



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Held: WEDNESDAY, 15 JULY 2009 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Mrs Sheila Brucciani (Independent Member) - Chair

Ms Mary Ray

Independent Member

Councillor Draycott
Councillor Scuplak

Councillor Keeling
Councillor Shelton

I N A T T E N D A N C E

Sheila Lock, Chief Executive

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65. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Kate McLeod, Councillor Corrall and Councillor Thomas.

66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have in the business on the agenda and/or declare that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to them. No such declarations were made.

For information, Councillor Shelton declared, in respect of Item 7, "Revisions to the Code of Practice for Member Involvement in Development Control Decisions," that he was Vice-Chair of the Planning and Development Control Committee.

71. REVISIONS TO CODE OF PRACTICE FOR MEMBER INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT CONTROL DECISIONS

The Head of Environment and Advocacy Law submitted a report that enabled the necessary approvals to be given for further revisions to be made to the Council's current Code of Practice for Member Involvement in Development Control Decisions. The Head of Planning Management and Delivery was also

present to answer Members' questions.

The main areas of change were pointed out to the Committee and Members discussed Paragraph 4.2 regarding Committee Members' need to obtain a substitute for the whole meeting if they wished to speak on an application. It was noted that, if a Member had a prejudicial interest, they would not be able to speak on the item at all. Members also considered the need for guidance regarding involvement in pre-application discussions, noting that some issues were of interest to a large part of the community. They discussed the issue of predetermination, and it was noted that if a Member had expressed an opinion in a meeting on an application that was subsequently deferred, they would be asked if they were still open-minded about it.

The meeting discussed concerns regarding the lack of influence local councillors had over planning applications. Members asked if they could be more involved in the pre-application discussions with developers. They also discussed the issue of site visits. It was reported that the need for site visits was reduced by the introduction of presentation technology, and that, when visits were requested, very few Members attended them. Members stated that it was important to retain the opportunity to call for a site visit, as this showed the community that the Council was taking an interest. It was reported that the original reduction in site visits was driven by Government targets. This pressure had since reduced, as targets were consistently being met.

RESOLVED:

that the Standards Committee notes the proposed revisions and confirms its agreement to the revised Code of Practice being submitted to Council.