

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	Development Control Committee
Date:	29th April 2003
Subject:	Protocol for Members and Reserve Members when Dealing with Planning Applications and Lobbying
Key decision:	N/A
Responsible Chief Officer:	Joint report of the Chief Planning Officer and Borough Solicitor
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	N/A
Status:	Part 1
Ward:	N/A
Enclosures:	Protocol for Members and Reserve Members when Dealing with Planning Applications and Lobbying

1. Summary/ Reason for urgency (if applicable)

- 1.1 The protocol was discussed at a Special Development Control Committee Meeting on 20th March 2003, and at Standards Committee on 8th April 2003. Development Control Committee raised a number of concerns about the wording of the protocol and these were discussed at the Standards Committee and proposed amendments made. The attached protocol shows the initial and new proposed wording for ease of reference.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That Members concur with the Protocol as now amended

REASON: Members have requested clear guidelines to help them deal with planning applications and associated lobbying.

The Local Government Association recommend that Councils have a local protocol dealing with planning issues.

3. Consultation with Ward Councillors

- 3.1 Not applicable

4. Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)

- 4.1 The Standards Committee agreed in February 2002 (Minute 9), that the Council should produce a revised Protocol dealing with planning decisions and lobbying.

Development Control Committee on 20th March 2003 (Minute 254) and Standards Committee have both commented on the initial draft.

5. **Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

5.1 No direct relevance

6. **Background Information and options considered**

6.1 The Local Government Association, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the Nolan Committee and the Royal Town Planning Institute all recommend that Members who have to make planning decisions are properly trained. Members of Harrow Council have been offered training on planning decisions and on the new Members Code of Conduct. This Protocol is designed to support that training and provide on-going guidance for Members.

7. **Consultation**

7.1 The protocol has been discussed at Development Control and Standards Committees.

8. **Finance Observations**

8.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report

9. **Legal Observations**

9.1 The Protocol has been drafted by officers within planning and legal and reflects both planning legislation and the new Local Government Act 2000.

10. **Conclusion**

10.1 The aim of the protocol is to help Members understand their roles and responsibilities and ensure that decisions of the Development Control Committee adhere to the principles of fair and open decision making and that Members take into account their responsibilities under the Members Code of Conduct.

10.2 Once approved by Council, this Protocol will form part of the Council Constitution.

10.3 Standards Committee at the meeting of 8th April made a number of suggested amendments to the protocol, following which it wished to recommend the revised version to Council. They propose that the protocol be placed on the agenda of the Annual Council meeting provided the changes made by them deal substantially with the concerns of Development Control Committee. Minor changes may be proposed by Development Control by way of a reference to Council. If however Development Control Committee still have significant concerns about the protocol, Development Control Committee is requested to report these to Standards Committee in June for further discussion.

11. **Background Papers**

11.1 Probity in planning (update) – March 2002 - Local Government Association

12. **Authors**

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