



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Planning & City Development Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Planning & City Development Committee** held on **Thursday 12th November, 2018**, Rooms 3.6 and 3.7, 3rd Floor, 5 Strand, London, WC2 5HR.

Members Present: Councillors Gotz Mohindra (Chairman), Geoff Barraclough, David Boothroyd, Iain Bott, Susie Burbridge, Ruth Bush, Peter Freeman, Jim Glen, Angela Harvey, Elizabeth Hitchcock, Louise Hyams, Guthrie McKie, Robert Rigby, Selina Short and James Spencer

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

1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Timothy Barnes, Tony Devenish, Murad Gassanly and Tim Roca.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 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.

3 WESTMINSTER CITY PLAN - DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

- 3.1 The Committee received a report from the Director of Planning which provided a summary of the key current trends and issues facing the service.
- 3.2 The Director of Planning introduced the report and provided an update on the following areas:

Pre-commencement Conditions – The Committee noted that the Town and Country Planning (Pre-Commencement Conditions) Regulations 2018 came into force from 1 October 2018. Its effects were detailed which included the requirement for the local planning authority to seek the written agreement of applicants to any pre-commencement conditions attached to permissions

granted in or after that date. Whilst the benefits of the new regulations were acknowledged concern was expressed over the likely practical implications for the determination of applications. These included a potential increase in refusals, extra expense for the applicant at the application stage and various issues for officers and members at Planning Sub-Committees.

Unauthorised Installation of Telephone Kiosks – An update on recent enforcement action undertaken against telephone kiosks deemed to be in poor condition was provided. The Committee was pleased to note that this had resulted in the removal of several kiosks. Following the completion of the pilot scheme, options for further pro-active enforcement action in other parts of Westminster were being assessed. The Committee requested that future enforcement action concentrate on the Edgware Road and Baker Street areas and Members were asked to forward on any further suggestions to the Director of Planning.

3.3 The Committee then discussed in detail the following topics:

- **Planning Advisory Service Review** – It was noted that proposals to permit public speaking at Planning Sub-Committee meetings had been delayed so that further work could be undertaken to understand how to best implement new procedures. The Committee agreed that views should be sought on any changes from all those with a stake in the planning system in Westminster, most notably residents. Members were advised that if they had comments on the consultation these should be fed back to the Chief Executive.
- **Place-Shaping and Planning Directorate** – The Committee discussed the proposals to create a new directorate and how the new service would help deliver the direction of travel set out in the emerging City Plan. Members were informed that if they had any questions on the remit of the new directorate to contact the Chief Executive.
- **Planning Changes Proposed by the Government** – The recent Government consultation setting out proposed changes to the planning system was noted, in particular with regards to new permitted development rights. It was acknowledged that it was an attempt to reduce red tape, however concerns were expressed it could have the opposite effect and actually increase red tape.
- **Carlton Tavern** – In response to a question the Committee was provided with a brief update on the status of the works to rebuild the pub.

4 CITY PLAN

4.1 The Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning provided the Committee with an overview of the City Plan 2019-2040 that set out the Council's strategy for Westminster's development and the policies that would be used in determining planning applications. This included:

- A new housing policy ensuring 35% of all new housing developments would be social and affordable. Restrictions would also be introduced to limit the size of new homes.
- A new greener and cleaner policy requiring developers to demonstrate they are designing for people of all ages and abilities and that sustainable materials were being used.
- A new design and heritage policy setting out seven clear design policies.
- A neighbourhood development policy.
- Golden principles for building heights in Westminster.
- A new office space policy designed to help high streets respond to the changes in the retail environment.
- A policy to help conserve Soho's unique character.

4.2 The Committee held an in-depth discussion on the Plan and was informed that a consultant had confirmed that requiring all new housing developments to consist of 35% affordable housing would have a 0% impact on the viability of future developments. The Committee was pleased to note that 60% of this housing would be classified as intermediate therefore providing homes for those people who did not qualify for social housing but who could not afford market prices.

4.3 The Committee also discussed conservation areas, construction management and limits to the size of new homes. The consultation process in place was noted which would include the Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning holding briefing sessions with community associations, amenity Groups and Ward Councillors. Members of the Committee were requested to participate in the consultation and try to ensure their local communities were fully engaged with the process.

5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

5.1 The Chairman reminded the Committee that if they had any questions over Planning Advisory Service Review to liaise with the Chief Executive.

The Meeting ended at 8.05 pm

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____