



Report to Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel

SCRUTINY

 Epping Forest District Council

Date of meeting: 03 March 2011

Subject: Standard Letters - 1. Neighbour Notifications on Planning Applications. 2. Acknowledgement of Enforcement Complaint

Officer contact for further information: Nigel Richardson 01992 564110

Committee Secretary: Mark Jenkins

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

1. That the standard neighbour notification letter be noted as per the attached documents.
2. That the standard enforcement investigation acknowledgement letter be noted as per the attached document.

Report:

The Panel at the meeting held on 2 December 2010, requested that an item be added to Work Programme in which they wished to scrutinise the standard letters the Development Control section send out to the public when they are consulted on planning applications and when the officers acknowledge an enforcement complaint for investigation.

The first letter attached to this report, sent out at the beginning of the planning application process, informs the recipient, who may be affected, of the proposed development submitted to the Council and gives them the opportunity to comment upon it and how they can view the plans.

We have in recent years expanded the length of the letter, through a succession of alterations, in order to make clear the different ways the application details can be viewed and how their local council can be contacted.

There are also two leaflets which are posted out at the same time and are attached to this report item.

The first is "Making Your Views Known - a guide to commenting on planning applications". This informs them of how they can find out about an application, how to comment, the proper grounds they can and cannot object upon, the decision making process and contacts.

The second is a guide to viewing the planning application online through the Council's website.

The Panel also wished to see the enforcement acknowledgement letter. A copy of this is also attached after the leaflets. It briefly explains who the complaint has been allocated to, what steps the Council can take and cross-references to the enforcement guide on the Council's website. It also importantly states that the complaint may take some time to investigate, because time evidence may need to be built up and legal advice sought in particular cases.

Reason for decision:

The Panel are requested to note these documents. The letters are periodically reviewed and it should also be noted that they satisfy their function of advising the recipients of where relevant information is obtainable and how their views can be made.

Options considered and rejected:

Nil

Consultation undertaken:

Nil

Resource implications:

Budget provision: Nil

Personnel: Nil

Land: Nil

Community Plan/BVPP reference: Nil

Relevant statutory powers: Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Background papers: Documents attached to the report

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: Nil

Key Decision reference: (if required)