

Statement of Community Involvement Report

Committee comments – in general, committees have noted the contents of the report and the following particular issues have been raised:

Central, South & West Area Committee Comments	Officer Response
<p>That the use of external consultants should be kept to a minimum and that officers should undertake the work as far as possible</p>	<p>Paragraph 57 of the Statement refers to the use of external resources as necessary. It is the intention to use consultants for specialist expertise in certain areas of work when appropriate such as the West End Area Action Plan. Recommend no change at this stage.</p>
<p>Consultation about facilities or measures to be included in Section 106 agreements should be carried out widely and at an early stage</p>	<p>Paragraphs 39-45 of the Statement sets out how we will encourage developers to undertake early consultation with the community and stakeholders before planning applications are submitted. Any mitigation measures to overcome potential reasons for refusal could form part of the consultation. Recommend no change at this stage.</p>
<p>Consultation by developers needs to be meaningful and that public meetings should be part of the process</p>	<p>Again paragraphs 39-45 of the Statement apply. We are encouraging developers to arrange public meetings particularly for large scale developments before applications are submitted as it is at this stage where the public are most likely to influence change. Recommend no change at this stage.</p>
<p>The Council to arrange public meetings where the developer is unwilling to do so</p>	<p>The Council would consider any requests for it to arrange public meetings on a case by case basis taking into account the implications of such requests for development control performance targets and subject to the agreement of the relevant area committee. It would not be appropriate for the Council to arrange a public meeting until after the application is submitted and at that stage, there would be limited scope to change the scheme to address concerns. However it is usually the area committee meeting itself which serves this purpose. Once the Local Plan is adopted, there would be scope to prepare development guidelines for major sites with consultation on the guidelines. Recommend no change at this stage.</p>
<p>That ward councillors should be involved in the process so that use can be made of their local knowledge contacts</p>	<p>Member involvement in development plan documents and supplementary planning documents are set out in paras 13-14 of the Statement. On planning applications ward councillors are already regularly in contact with officers to discuss relevant issues. Recommend no change at this stage.</p>

That planning officers ensure that due regard is given to the contents of area plans	Comment to be taken on board by officers but not directly relevant to the Statement. Recommend no change at this stage.
In the case of planning applications concerning colleges, junior and middle common rooms should be consulted	Comment to be taken on board by officers but not directly relevant to the Statement. Recommend no change at this stage.
Environment Scrutiny Committee – some of the above points were also raised by the Scrutiny Committee – but the following additional points were raised:	
Could a summary version be produced	The introductory paragraphs of the Statement provide a form of summary. However it is intended to produce an explanatory leaflet with the Statement when it was circulated for public consultation. Recommend no change at this stage.
The need to meet Government performance indicators was hindering the Council's ability to conduct proper consultation on planning applications	The Government is very keen that discussions about the nature of a proposal take place before an application is submitted, to allow all the relevant parties to comment. Recommend no change at this stage.
Developers could not be enforced to comply with Council guidelines with regard to carrying out proper public consultation	Paragraph 39 of the Statement sets out the benefits of early consultation before applications are submitted. Paragraph 42 reflects Planning Policy Guidance by stating that whilst there is no legal obligation for applicants to undertake consultation, failure to consult properly is likely to lead to objections being made which could be material to the determination of the application. Recommend no change at this stage.
The Statement did not go far enough in meeting councillors aspirations on engaging the public in consultation but that it hoped that these issues would be addressed quickly through further planning policy development.	The Statement should encourage early public engagement in the development of policies. Councillors will be fully involved in the development of policies through committee consultation. Recommend no change at this stage.
Reference to Supplementary Planning Documents in the form of development guidelines for site specific policies be included in the Statement	Recommend amendment to paragraph 12 – Supplementary Planning Documents – to list development guidelines on site specific policies as an example of a type of Supplementary Planning Document.
East Area Parliament	
Inform the Executive Board that the Area Parliament believed there was a danger that expectations were raised through consultation on planning applications, but the centralised planning processes often made it difficult for members to take account of public comments when determining applications at Area Committees, and to ask the Executive Board to pass this comment on to central government.	The Board to decide whether to pass on the comment.

