

London Borough of Camden

Strategic Panel on Emerging Planning Proposals

Terms of Reference

Planning Solutions Team

Strategic Panel on Emerging Planning Proposals

Introduction

Sometimes it will help the planning process if lead Members are briefed about emerging proposals on the most strategic sites at the outset of pre-application discussions. Lead Members will be briefed via the medium of the Strategic Panel on Emerging Planning Proposals ('the Strategic Panel').

The type of proposals appropriate for the Strategic Panel's consideration are as follows:

- Major development proposals for more than 100 residential units or 5000sqm non-residential floorspace;
- Tall buildings; and
- Any other proposals which do not fall into the above categories but which the Chair of the Strategic Panel or the Director of Regeneration and Planning consider are of strategic importance and should be presented to the Strategic Panel.

The Strategic Panel meeting will involve a presentation by the developer after which the Panel can ask questions, but not express formal views or engage in debate.

For the avoidance of doubt it is not the function of the Strategic Panel to play any part in determining the planning merits of a proposal, which would be determined by Planning Committee in accordance with statutory requirements.

It is not a requirement that the Strategic Panel be consulted on such proposals.

Use of the Panel may deviate in full or in part from the usual practices set out.

Primary Purpose of the Strategic Panel

The Strategic Panel is not a formally constituted Council meeting or a decision making body. It has no power to bind the Council in any regard in relation to a planning application. Nor can it override the Council's statutory functions whether as local planning authority or otherwise. It is an informal forum that can provide high-level strategic input as one part of the evolution of a proposal that will ultimately lead in many cases to a planning application being considered by the Planning Committee.

The Strategic Panel is intended to serve a number of overlapping purposes including:

- assisting Panel members in gaining an initial understanding of the most complex proposals and their strategic and planning implications;
- helping demonstrate Camden's commitment to growth by providing a forum for Members to consider developers' perspectives and for developers to

understand some of the issues that may be important to the Council;

- to give Panel members a high-level strategic involvement in emerging development proposals without compromising any subsequent role they may play as decision-makers by allowing them to provide their provisional input/steer in particular by:

- highlighting how they see proposals fit with the Council's wider policy aspirations;
- identifying aspects where in their view proposals may not be policy compliant;
- giving their preliminary opinion on how competing or contentious issues could be balanced.

Membership and conduct of the Strategic Panel

The Strategic Panel will generally consist of:

- Cabinet Member with responsibility for planning (Chair);
- Leader of the Council (only on the most significant strategic proposals such as Euston);
- Cabinet Member with responsibility for transport and sustainability;
- Chair of the Planning Committee;
- Heritage Champion; and
- Other Cabinet members as required depending on the nature of the proposals being reported.

Should it be considered appropriate with regard to the circumstances of a particular matter the Director of Regeneration and Planning may in consultation with the Chair of the Strategic Panel amend the membership of the Panel.

The Director of Regeneration and Planning will attend, with planning officers and officers from other relevant services attending as necessary. A legal advisor will be also present.

Strategic Panel Members are bound by the Code and therefore the points on conduct as set out above, should be borne in mind. In particular, Strategic Panel members should be careful about saying things at Strategic Panel meetings, which could be perceived as showing they had taken a fixed position on the proposals (or any aspect of them) or could be taken as an indication of bias.

However, subject to that constraint, Members should feel free to ask questions to understand and explore the nature of proposals being presented to the Panel. Questions primarily should be factual but it would be perfectly in order, for example, to ask whether a particular option or approach had been explored, why a particular approach had not been explored, or whether it could be explored in the future.

Any comments from Panel Members will not bind the Council in any regard as to future decision-making. In particular, members of the Strategic Panel who are also members of the Planning Committee, will not be bound in any way on any

subsequent application, which Planning Committee considers. Those Members should determine the application with an open mind based on all the information before them at that point.

Meetings

The Chair of the Strategic Panel and the Director of Regeneration and Planning will agree the schemes where they consider it would be beneficial for the Strategic Panel to receive a briefing because of the proposal's strategic impact.

In order for Members to give meaningful input in schemes which have not yet been fully formulated (unless specifically agreed by the Chair due to exceptional circumstances), briefings will take place at the very outset of pre-application discussions.

Meetings are to be held in the early morning or evening on dates to be agreed between the Chair of the Strategic Panel and the Head of Development Management. They will be held at the Council's offices at either 5 Pancras Square, the Crowndale Centre, or the Town Hall.

Meetings will usually hear one presentation at each meeting.

An agenda will be circulated to Panel Members at least 5 working days before each Strategic Panel briefing containing a short summary of the proposals and key issues including:

- why the scheme was selected to come before the Strategic Panel;
- what the Council's policy aspirations are for the site; and
- Potential non-policy compliant aspects of the scheme.
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The developer will supply all presentation materials including any models, and these will be displayed in the meeting room.

There will generally be a fee payable by developers attending Strategic Panel.

The Chair will usually adopt the following indicative format at the Panel but this may be varied at the Chair's discretion in particular cases to assist meeting management:

- Prior to the meeting a Strategic Panel pre-meeting will take place with the Director of Regeneration and Planning and relevant officers.
- The developer will be invited in for the start of the briefing and the Chair will introduce the Strategic Panel, highlighting its function as a discussion based Member forum to facilitate Members giving non-binding input on proposals at a preliminary stage.
- The Chair will ask Members to disclose relevant interests for reasons of transparency.
- Officers will make a short introductory presentation based on the circulated

summary, including the context of the site with plans/photos as necessary (usually around 5 minutes).

- The developer will make a presentation (usually up to 20 minutes) highlighting all significant planning issues.
- Strategic Panel members may comment and ask questions primarily of the developer (but also officers) on the developer's presentation and officer's report and presentation.
- The developer will leave the room and there will be a roundtable discussion of the proposals.
- Following the meeting, a feedback and advice letter will be prepared by officers (and agreed by the Strategic Panel prior to it being sent to the developer) to record general outcomes. This will reiterate that any views expressed are informal and not binding on the Council.

The Strategic Panel will consider each item for 75 – 90 minutes usually but more or less time may be allocated if the Chair of the Strategic Panel thinks this appropriate having regard to the complexity of the issues to be considered.