



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Planning & City Development Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Planning & City Development Committee** Committee held on **Thursday 17th January, 2019**, Room 3.1, 3rd Floor, 5 Strand, London, WC2 5HR.

Members Present: Councillors Gotz Mohindra (Chairman), Timothy Barnes, Geoff Barraclough, David Boothroyd, Susie Burbridge, Ruth Bush, Melvyn Caplan, Tony Devenish, Peter Freeman, Murad Gassanly, Jim Glen, Elizabeth Hitchcock, Louise Hyams, Robert Rigby, Tim Roca, Selina Short and James Spencer

Also Present: Councillor Richard Beddoe (Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning)

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Angela Harvey and Councillor Guthrie McKie

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 1.1 Cllr David Boothroyd declared that he was Head of Research and Psephology for Thorncliffe, whose clients were companies applying for planning permission from various local authorities. No current schemes were in Westminster; if there were he would be precluded from working on them under the company's code of conduct.

2 MINUTES

- 2.1 That the Minutes of the Planning and City Development Committee meeting held on 12 November 2018 be approved.

3 PLANNING REVIEW INCLUDING THE INTRODUCTION OF PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS AT PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEES

- 3.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of Place Shaping and Planning providing an update on the programme of work that was underway to implement the findings of the Planning Review undertaken by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). The Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning presented the report and the Chief Executive, the Director of Place

Shaping and Planning, HR Business Partner and the Principle Planning Solicitor were also in attendance to answer questions.

3.2 The Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning provided an overview of the recommendations, which would facilitate the opportunity for members of the public to make verbal representations at Planning Sub-Committee meetings. The following key features of the proposed procedures and protocols relating to public speaking were highlighted:

- Anyone wishing to speak at Sub-Committee meetings would be required to register their interest in advance;
- The number of persons/organisations permitted to speak would differ according to the type of Sub-Committee being held. For the Planning (Major) Applications Sub-Committee, it was proposed to permit a maximum of two speakers in support of the application and two against. Whilst for Planning Applications Sub-Committees 1, 2 and 3 there would be a maximum of one permitted speaker in support and one against. In addition, it was confirmed that the procedure rules would be amended for all Sub-Committee meetings to enable more than one relevant Ward Councillor and amenity society to address the meeting if required.
- A period of three minutes be permitted for each speaker except where the number of requests exceeds the number of speaking slots. In such circumstances, potential speakers would share the total speaking time between them if a nominated spokesperson could not be agreed upon.
- Practical matters including the running order of speakers and permitting verbal representations only.

3.3 The Committee welcomed the proposals and confirmed the importance of permitting public speaking to improve transparency of the planning process and ensure residents were at the heart of decision-making. The commitment that the proposals would be formally reviewed after six months was also considered important to assess how successful the measures had been and allow any improvements to be implemented if considered necessary. Amendments to the proposed procedures were noted and the Committee was pleased that this included permitting more than one Ward Councillor and Amenity Society to make verbal representations. This was especially considered important on applications that had the potential to affect more than one ward. To assist potential speakers the Committee also requested that guidance be produced to try to ensure any verbal representations were relevant and appropriate.

3.4 The Committee discussed the new proposed approach to pre-application community engagement, which included involving communities at an early stage of the planning process to help influence and shape developments. The Committee noted that work on the initial proposals was still ongoing but welcomed the Council playing a more active role at an earlier stage. It was

considered this would help resolve any potential issues in advance of a planning application being formally submitted.

3.5 In response to questions from the Committee the Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning commented that:

- It was not currently proposed for Neighbourhood Forums to have an allocated speaking slot at Sub-Committee meetings, however this could be reviewed after six months;
- Sub-Committee members would not be permitted to ask speakers questions as the Planning Presiding Officer would be present to answer any technical questions;
- The order of speakers was currently considered appropriate but this would be assessed during the formal six month review of the process;
- Minor amendments to the procedure would be made including any references to 12pm being changed to noon and ensuring officers were also asked to declare any interests at Sub-Committee meetings.

3.6 The Committee welcomed the proposals and agreed that facilitating the opportunity for members of the public to make verbal representations at Planning Sub-Committee meetings was a positive step forward. The procedures and protocols required to allow public speaking to take place were considered efficient, effective and fair and Members were pleased to note that they would be subject to a six-month review of their effectiveness. Subject to the minor amendments to the proposed procedure rules detailed above, the Committee agreed the report's recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the proposed procedures and protocols to allow for members of the public to make verbal representations at Planning Applications Sub-Committee meetings, as amended, be agreed;
- 2) That the proposed procedures and protocols take effect from the first Sub-Committee meeting to be held at City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, subject to a 6 month review of their effectiveness; and
- 3) That the ongoing work to implement the proposals relating to pre-application community engagement and delegated authority with regards to planning decisions be noted.

4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

None.

The Meeting ended at 7.44 pm

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____