

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF MEETING OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROL CHAIRMEN AND
VICE CHAIRMEN
HELD ON MONDAY, 2 AUGUST 2010
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 PM - 10.05 AM**

Members Present: Mrs D Collins (Cabinet Representative), Mrs R Gadsby (Vice Chairman Area Plans West), J Hart (Chairman Area Plans South), G Mohindra (Vice Chairman DDCC), J Philip (Chairman, Planning Scrutiny Panel), Mrs P Smith (Cabinet Representative), Ms S Stavrou (Cabinet Representative), B Sandler (Chairman DDCC), Mrs L Wagland (Cabinet Representative) and J Wyatt (Chairman Area Plans West)

Other members present: -

Apologies for Absence: A Boyce, K Chana and A Green

Officers Present J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), S Solon (Principal Planning Officer) and J Godden (Planning Officer)

Also in attendance: -

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

Agreed that Councillor Sandler chair the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The notes of the meeting held on 15 October 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

3. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING/PROGRESS

(a) Planning Services and Building Control – Working From the Same Set of Plans (Note 3)

Noted that Development Control Staff were reviewing Building Controls commencement list and checking for relevant consents. If found the approved plans were given to the Building Control Officer. Noted that a number of enforcement cases had arisen from this process.

(b) Pre-application Briefings (Note 4(a))

Noted that not many contentious/large applications had been received since the last meeting. It was now thought that the best way of engaging with local members was to discuss received applications at the conclusion of the relevant Area Plans Chairman's Briefing.

(c) Outline Plans (Note 4(b))

Noted that there were some technical problems in adding links to online plans to agenda but this was being worked on. Members were encouraged to contact relevant

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officers with issues on applications, particularly if they were requesting information to be presented at the Area Plans meetings.

(d) Non-present Chairman and Vice Chairman (Note 4(d) Point 2)

Agreed: That the constitution position if both Chairman and Vice Chairman of a subcommittee are not able to attend be reviewed by officers and the issue referred to scrutiny if appropriate.

4. POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS AND INFORMATION REQUIRED BY MEMBERS

Agreed:

(1) Planning Officers to provide presentation slides on applications where previous applications and their plans are a material consideration and that their presentation include relevant issues from previous applications;

(2) Planning Officers to ensure that they have relevant previous files to hand at the planning meeting; and

(3) That applicants be encouraged to provide a summary of revisions on resubmitted or altered plans and particularly on controversial sites.

5. "BALANCED" COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Group discussed whether there should a greater number of 'balanced' reports at Subcommittee. Some members felt that there were not many such reports at the East Subcommittee and at a recent meeting the majority of officer recommendations had been overturned by members. Officers indicated that reports for the East Subcommittee were written by both planning teams. Additionally those 'balanced' applications that came down on the refusal side were often refused under delegated authority.

It was **Agreed** that no changes to the current arrangements or structure of reports were required at present.

6. VIABILITY IN DETERMINING S106 REQUIREMENTS

The group discussed how a policy could be developed to cover applications where Section 106 agreements were appropriate. The following was **Agreed:**

(1) Officers to give consideration to a proper 'planning gain' policy within the LDF process together with the development of a 'toolkit assessment' for those applications where appropriate or viability were in question.

(2) Officers to formalise arrangements for member consultant on 'major' applications, giving members the opportunity to give officers greater input as to local considerations at an early stage of the application process.

(3) Officer to approach other Local Authorities where this process works well to help develop a policy for the Council.

(4) That a report be prepared for the Planning Services Scrutiny Panel.

7. MEETINGS WITH APPLICANTS/DEVELOPERS

The group discussed good practice in meeting applicants or developers. It was recognised that Councillors would be subject to lobbying on specific applications. In such cases, it is essential that care was taken to maintain the Council's and its members' integrity so as to protect the credibility of the planning process.

Agreed:

(1) That, in line with the planning protocol, if approached for a meeting members should decline unless Councillors could be accompanied by an officer and a note taken of the meeting for the purpose of reporting to the full Committee.

(2) That if approached members should seek guidance from officers at the earliest opportunity.

8. QUALITY OF PLAN SUBMISSIONS/APPLICATION VALIDATION

Councillor Sandler reported that there had been an improvement in plans particularly those showing Streetscene but some didn't show slopes. Officers reported that, generally, Streetscene plans were not asked for in applications for domestic extensions, but asked that if members became aware of problems with plans that they contact them at an early stage.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Neighbour notification on deferred applications

Members asked that officers keep neighbours and interested parties informed if applications were deferred.

(b) Member Call-in deadlines

It was noted that members had 28 days in which to call an application before Subcommittee. Some members had found that applications had missed this deadline as information about whether an application site was contentious took time to circulate locally and they had been unable to raise the matter at Committee. Officers indicated that the Council worked to set targets but that if the request were made by the member the Director and was still within the statutory period, a view would be taken as to bringing the matter to Subcommittee.

(c) Issues for Next meeting

- Training issues – Permitted Development and Certificates of Lawful Use
- Policy for bungalows
- Effect of localism on planning
- Deferred applications

(d) Timing of Next Meeting

Agreed that the Group should meet again in late October 2010.