



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE Tuesday 26 January 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Marquis (Chair), Agha (Vice-Chair), S Choudhary, Colacicco, Ezeajughi, Mahmood, Maurice and M Patel

1. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None.

2. **Review of SPG5 - Altering and Extending Your Home**

The current Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 5 (SPG5) 'Altering and Extending Your Home' was adopted in 2002 and although it has served its purpose well, due to its age it requires updating. The report set out the areas proposed to be reviewed for the document to reflect practical experience of its use and to take into account changes in permitted development rights/prior approvals and increases in development activity including basements.

Paul Lewin (Planning Policy and Projects Manager) introduced the report. He drew members' attention to the changes to permitted development rights for residential extensions and ancillary buildings/structures and more recently the introduction of Prior Approvals. These potentially allowed development to occur which is inconsistent with some aspects of the SPG particularly distances anticipated between buildings and greater emphasis being placed on the quality of amenity to existing and future occupants. Members were also informed that particularly in the southern part of the Borough there has also been an increased demand for basement extensions which needed to be reflected in the SPG5. In respect of conservation area, he stated that some guidance existed in conservation area design guides however, a review of SPG 5 would also allow an opportunity to provide more up to date advice and a wider corporate response to issues outside direct planning control such as skip permits, parking bay suspensions and parking enforcement.

In the discussion that ensued, members welcomed the need for the review and unanimously recommended a separate SPG for basement developments due to the technical nature of developments. They also suggested that at the pre-application stage basement developments, applicants should be encouraged to cover issues such as the potential impacts on structural integrity and a flood risk assessment by a competent expert. Members also requested a clear section on Conservation Area policy and that officers should work with other departments of the Council on the control of public realm nuisances.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the need to review SPG 5 Altering and Extending Your Home be agreed;
- (ii) that SPG5 be issued for public consultation subject to the creation of a separate basement development policy which would also be referenced / linked from SPG5 as a stand alone document. Members felt that the basement development policy should also incorporate sections on basements in conservation areas, energy and efficiency requirements and non-technical summaries.

3. Review of SPG17 - Design Guide for New Developments

The current SPG Design Guide for New Developments was adopted in 2001. The document has served its purpose well but due to its age requires updating. Since 2001 planning policy has changed significantly, particularly in relation to urban areas with much greater emphasis on maximising development density and the promotion of the efficient use of land particularly in areas of high public transport accessibility consistent with London Plan Policy 3.2: Optimising Housing Potential. The proposed review of the SPG17 document would also provides the opportunity for it to be a promotional tool, giving a positive message about development potential within Brent and the need for high quality design.

Paul Lewin (Planning Policy and Projects Manager) informed the Committee that the current SPG17, which primarily has a focus on the typical inter-war suburban context of Brent, was relevant in areas to much of the Borough where major change to the existing character was not envisaged.. However, there may be scope for greater flexibility for areas of larger transformational change, such as South Kilburn or Wembley where densities much higher than traditionally provided in Brent were anticipated. With reference to the report, he set out the steps towards achieving improved and successful developments in the borough.

Paul Lewin also clarified the approach to tall buildings adding that Brent's policy was in keeping with the London Plan. In working through the document members made various points on the following:

Incorporation of an overview of what makes a good development, e.g. sufficient infrastructure, landmark buildings.

Minimum standard to be maintained and flexibility provided where the applicant could show benefits/high amenity environment being created and softer approach to higher density, e.g. encouraging higher density development *where suitable*.

A greater emphasis on images with more soft landscaping/ spacing between buildings.

A reference to preventing/dealing with anti-social behaviour

Reference to the right tree in the right location.

More emphasis on energy efficiency of buildings.

In terms of understanding and promoting design improvements, Members indicated a need for plans and images for residential and commercial proposals of sufficient quality to be submitted to enable them to be more fully considered and to

reduce the risk of delay in decision making. Members were also keen to see a requirement for excellent design standards in all future developments especially on landmark sites. They also indicated a desire to develop existing opportunities to see proposals at an earlier stage in the planning application process, e.g. pre-application stage. They were also supportive of the proposal to retain an expert throughout the development construction to maintain high standards. Members suggested that wherever possible separate entrances for affordable housing units and owner occupiers should be avoided and that schemes should design out crime, particularly anti-social behaviour (ASBO). Members also queried the scope to amend the current general approach if densities and heights were significantly greater. In concluding on the item, the chair indicated that whilst it might not be appropriate to incorporate all changes to comments made, that officers should provide a response to members of the Committee as to how they had dealt with the points raised prior to consultation on the document.

Paul Lewin also clarified the approach to tall buildings adding that Brent's policy was in keeping with the London Plan. In working through the document members made various points which officers noted down. In terms of understanding and promoting design improvements, Members indicated a need for plans and images for residential and commercial proposals of sufficient quality to be submitted to enable them to be more fully considered and to reduce the risk of delay in decision making. They also indicated a desire to develop existing opportunities to see proposals at an earlier stage in the planning application process, e.g. pre-application stage. Members suggested that wherever possible separate entrances for affordable housing units and owner occupiers should be avoided and that schemes should design out crime, particularly anti-social behaviour (ASBO). Members also queried the scope to amend the current general approach if densities and heights were significantly greater. In concluding on the item, the chair indicated that whilst it might not be appropriate to incorporate all changes to comments made, that officers should provide a response to members of the Committee as to how they had dealt with the points raised prior to consultation on the document commencing.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) that the existing general approach within the guidance and the need to review and produce a new Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document to reflect its application within the Borough be supported;
- (ii) that subject to incorporation of feedback from members, a draft Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document be issued for public consultation.

4. Planning Policy Work Programme 2016-2017

The report from the Head of Planning set out potential projects for the coming year with indicative timescales of work. The report was intended to allow the Planning Committee to understand the context and to provide an input to forming Planning's work programme for areas covering the policy review and development function.

Members' input will feed into the wider service planning process and, in particular, the Peer Review process for Planning programmed for March 2016.

Stephen Weeks (Head of Planning) drew members' attention to the work programme for 2016/17, identifying the priority areas and those areas which were subject to confirmation, as set out in the report. He highlighted work associated with the adoption of the Development Management Policies Development Plan to replace all remaining policies in the 'saved' Unitary Development Plan and also the South Kilburn Masterplan.

Members queried the position on progressing the update to the local list and indicated support for the work to continue and be adopted as soon as possible. Members heard that as there were no objections to the pub protection policy the policy would be likely to be recommended for adoption with no major changes. Members also indicated that they would like to see the work in relation to the following policies prioritised – Local Development Plan, South Kilburn SPD, SPG5 and the separate basement development policy.

RESOLVED:-

that the areas of the work programme indicated for year 2016-17 service planning purposes as set out in the report from Head of Planning be agreed.

5. Any Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

COUNCILLOR S MARQUIS
Chair