

MINUTES OF THE Strategic Planning Committee HELD ON Monday, 23rd February, 2026, 7:00 - 8:00pm

PRESENT:

**Councillors: Sean O'Donovan, Barbara Blake (Chair), Reg Rice,
John Bevan (Vice-Chair), Cathy Brennan, Scott Emery, Alexandra Worrell
and Kaushika Amin**

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

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

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Collett gave apologies for absence, Cllr Ibrahim and Cllr Bartlett were absent.

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 confirm and sign the minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee held on **xxx** as a correct record.

7. PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL 2025/26 Q1-Q3 UPDATE

Bryce Tudball, Head of Spatial Planning presented the report for National planning reforms –

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

- It was noted that a wide range of stakeholders, including this Council and the sponsor of the consultation, did not consider that the proposed changes would necessarily achieve the intended outcomes. A number of councils had expressed the view that the proposals would not address the root causes of

issues relating to housing delivery. Similarly, several developers and landowners had indicated that they did not consider the changes would be effective.

- Members heard that a criticism of the current Building Regulations regime was that it did not secure genuinely net zero development. The London Borough of Haringey, along with many other authorities, had sought to exceed national energy efficiency standards. The energy policies within the draft Local Plan went significantly beyond Building Regulations requirements. Officers advised that if the Council were restricted to delivering only Building Regulations standards, this would represent a reduction in energy efficiency performance compared to the standards the authority sought to achieve. This was identified as a principal concern.
- In relation to energy efficiency improvement schemes, officers explained that Government operated a range of programmes providing professional advice, practical support and/or financial assistance to enable property owners to improve energy performance. At any given time, a variety of schemes were available, including grants to support the installation of measures such as air source heat pumps. These measures were typically expensive, and Government contributions generally ranged between £1,000 and £5,000.
- Members congratulated officers on drafting an effective response letter which comprehensively addressed the concerns raised.
- Regarding the proposed changes to the Mayor's call-in powers, officers clarified that the proposal related to circumstances where a local planning authority was minded to refuse a scheme. It was noted that it was relatively rare for the Council to be minded to refuse a major application that had progressed to Planning Committee. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that there would occasionally be schemes that did not meet the appropriate standards. Whilst the number was likely to be small, the principle remained a concern.
- In respect of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) relief, officers advised that relief of 50% or greater was conditional upon meeting the proposed minimum affordable housing threshold of 20%, with higher levels of relief available where higher affordable housing provision was secured.
- Officers emphasised that local support for development proposals was contingent upon schemes meeting evidenced housing needs. In this borough, identified need was principally for affordable housing. Therefore, if proposed changes to thresholds resulted in reduced affordable housing delivery, this was likely to weaken local support. In addition, lower CIL receipts would result in reduced funding for local infrastructure. Consequently, communities would perceive that developments were delivering fewer local benefits, which could further reduce public support.
- In relation to proposals emerging from the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), officers advised that a consultation had taken place prior to Christmas and had recently closed. Whilst feedback would be reviewed in detail, previous engagement with both authorities had indicated that the substantive changes were likely to proceed, albeit with potential minor amendments.
- With regard to the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), officers advised that the consultation remained open. Although a significant

- volume of representations was anticipated, the overarching policy direction appeared clear. It was therefore expected that most of the proposed changes would proceed, subject to minor refinements.
- Members also referred to the Planning and Infrastructure Act, which was now in force. The Act provided that councils could set their own planning fees. Officers advised that the Council was awaiting secondary legislation which would establish the detailed process and requirements for implementing this power.
 - Officers confirmed that they were not aware of any announcements relating to “new burdens” funding. In its response to the GLA and MHCLG consultation, the Council had highlighted that the proposed changes were complex and potentially bureaucratic, and could place additional administrative burdens on local planning authorities whilst reducing financial contributions from developers. The Council had therefore expressed concern and had indicated that, should the proposals proceed, appropriate support for local authorities would be required.
 - Members were advised that changes to planning Use Classes had reduced the Council’s ability to control the composition of uses within town centres. In many instances, a retail unit could change to another use within the same Use Class (for example, to a barbershop) without requiring planning permission. As such, there was often no planning control over such changes, which were largely driven by market demand.
 - In response to a query regarding independent shops, officers advised that there were no planning mechanisms enabling the Council to distinguish between chain and independent operators (for example, between a chain supermarket and an independent food store, or between a chain and independent coffee shop). Whilst broader place-making initiatives and environmental improvements could support town centre vitality, the planning system did not provide tools to differentiate between business ownership models.
 - In relation to licensing and the Agent of Change principle, officers explained that where an existing use was established, any new development would be required to mitigate impacts so as not to cause unacceptable harm to existing occupiers. Equally, where residential properties were already present, a new venue would be required to ensure that there was no unacceptable impact on residential amenity. These matters were addressed through the existing planning and licensing frameworks.
 - It was acknowledged that sections of the borough’s High Road required regeneration.
 - Finally, officers noted concerns that the proposed changes could curtail the standards the Council was able to apply across a range of planning matters. Members also raised concerns regarding the removal of certain statutory consultees. Officers advised that, notwithstanding any change in statutory requirements, the Council would continue to apply a proportionate risk-based approach to consultation. Where consultation was considered necessary and beneficial, it would continue to be undertaken to ensure that appropriate input was secured at the correct stage of the process.

Catherine Smyth, Head of Development Management and Enforcement presented the report for development management and enforcement –

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

- Officers advised that the Enforcement and Appeals Team Manager was responsible for reviewing appeal decisions as they were received. A report was presented to the Planning Board on a monthly basis setting out appeal outcomes, including which appeals had been allowed or dismissed. The Board considered whether any patterns were emerging and whether any lessons could be learned in respect of decision-making.
- It was reported that there were no significant or recurring patterns identified. Applications were refused for a range of reasons, and appeal outcomes reflected individual case circumstances rather than any systematic issue in the Council's approach. Accordingly, there were no specific trends requiring targeted intervention at this time.
- Members were advised of a correction to previously reported figures in relation to enforcement decisions and cases determined within eight weeks. The correct figure was 48%, not 85%.
- In respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) referrals, officers reported that a significant number of cases had been referred by the Private Sector Housing Team. That team had adopted a proactive approach to identifying potential HMOs and referring cases for planning enforcement investigation. Close joint working arrangements were in place, with referrals accompanied by supporting documentation including plans, licensing information and relevant contact details. This enabled the Enforcement Team to prioritise cases efficiently without needing to undertake preliminary information gathering. The collaborative process had been operating effectively to date.
- However, it was noted that the Enforcement Team remained significantly stretched due to the volume of cases under investigation. Officers expressed the hope that additional resources would be secured from the Regulatory Services Team, which could have a positive impact on enforcement performance over the coming year.

Bryce Tudball, Head of Spatial Planning presented the report for spatial planning –

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

- It was noted by members that it was positive to see the response to the local plan consultation from residents.

Denis Ioannou, Head of Building Control presented the report for building control.

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

- Officers advised that applicants undertaking building works, such as residential extensions, were able to choose between using a private sector Approved Inspector or the Council's Building Control service. It was reported that, over a number of years, the Council had experienced a reduction in market share, with an increasing proportion of applicants opting to use private inspectors. This trend had continued for a variety of reasons.
- Members were informed that the number of events at Bruce Castle Park had increased in recent years. In the previous year, 11 events had taken place, which had been serviced by two officers. Particular concern was raised in relation to concerts, as these required the issuing of a Special Safety

Certificate in order to proceed lawfully where they were not otherwise licensed. Officers advised that capacity pressures within the team had presented challenges in meeting these regulatory requirements.

- It was noted that the Safety at Sports Grounds Association, which provided oversight and guidance in this area, had been made aware of the Council's reduced capacity. A meeting had taken place with the Chief Executive to highlight the resourcing issue and the need to strengthen the team.
- Members were advised that Local Authority Building Control (LABC), the national body representing local authority building control services, had been promoting apprenticeship routes into the profession and had accessed Government funding to support this initiative. However, a key constraint was the limited number of experienced surveyors available to supervise and train apprentices, whilst also maintaining existing workloads.
- It was explained that entry onto apprenticeship schemes had historically been available to individuals from trade backgrounds as well as those with relevant degrees, who were then placed on structured training programmes to gain professional competence. Officers estimated that it could take approximately ten years to develop a fully experienced and registered Building Inspector
- Concern was expressed that a number of experienced surveyors who had worked in the sector for many years had left the profession as a result of the introduction of the new registration system. It was suggested that there may be merit in seeking to encourage such individuals back into the industry.
- Officers further noted that the Building Safety Regulator had experienced backlogs, particularly in relation to high-rise residential buildings. In response, adjustments had been made to allow surveyors with a lower classification to undertake more minor works within high-rise blocks. It was considered that the regulatory framework was continuing to evolve in order to address short-term operational challenges.

RESOLVED

To note the report.

8. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no new items of urgent business.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the dates of the next meeting was to be confirmed.

CHAIR: Councillor Barbara Blake

Signed by Chair

Date

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