

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: District Development Control Committee **Date:** Tuesday, 7 April 2009

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 8.17 pm

Members Present: B Sandler (Chairman), M Colling (Vice-Chairman), K Chana, Mrs A Cooper, R Frankel, Mrs R Gadsby, A Green, Mrs A Haigh, J Wyatt and Mrs L Wagland

Other Councillors:

Apologies: J Hart, J Markham, R Morgan and P Turpin

Officers Present: G Lunnun (Assistant Director Democratic Services) and S Solon (Principal Planning Officer)

47. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman made a short address to remind all present that the meeting would be broadcast on the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

48. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 2 March 2009 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the inclusion of the name of Councillor J M Whitehouse in the list of apologies for absence and to the removal of his name under Minute 42.

49. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

No substitutes had been appointed.

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

51. HIGHWAY AUTHORITY SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

The Committee considered a report on a proposed Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Highway Authority on matters relating to planning and highway development control or management.

Members were advised that the lack of such an Agreement had led to a certain amount of interpretation, misunderstanding and confusion which had reflected on the timescales for responses from the Highway Authority, the quality of information provided and the relationships between the two authorities.

The Committee were advised that the proposed Service Level Agreement had been compiled by the Essex Planning Officers' Association and was intended for adoption by the Highway Authority and all of the District and Borough Local Planning Authorities in the County.

Attention was drawn to a number of key issues contained within the proposed Agreement. In recognition of performance indicators regarding the timeframe to make decisions on planning applications there was to be a commitment from Essex Highway Authority to provide a formal response to planning officers within 21 days of being notified. Highway officers would attend pre-planning application meetings when required and planning committees when requested. The Highway Authority would monitor highway and transportation issues in legal agreements and financial contributions would be spent in accordance with the requirements of such agreements. Highway officers would present and defend the highway case at all types of appeals, unless a planning application had been refused on highway grounds against the Highway Authority recommendation or where not consulted. However, where not consulted, the Highway Authority would provide support and assistance in preparing appeal statements. The Agreement also committed the Highway Authority to assist with the resolution of highway related enforcement issues.

Members noted that generally the Highway Authority would not normally pay towards appeal costs awarded against a planning authority on planning grounds but that cost sharing on a case-by-case basis would be considered where highway matters were the only reason for objection and subsequent appeal.

Members sought clarification of a number of issues but generally welcomed the proposed agreement.

RESOLVED:

That the Head of Planning and Economic Development be authorised to enter into the agreement with Essex County Council Highway Authority entitled "Highway Authority Development Management Service Level Agreement with District and Borough Local Planning Authorities".

52. CAR PARKING STANDARDS - CONSULTATION DRAFT

The Committee considered a report and received a presentation on proposed revised car parking standards issued by Essex County Council in conjunction with the Essex Planning Officers' Association. Members noted that they were being consulted on the draft document and that comments had to be submitted by 24 April 2009.

The Committee noted that the proposals included a fundamental change to move to minimum standards for trip origins (residential parking) and a greater emphasis on

advice and best practice examples rather than just a list of standards. The move to minimum standards for housing was supported by members of County and District Officers and Essex County Council considered this to be in line with emerging Government thinking, albeit that PGG-13-Transport currently supported maximum parking standards for residential areas.

Members were advised that the proposals were being closely monitored by neighbouring counties as an example of emerging best practice.

Attention was drawn to proposed changes in relation to residential development, garages, parking bay sizes and areas, cycle parking standards, powered two-wheeler standards and part-time employees.

The Committee was advised that following the consultation period the proposals, amended if necessary, would be adopted by the County Council as a policy document to which weight would have to be given. However, the document would not form part of the Development Plan in advance of the core strategy.

Members welcomed the proposed increase in the minimum internal dimension size of garages but drew attention to the need for an equivalent increase in the width of garage doors failing which there could still be a reluctance to use garages for vehicles. Members also questioned why the document could not be adopted in advance of the Core Strategy in the same way that the Council was being required to adopt Development Plan Provision for Gypsies and Travellers.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the revised car parking standards entitled, "Parking Standards and Good Practice for Essex" issued by Essex County Council be supported subject to provision being made for a minimum garage door width size; and
- (2) That the officers undertake further investigations into the possibility of the adopted standards becoming part of the Development Plan in advance of the core strategy.

53. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no further business to be transacted at the meeting.

CHAIRMAN