

MINUTES OF MEETING Strategic Planning Committee HELD ON Monday, 19th February, 2024, 7:00-8:42pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Barbara Blake (Chair), Reg Rice (Vice-Chair), John Bevan, Cathy Brennan, George Dunstall, Scott Emery, Emine Ibrahim, Sue Jameson and Alexandra Worrell

ALSO ATTENDING: Kodi Sprott, Principal Committee Coordinator, Robbie Mcnaugher Head of Development, Management and Enforcement, Rob Krzyszowski, Assistant Director for Planning, Building Standards and Sustainability, Bob McIver, Head of Building Control Services, Denis Ioannou – Building Control Team Manager –

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred to the notice of filming at meetings and this information was noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Bartlett and Councillor Collett.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. DEPUTATIONS / PETITIONS / PRESENTATIONS / QUESTIONS

There were no deputations/ petitions/ presentations/ questions.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED

To approve and sign the minutes held on the 11th November and 13th December 2023 as a correct record of the meeting.

7. PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL 2023/24 Q3 UPDATE

Rob Krzyszowski introduced the report on the work of the Planning and Building Control services to December 2023.

The following was noted in response to questions from the committee:

Cross Cutting Matters:

- The government would be looking in more detail at where Councils were frequently refusing proposals against officer advice. They would be looking to publish that data more so that local communities and residents could see.
- On the planning skills delivery fund, officers did initially suggest further agency staff to help deal with tackling the backlog of applications. So far, the backlog had been manageable with existing staff, through overtime measures and there was agency staff already within the team. So in reality, there was a blended approach.
- The National Development Management Policies will be a new addition to the planning system. This entailed the Local Plan, the London Plan and the new National Development Management Policies all being the development plan. Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan, in turn this would strengthen them. The National Planning Policy Framework was not the development plan, currently this was just a material consideration. Officers had not seen any drafted National Development Management Policies yet; this would need to be consulted on first. Officers would likely respond to this as a Council.
- Older peoples housing would be picked up in the Local Plan. To clarify, the Government ordered a review into the London Plan. That review had been published and does not suggest any changes to the London Plan. Since this, the Government have announced a national brownfield first policy. This reiterated building on brownfield first rather than greenfield sites. This had been long established national planning policy for many years.
- There was a small amount of Green Belt in Haringey, but officers would still keep an open-minded approach for those types of sites and apply planning policy.
- When the housing delivery test figure was not as good as it was now, there was something called the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This was an extra national policy nudge to make it slightly more difficult to refuse planning applications for housing. The nudge was only in national policy, it was not in the development plan. The development plan was still the most important document; therefore, this was just a material consideration. It would not make much difference in practice and particularly in Haringey where most of the sites were brownfield. The principle of development was generally accepted through the local plan and planning policy, so it was a slightly nuanced technical policy issue.

Development Management and Enforcement:

- In terms of the appeals, the council had received a batch of telephone box replacements. These were generally received quite negatively, there had been a lot of issues with clutter in the pavement and some of them caused anti-social behaviour. A tough stance had been taken on these and unfortunately a batch of appeals on this was lost. The 10% loss of appeals included enforcement and adverts which were a separate category.
- EOTS had been used more wider than usual, the Government had encouraged that as part of the planning skills delivery fund; to make sure that officers agreed deadlines. It was common that services with the highest performance figures would have the highest refusal rates, this was not something that the people of Haringey wanted. There would have to be a judgement call and officers would be very focused on that.

- In terms of the backlog, the overall number the team had been targeting was just over 200 and roughly 100 of those had been delivered. There had been a slight increase in other things joining that list, the outstanding list was now about 130. Good progress was being made in a short period of time; the team had kept April as a target to have most of it done with May as a fallback position.

Building Control:

- Cllr Bevan requested that cabinet members should get involved in the creation of job profiles.
- There was something called over sailing licences, this was where a licence would be given for a crane to go over other people's property. This sits outside of the Planning system and Building Control system.
- A number of trainees have been recruited, paid for by the professional body, a couple hadn't worked out, however the remaining new trainee is working well within the team.
- The Chair and Committee thanked Bob McIver, Head of Building Control, for 44 years of service at Haringey Council.

RESOLVED

That this report be noted.

8. PLANNING SERVICE PEER CHALLENGE: REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

Rob Krzyszowski introduced this report sets out the Council's response to the recommendations from the Planning Service Peer Challenge that took place in October 2023, looking at the Planning service functions.

The following was noted in response to questions from the committee:

- The Systems Thinking Approach was something put in place in 2016, this looked at the whole process end to end from the position of a customer to ensure it was streamlined and efficient. One person would have the responsibility for it, and they would be involved from start to finish. For some that felt like a lot of admin work but overall, this enabled savings and the benefits and experience of customers, which was reflected in the peer review.

RESOLVED

To note the content of this report, the recommendations in the Peer Challenge report (Appendix A) and the Action Plan (Appendix B) which responds to each of the 10 recommendations.

To agree to refer this report and the appended documents to Cabinet with the recommendation to endorse the Peer Challenge report (Appendix A) and approve the Action Plan (Appendix B).

9. UPDATING THE PLANNING PROTOCOL

Rob Krzyszowski introduced the item. This report sets out the potential changes to the Planning Protocol, which is part of the Council's Constitution, that officers are considering, for Members to consider and discuss.

The following was noted in response to questions from the committee:

- The protocol itself was not the main document about the delegation of powers. There was another document which was not currently being reviewed called the scheme of delegation. The protocol was not the right document for this issue. In terms of delegating smaller applications to officers, that was good practice and was generally how things were done across the country. Planning Sub Committee had a report at the end of the agenda items that detailed any delegated applications, this information was accessible, and these applications would go to ward councillors as well.
- The Local Plan was a key place for councillors to shape, officers did not make decisions based on any judgement alone, it had to be based on the local plan. Councillors ultimately approved the local plan and influenced that.
- The Strategic Planning Panel was currently a draft proposal. This would essentially be where officers could take early pre-application proposals from developers to relevant cabinet members and the Chair of the Planning Sub Committee for an informal presentation; this would also be an opportunity for councillors to ask questions. This was not about predetermining things. If this were to be introduced this process would be as transparent as possible. By having it in the protocol and setting out a mechanism on how there would be notes taken of the meeting would further strengthen the process and transparency. Officers would continue with pre-application meetings with the committee, this would just allow another layer of member input.
- Officers would be looking at including relevant cabinet members, which could also include the leader.
- Officers understood the public perception point and encouraged an open and transparent approach. It was generally encouraged in good practice to have early member engagement at various levels of the organisation.
- It was not possible for Cabinet to make decisions or give any steer on the Planning Sub Committee, this was set out in legislation.
- A reminder was given to Committee members that if they could not make the scheduled site visits with officers they could visit on their own accord.
- Regarding the running order of the meeting, the intention would be to allow extra time for officer advice.
- On the petitions, officers were looking at setting a clear deadline in advance of the committee to receive these, this would ensure officers had enough time to go through and then give advice. There had been cases where petitions had been received during the meeting.

RESOLVED

To note the content of this report

10. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no new items of urgent business.

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the dates of the next meeting was TBC.

CHAIR: Councillor Barbara Blake

Signed by ChairCllr Blakde.....

Date12.03.24.....