

Report to Planning Services Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting: 02 September 2010

Subject: Controversial Planning Decisions

**Officer contact for further information: Jeremy Godden,
Principal Planning Officer (01992 56 4498)**

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins (01992 56 4607)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

1. That three sites subject of recent planning applications are selected for a detailed review of the scheme as finally built judged against that as originally approved by Members. These sites are:
 - 1 – Manor Hall site, Manor Road, Chigwell
 - 2 – Wansfell College site, Piercing Hill, Theydon Bois
 - 3 – Lidl Supermarket, Sewardstone Road, Waltham Abbey
2. That members confirm the scope of the review to be carried out on these sites.

Report:

With regard to Minute 8 of Planning Service Scrutiny Standing Panel dated 03 June 2010 Members have requested that a review is carried out of a selection of recent controversial Planning decisions.

This is to enable lessons to be learned by both Members and Officers from the selected sites which can be applied to future planning applications to raise the quality of decision making and monitoring of the development of sites.

An item was placed in the 06 August member bulletin asking for suitable sites to be suggested for the review. To date no members have come forward and therefore Officers have suggested one site in each Planning Committee Area.

It is considered that the review should cover the original planning application, any further formal amendments to the scheme, any Enforcement investigations and action, and the scheme as finally built. It will be an important part of the review that a site visit to each scheme is carried out to allow Members to compare the finished building or progress of the development with the relevant approved plans, as well as seeing it in the context of the local environment and neighbouring properties.

Those present at the site visit could consist of:

- 1 – Members of the Scrutiny Panel
- 2 – The Planning Officer and/or Presenting Officer
- 3 – Ward Members
- 4 – Parish/Town Council Representative
- 5 – Site Owner/Developer

Details of relevant plans and a summary of the planning/enforcement history of the site should be circulated to all parties prior to the site visit. A brief report of the conclusions drawn from the scheme would then be circulated to all parties.

The visit could be carried out either in the evenings prior to the clocks going forward on 31 October 2010 or on a Saturday morning as required.

Reason for decision:

Members to select the appropriate methodology for carrying out the review.

The three sites have been chosen as representative of locally controversial developments, which have generated continued local interest during the building of the scheme.

Options considered and rejected:

Carrying out the review as a desktop exercise. This would not enable a proper appreciation of the context of the finished scheme within its local environment and would make assessment of the impacts of amendments to the scheme unbalanced and unclear.

Consultation undertaken:

All members via the weekly bulletin on 06 August 2010

Resource implications:

Budget provision: Officers overtime payments
Personnel: Planning Officers and Members
Land: Nil

Community Plan/BVPP reference: Nil
Relevant statutory powers: Town and Country Planning Act

Background papers: Planning applications as per report
Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: Nil
Key Decision reference: (if required)