
REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD ON 5 JUNE 2008

Chairman:	* The Right Revd Peter Broadbent	
Councillors:	* Husain Akhtar	* Joyce Nickolay
	* Mitzi Green (1)	* Phillip O'Dell
	* Mrs Kinnear	* Jeremy Zeid (3)
Independent Persons:	Ms Sheila Darr	* Mr Mohammad Rizvi
	* Dr J Kirkland	

* Denotes Member present
(1) and (3) Denote category of Reserve Member

[Notes: (1) Councillor Osborn also attended this meeting. to speak on the item indicated at Minute ... below;

(2) Councillor Mrs Bath also attended the meeting].

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION II - Protocol for Planning Committees

The Committee received a reference from the Strategic Planning Committee held on 26 January 2008 which proposed changes to the Protocol for Members and Reserve Member when dealing with Planning Applications and Lobbying. In considering the changes proposed by the Strategic Planning Committee Members discussed the advice contained within the "Connecting Councillors with Strategic Planning Applications" guidance and its proposal that Ward Members should be included in the proposals for Members to have early opportunity for engagement on strategic applications, expressing opinions both in favour and against such a process. The importance of Ward Members being able to be involved in early engagement was stressed and it was agreed that Strategic Planning Committee should give further thought to how it would seek to engage Ward Councillors successfully on strategic applications.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

(1) That the additional paragraphs proposed for Early Engagement on Strategic Planning Applications be included within the Protocol as follows:

"1. Early Engagement on Strategic Applications

Since 2003 the complexity of the planning process has increased considerably particularly in respect of major applications which can require Environmental Assessments, Access and Design Statements, Transport Assessments, Viability 'Toolkits', Energy Statements, Children's Play statements etc. The numbers of major applications which are currently in the pipeline is far above what has previously been the norm for the authority, and the pressure to deal with these in a timely manner within Government targets remains.

To enable members to understand large scale applications and their implications the officers consider that they should have the opportunity to ask questions, raise issues and meet applicants, both prior to submission and between submission and determination. However, to avoid any problems of probity this engagement needs to be carefully managed. This approach is recommended in a leaflet published by London Councils, The Government Office for London and London First in November 2007. (attached Appendix B)

Officers are recommending that applicants for major strategic schemes should be invited to make a presentation to members of the Committee and reserves, at which they should explain their proposals and answer questions of fact. Such presentations may also involve a site visit, and where necessary site visits for strategic proposals should be arranged prior to Committee meetings where the proposal is to be considered. At such presentations there should be no debate about the merits or otherwise of the scheme.

At least one senior officer should be present at all such meetings and may be called upon to answer any factual questions about policy issues etc.

Such meetings can be at either pre- or post-application stages and in some instances both may be appropriate. Similar meetings may also be arranged for ward/backbench members and members of the Executive.”