more than one person wishes to speak on the same application the Chair shall have the discretion to limit the number of speakers to no more than 2 people and in so doing will seek to give priority to occupiers nearest to the application site or representing a group of people or to one objector and one supporter if there are both. In addition (and after hearing any members of the public who wish to speak) the applicant (or one person on the applicant's behalf) may speak to the Committee for a maximum of 3 minutes. In respect of both members of the public and applicants the Chair and members of the sub-committee may ask them questions after they have spoken.

- (b) Persons wishing to speak to the Committee shall give notice to the Democratic Services Manager or his representatives prior to the commencement of the meeting. Normally such notice shall be given 24 hours before the commencement of the meeting. At the meeting the Chair shall call out the address of the application when it is reached and only if the applicant (or representative) and/or members of the public are present and then signify a desire to speak shall such persons be called to speak.
- (c) In the event that all persons present at the meeting who have indicated that they wish to speak on any matter under consideration indicate that they agree with the officers recommendations and if the members then indicate that they are minded to agree the officers recommendation in full without further debate the Chair may dispense with the calling member of the public to speak on that matter.