Kingston Town Neighbourhood Committee

3 June 2015

Item for Information - Restriction on the tabling of new information by members of the public at Planning meetings

1. Provisions for allowing registered members of the public to speak during the consideration of planning applications at Committee are set out in the Council’s Scheme for Public Participation on Planning Applications. The Executive agreed in October 2006 that any amendments to that Scheme should be submitted to Development Control Committee, following consultation with Neighbourhood Committees. Neighbourhood Committees were consulted at the January/February cycle of Committee meetings on a proposed change to the Scheme arising from the most recent guidance from the LGA (“Probity in Planning”) in relation to members of the public tabling new information at planning meetings.

2. The LGA guidance indicates that: “New documents should not be circulated to the committee; councillors may be unable to give proper consideration to the new information and officers may not be able to check for accuracy or provide considered advice on any material considerations arising. This should be made clear to those who intend to speak.” (Previous LGA guidance had not been as explicitly prohibitive on this matter and it had been past practice across the Neighbourhood Committees that registered speakers were permitted to table documents in order to support the points being made in their representation.)

3. The four Neighbourhood Committees had differing responses to a proposed change to the Scheme to reflect this more restrictive approach; these differing views were reported to the Development Control Committee meeting on 19 March (report at Appendix B of that agenda)

4. Having considered these views, the Development Control Committee resolved that the Scheme for Public Participation on Planning Applications is amended so that it includes a straightforward restriction on any new document, including photographs, being tabled at planning meetings by members of the public or by the applicants.

5. The Development Control Committee also considered other recommendations from Neighbourhood Committees on proposed changes to the Scheme and, in response to a recommendation from South of the Borough Neighbourhood Committee, resolved that any documents that the public or applicants wish a Planning Committee to consider need to be submitted at least two working days prior to the date of the meeting in order that ‘late material’ can be sent to the Committee in sufficient time for Members to consider it before the meeting.

6. Those who have registered to speak will be clearly informed of these changes in the letter which is sent to interested parties to explain the arrangements for speaking on planning.

Background papers – held by the author of the report- Jean Cousens, Snr Democratic Support Officer, tel 020 8547 5023 email: jean.cousens@kingston.gov.uk: