

ARTICLE 10

District Development Management Committee and Area Plans Sub-Committees

The Council will establish the following Committees which shall be appointed at its annual meeting.

Membership

- (1) The following shall be the non-executive committees of the Council, consisting of the number of members set out below:

Committee or Sub-Committee	Number of Councillors	Membership
District Development Management Committee	15 members	15 members of the Council appointed by the Council at its Annual meeting, subject to pro rata requirements and including those members appointed as Chairman of each Area Planning Sub-Committee. Members to be appointed on the basis of aptitude, interest and planning experience
Area Plans Sub-Committee South	25 members	All District Wards in the parishes of Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell and Loughton.
Area Plans Sub-Committee East	19 members	The District Wards of Chipping Ongar, Greensted and Marden Ash; Epping Hemnall; Epping Lindsey and Thornwood Common; Hastingwood, Matching and Sheering Village; High Ongar; Willingale and The Rodings; Lambourne; Lower Sheering; Moreton and Fyfield; North Weald Bassett; Passingford; Shelley and Theydon Bois.
Area Plans Sub-Committee West	14 members	All District Wards in the parish of Waltham Abbey together with the District Wards of Lower Nazeing; Broadley Common, Epping Upland and Nazeing and Roydon.

- (2) Members of the Council appointed to each Area Plans Sub-Committee shall be drawn solely from those representing wards within the area for which the Sub-Committee is responsible shown in the 'Membership' column above. Seats on each Sub-Committee shall be allocated to all Councillors representing electoral wards in the areas concerned. The requirement for the appointment of Sub-Committees from all members of the Council shall not apply to the Area Plans Sub-Committees.

- (3) Newly elected members may be appointed to the relevant Area Plans Sub-Committee at the next ordinary meeting of the full Council.
- (4) A member of the executive may serve on an Area Plans Sub-Committee if otherwise eligible to do so as a Councillor.

Responsibility for functions:

The Committee and Sub-Committees the subject of this Article have responsibility for determining matters which have been delegated by the Council and the Executive shown in Part 3 of this Constitution, showing those which are the responsibility of the Executive and those which are not Executive functions and any limitations on delegation.

Terms of Reference:

District Development Management Committee

- (1) To determine:
 - (a) Any development proposals which affect more than one Area Plans Sub-Committee;
 - (b) Any 'large scale' application¹ (as defined below);
 - (c) Any 'major' application² (as defined below) where the Council is the land owner;
 - (d) Any application referred by an Area Plans Sub-Committee by resolution, by a minority of members of an Area Plans Sub-Committee in accordance with the Council's Rules or where the Sub-Committee is unable to determine the application;
 - (e) To determine any recommendation of an Area Plans Sub-Committee which relates to potential decisions liable to give rise to claims for costs or compensation, including development management matters and enforcement of planning requirements (including recommendations of no action) but excluding works on preserved trees;
 - (f) Any planning application or other planning matter submitted by, or on behalf of, a Councillor of the Authority (and/or their relevant person as defined in the Council's Code of Conduct); and
 - (g) Any development proposals for a site made by or on behalf of the Council or where the Council is the landowner that has been recommended for refusal by the relevant Area Plans Sub-Committee contrary to a recommendation of the Service Director (Planning Services) that planning permission be granted.

¹ 'Large-scale major development' means development involving any one or more of the following;

(a) The provision of dwellinghouses where (i) The number of dwellinghouses to be provided is 200 or more: or (ii) The development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 4 hectares or more where the number of dwellinghouses is not known (normally an Outline application) or

(b) The provision of a commercial building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 10,000 square metres or more: or

(c) Commercial development carried out on a site having an area of 2 hectares or more.

² 'major development' means development involving any one or more of the following;

(a) The provision of dwellinghouses where (i) The number of dwellinghouses to be provided is 10 or more up to 199: or (ii) The development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectares or more but just less than 4 hectares where the number of dwellinghouses is not known (normally an Outline application)..

(b) The provision of a commercial building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more up to 9,999 square metres: or

(c) Commercial development carried out on a site having an area of one hectare but less than 2 hectares.

Area Plans Sub-Committees

- (1) To consider all applications (except as may be delegated to the Service Director (Planning Services)) or fall to the District Development Management Committee to determine as set out above) received for development within the respective Sub-Committee area and, except as detailed below, to make decisions on behalf of the local planning authority thereon;
- (2) Subject to the prior approval of the Chairman of the Sub-Committee, to consider informal proposals for development and to give guidance to the Service Director (Planning Services);
- (3) To consider planning applications made by other authorities which are considered by the Service Director (Planning Services) to require member response;
- (4) To consider and make recommendations to the District Development Management Committee on applications for development where:
 - (a) the Sub-Committee's proposed decision is a substantial departure from:
 - (i) the Council's approved policy framework; or
 - (ii) the development or other approved plan for the area; or
 - (iii) it would be required to be referred to the Secretary of State for approval as required by current government circular or directive;
 - (b) the refusal of consent may involve the payment of compensation; or
 - (c) the District Development Management Committee have previously considered the application or type of development and has so requested; or
 - (d) the Sub-Committee wish, for any reason, to refer the application to the District Development Management Committee for decision by resolution; or
 - (e) development proposals for a site are made by or on behalf of the Council or where the Council is the landowner, that are recommended for refusal by a Sub-Committee contrary to a recommendation of the Director of Governance that planning permission be granted;
- (5) Planning applications made by officers of Service Director level and above;
- (6) Where an application is objected to by a Councillor in a purely personal capacity;
- (7) To consider enforcement action on a site where members have refused a retrospective planning application;
- (8) To require a report (pursuant to (7) above) to be made to the relevant Area Plans Sub-Committee from officers in those cases where no further action is subsequently proposed, such report to give option to refer enforcement action to the District development management Committee; and
- (9) To require that such report (pursuant to (7) above) be made within two months after the elapsing of the timescale within which a retrospective application can be appealed and that the Sub-Committee is informed if an appeal has been launched after the six week deadline.

Joint Meeting of the Development Management Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

- (1) To consider matters relating to the conduct and good governance of planning meetings.
- (2) To consider any current and future requirements for member training necessary to support the effective operation of the Council's development management function and responsibilities.
- (3) The Committee shall ordinarily meet twice a year.
- (4) The Committee shall comprise the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of each planning committee and sub-committee, the Cabinet Member responsible for Planning Policy matters, plus a Councillor nominated by the Leader of any political group not otherwise represented on the Committee, and shall have the assistance of the officer in charge of the Development Management system, or her/his nominee.
- (5) The Committee shall be chaired by the Chairman of the District Development Management Committee, and in her/his absence, by the Vice-Chairman thereof.

Public Participation at District Development Management Committee and Area Plans Sub-Committees on Planning Matters

- (1) There shall be afforded to those classes of persons specified in the rules for participation at Appendix 1 to this Article an opportunity, on request, to make oral representations to any Area Plans Sub-Committee (or in appropriate circumstances, the District Development Management Committee) meeting concerning any planning application or related matter before that Sub-Committee for determination. Such arrangements for public participation also apply to all planning applications considered by the full Council;
- (2) The procedure for dealing with requests to address an Area Plans Sub-Committee, the District Development Management Committee or the Council, shall be as prescribed from time to time by the Council and as set out in Appendix 1 to this Article.

Site Visits

- (1) Formal Site visits may be undertaken of any potential development site subject to application where there is a substantial benefit to the decision-making process. Such a visit may be approved by the District Development Management Committee or the appropriate Area Plans Sub-Committee at the meeting where they are being asked to determine the matter or in advance on the recommendation of the Service Director (Planning Services) in consultation with the Chairman of the District Development Management Committee or the appropriate Area Plans Sub-Committee.
- (2) In those circumstances where an application that has been subject to a formal site visit by an Area Plans Sub-Committee is subsequently referred to the District Development Management Committee for determination, a further site visit will be arranged for members of the District Development Management Committee prior to its consideration of the application.
- (3) Formal site visits may also be held for all members with regard to any planning application to be considered by the full Council. Such site visits shall be approved by the Chairman of the Council on the recommendation of the Service Director (Planning Services).
- (4) Formal Site visits will be undertaken following the guidance at Appendix 2 to this Article.

**RULES FOR PARTICIPATION ON PLANNING MATTERS AT COUNCIL,
AREA PLANS SUB AND DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
MEETINGS**

1. The following persons shall be able, on request, to address the appropriate Area Plans Sub-Committee and/or District Development Management Committee and/or the Council on any planning application or related matter within its terms of reference and included on any agenda, for a period of three minutes:
 - (a) one objector;
 - (b) one representative of any relevant Parish or Town Council for the purpose of explaining the views of that Council on the matter in question;
 - (c) one representative of any other authority consulted on the application or as a statutory consultee where they have so requested; and
 - (d) the applicant (or one nominated agent or representative);
2. In the case of planning applications which have a District-wide significance, it shall be permissible for the Chairman of an Area Plans Sub-Committee, the District Development Management Committee or the Council, to allow any Parish or Town Council to speak on such an application.
3. For the purposes of this Standing Order the definition of "planning application or any related matter" shall not include any existing or proposed enforcement action under the Planning Acts.
4. The Chairman of the Area Plans Sub-Committee, the District Development Management Committee or the Council may allow additional speakers in exceptional circumstances.
5. Persons wishing to address the Area Plans Sub-Committee, the District Development Management Committee or the Council are required to register with Democratic Services by 4.00 pm on the day before the meeting. The Chairman may make changes or additions to speakers after that time at their discretion.
6. Persons addressing an Area Plans Sub-Committee, the District Development Management Committee or the Council shall be allowed no more than three minutes to present their case. At the discretion of the Chairman, speakers may clarify matters relating to their presentation and answer questions from members.
7. Written submissions and photographic or similar material will not be considered by an Area Plans Sub-Committee, the District Development Management Committee or the Council. Any written submissions received after the agenda is produced will be verbally summarised and reported to the Committee.
8. The right to address the Committees is extended to the Area Plans Sub-Committees the District Development Management Committee and the Council. Having previously made representations at an Area Plans Sub-Committee does not preclude any applicant, objector or parish/town council representative from speaking again when the matter is reconsidered.

Guidance for Members at Site Visits

Formal site visits may be requested by any planning committee. These can be requested either before a planning meeting or resolved at the meeting concerned. However, these consume resources and delay determination of an application. It is good practice to consider site visits only where there is a substantial benefit to the decision-making process, e.g. when the impact of the proposed development is difficult to visualise from prior inspection from a public place, or from the plans and the supporting material; or it is particularly contentious.

It is recognised that Councillors are subject to lobbying on specific applications. In such cases, it is essential that care is taken to maintain the Council's and its members' integrity so as to protect the credibility of the planning process.

Councillors are asked to bear in mind the following guidance when undertaking planning site visits so as to avoid the perception of pre-determination.

- Site visits should be undertaken at an agreed predetermined time and conducted in a single group with a planning officer present at all times.
- Members of the committee concerned are encouraged to attend site visits.
- The site visit is managed by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or planning officer present. The Chairman or Vice Chairman will remind Councillors of the guidance at the beginning of each visit. Members of the Committee or Sub-Committee should not enter into discussions with interested parties, such as the applicant, the agent or neighbours during the visit.
- Councillors/Planning Officers should not allow interested parties to use the site visit as an opportunity of lobbying members of the committee. It is made clear to other parties at the outset that the purpose is to gather information and to view the site only.
- Any questions from Councillors should be limited to questions of fact and directed, in the first instance, to the planning officer present and not directly to interested parties present.
- In the interests of fairness to all parties, members as a single group should consider the desirability of viewing an application site from more than one property when the site visit is arranged.
- Councillors must ensure that the application is not determined at the site visit
- Councillors should avoid acceptance of any hospitality at a site visit which could be misinterpreted by third parties.