



Epping Forest District Council

AREA PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE SOUTH Wednesday, 7th November, 2007

Place: Roding Valley High School, Brook Road, Loughton, Essex

Room: Dining Hall

Time: 7.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: Zoe Folley - Research and Democratic Services
Email: zfolley@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel: 01992 564532

Members:

Councillors J Hart (Chairman), Mrs L Wagland (Vice-Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, D Bateman, K Chana, R Church, Mrs S Clapp, M Cohen, T Frankland, Mrs A Haigh, J Knapman, R Law, A Lee, J Markham, G Mohindra, Mrs C Pond, Mrs P Richardson, B Sandler, P Spencer, P Turpin and H Ulkun

A PLAN SHOWING THE LOCATION OF RODING VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL IS ATTACHED TO THIS AGENDA. A BRIEFING WILL BE HELD FOR THE CHAIRMAN, VICE-CHAIRMAN AND GROUP SPOKESPERSONS OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE, AT 6.30 P.M. PRIOR TO THE MEETING

1. ADVICE TO PUBLIC AND SPEAKERS AT COUNCIL PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEES (Pages 7 - 10)

General advice to people attending the meeting is attached together with a plan showing the location of the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. MINUTES (Pages 11 - 30)

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Sub-Committee.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Assistant to the Chief Executive) To declare interests in any item on this agenda.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, together with paragraphs 6 and 25 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution requires that the permission of the Chairman be obtained, after prior notice to the Chief Executive, before urgent business not specified in the agenda (including a supplementary agenda of which the statutory period of notice has been given) may be transacted.

In accordance with Operational Standing Order 6 (non-executive bodies), any item raised by a non-member shall require the support of a member of the Committee concerned and the Chairman of that Committee. Two weeks' notice of non-urgent items is required.

6. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (Pages 31 - 98)

(Director of Planning and Economic Development) To consider planning applications as set out in the attached schedule

Background Papers: (i) Applications for determination – applications listed on the schedule, letters of representation received regarding the applications which are summarised on the schedule. (ii) Enforcement of Planning Control – the reports of officers inspecting the properties listed on the schedule in respect of which consideration is to be given to the enforcement of planning control.

7. SIX-MONTH REVIEW OF OPERATION OF SUBCOMMITTEE (Pages 99 - 100)

Decisions Required:

(1) To review the operation of the Sub-Committee during the first six months since its membership was reviewed.

(2) To determine any changes that should be made;

(3) To determine whether further reports are required by officers on members proposals

1. (Senior Democratic Services Officer) At the February 2007 meeting of the Area Planning Subcommittee A it was agreed that a review of the operation of the new arrangements be undertaken at this meeting.

2. The scope of the review was to cover:

(i) The membership and 'opting in' arrangements;

(ii) Revisions to the seating arrangements at the meeting venue;

(iii) Application of more rigorous controls to avoid repetition during debate; and

- (iv) Giving precedence to ward members.

Analysis of Meetings

3. There have now been six meetings of the New 'South' Subcommittee. An analysis has been undertaken of the duration, number of applications and member attendance at the meetings against a benchmark of the meetings of Subcommittee 'A' during the year 2006/07. Details are attached as an appendix to this agenda.

4. In essence, the new enlarged sub - committee has considered a similar average number of development control items at each meeting as last year (nine). The average time taken to consider each application has remained at 13 minutes. The duration of meetings has marginally decreased (11 minutes) and agendas marginally shorter (by 7 pages on average). Member attendance, as a percentage of the whole, has decreased slightly but actual attendance by members of the sub - committee is up on last year.

5. One change has been made to the membership of the Subcommittee resultant from a resignation. The reappointment of the new Councillor was made at full Council. Whilst this eventuality was not foreseen in drafting up the rules for opting in it was dealt with properly by the Council. No changes to constitutional rules are felt necessary.

Operational Issues

6. Changes to the layout of the meeting room have been made such that members sit in a horseshoe shape with ten members either side. There have been no instances of the venue being overcrowded. Officers are receiving complaints from those attending that members and officers cannot be heard from the public seating area. The problems are as a result of (i) noisy cooling units in the canteen (this issue has been discussed with the school); (ii) no amplification of members microphones to the seating area; (iii) poor acoustics; and/or (iv) members not speaking loudly enough. This aspect has been a continuing source of complaint from those attending meetings. Previous issues have included the noise made by rain on the conservatory area although this has not been a problem during the summer months. This problem has been helped marginally by the use of webcasting microphones but these are not designed to replace an amplified address system.

7. Webcasting of the meetings has taken place three times since the start of the municipal year. These webcasts are proving popular although cannot be viewed live as no Internet connection is available to the Council at the location. The setting up and transportation of the system currently takes three members. Once portable equipment is obtained in the new Council year this will enable this to be reduced to two people.

Workload Issues

8. The Council also asked that this review should consider whether there was a need for a second Area 'South' during the monthly cycle. Workload levels have remained static and this may be something that would benefit from a further review in six months. Planning Services have commented that a further meeting would assist in helping to meet application targets for determining but this should be weighed against the additional costs of holding further meetings.

9. Members are requested to consider whether further changes need to be made to the way the Sub - committee operates. If members request changes officers will consider the resourcing implications and report back.

8. PROBITY IN PLANNING – APPEAL DECISIONS, APRIL TO SEPT 2007. (Pages 101 - 106)

(Director of Planning & Economic Development). To consider the attached report.

9. DELEGATED DECISIONS

(Director of Planning and Economic Development) Schedules of planning applications determined by the Head of Planning and Economic Development under delegated powers since the last meeting of a Plans Subcommittee may be inspected in the Members Room or at the Planning and Economic Development Information Desk at the Civic Offices, Epping.

10. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Exclusion: To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
Nil	Nil	Nil

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Confidential Items Commencement: Paragraph 9 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution require:

- (1) All business of the Council requiring to be transacted in the presence of the press and public to be completed by 10.00 p.m. at the latest.
- (2) At the time appointed under (1) above, the Chairman shall permit the completion of debate on any item still under consideration, and at his or her discretion, any other remaining business whereupon the Council shall proceed to exclude the public and press.
- (3) Any public business remaining to be dealt with shall be deferred until after the completion of the private part of the meeting, including items submitted for report rather than decision.

Background Papers: Paragraph 8 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of

the Constitution define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 10) and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

Inspection of background papers may be arranged by contacting the officer responsible for the item.