

BOROUGH PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
19 JANUARY 2011

(7.15pm – 9pm)

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Munn (in the Chair);
Councillors Philip Jones, Diane Neil Mills, Geraldine Stanford,
Ray Tindle and David Williams.

ALSO PRESENT: Council Officers
Tara Butler (Spatial Planning Manager- Interim); and
M.J.Udall (Democratic Services)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1)

No declarations of interest were made.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3(a))

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Plan Advisory Committee held on 4 November 2010 be agreed as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Agenda Item 3(b))

No matters were reported under this item.

4 LOCALISM BILL (Agenda Item 4)

Reason for urgency - The Chairman approved submission of this item as a matter of urgency for the following reason: To enable Members to be kept up to date on this matter.

Tara Butler (Spatial Planning Manager- Interim) introduced the report by means of a power-point presentation, hard copies of which were circulated at the meeting. (NB. The power-point presentation was subsequently put on the Council's web-site with the rest of the agenda.)

There was discussion on various issues including the following

(a) The Council's responsibilities for neighbourhood planning, including the Council's role in supporting and validating proposed Neighbourhood Forums.

(b) It was noted that on various issues, such as the criteria for validating proposed Neighbourhood Forums, further details would become available when the relevant Regulations were published.

(c) Tara Butler advised that Government advice was that Neighbourhood Forums had to propose more development (e.g. additional housing) in an area than was proposed in the local plan (such as the LDF or London Plan). Tara Butler undertook to check where this was specifically stated in the draft legislation (and advise Members).

(d) The possible difficulty of determining what constituted more development for a specific area in the absence of specific targets (such as housing) for a defined area.

(e) Whether local business groups as well as residents would be eligible to vote in Neighbourhood Plan referendums or whether business groups would be able to

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create neighbourhood plans for example for industrial areas.

(f) Neighbourhood Plans appearing to be more likely to be sought outside of major urban areas.

(g) The resources needed for the Council to support the neighbourhood planning process and the possibility of local authorities being able to charge for some aspects.

(h) The possibility of streamlining the plans Merton needed to produce as part of the LDF process. Tara Butler indicated that it was hoped to report on this as part of the LDF programme to the next meeting.

(i) The new regime for the existing CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) which will replace Section 106 Obligations from 2014 except for affordable housing. Tara Butler undertook to check whether the CIL would replace S.106 for applications granted permission after 2014 or for applications submitted after 2014.

(j) Tara Butler advised that the Mayor for London had just issued his draft CIL charging policy, and that his charge in Merton was £35/sqm for most developments, subject to certain exceptions, and Merton's CIL charges would need to take account of the Mayor's charges. Tara Butler confirmed that a development could be subject to the Mayor's CIL charge (which took precedence), Merton's CIL charge and, up to 2014, a S.106 Obligation.

(k) It was noted that the Localism Bill prescribes that it would be mandatory for "neighbourhoods" to be given a meaningful proportion of CIL revenues; and that these CIL monies for the neighbourhoods had to be passed to a Neighbourhood Forum or individual persons/organisations, and spent by them, not by the Council.

(l) The proposed additional enforcement powers.

(k) The need for officers to advise if there were any aspects of the Bill, which in their opinion, should be amended in order that Merton could decide whether to lobby the Government.

(l) Reference to possible changes to Appeal Inspectors overturning the Council's refusal of individual applications.

(n) The possible benefits and disadvantages of the Bill for Merton, including possible revenue opportunities and cost savings, and possible resource implications.

RESOLVED: That the Advisory Committee requests that officers produce a report showing the opportunities for Merton provided by the Localism Bill in respect of matters within the remit of this Advisory Committee, and for the report to also address the pressures and cost implications associated with implementing them.

5 CORE PLANNING STRATEGY AND SOUTH LONDON WASTE PLAN –
UPDATES (Agenda Item 5)

Reason for urgency - The Chairman approved submission of this item as a matter of urgency for the following reason: To enable Members to be kept up to date on this matter.

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Tara Butler (Spatial Planning Manager- Interim) introduced the report and responded to queries on both issues.

Core Planning Strategy - Tara Butler advised that a number of organisations had dropped out of participating in the Hearing (starting on 4/2/11) and the number of objectors to the Merton's Strategy was relatively low compared to other Boroughs. Reference was also made to the number of advance queries from the Inspector (shown on agenda page 32) including her query in relation to the Rainbow Industrial Estate (on agenda page 37).

Annual Monitoring Plan (AMR) - Tara Butler confirmed that the Council would still be required to produce an AMR in future. Following a suggestion from a Member, it was

RESOLVED: That, prior to the draft AMR being submitted to the Advisory Committee for endorsement, a report be submitted to a future meeting regarding the proposed content of the AMR, following the relevant Regulations being published by the Government.

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