

Comments of Local Agents	Officer comments	Action proposed	Time scale
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1. Development Plan Process

LDF	Officer explains current position and work needed to develop LDF. Unitary Development Plan remains the adopted Development Plan.		
Site Briefs	Crane valley guidelines adopted; Barnes Goods yard under consultation; Terrace Yard & Friars Lane car park sites due soon; telephone mast guidelines in the pipeline		
Other documents	Planning Obligations Strategy adopted and applications being considered against its criteria		
	Public Space Design Guidelines to be subject of consultation		August 2005
	Consultation to be carried out on Supplementary Planning Guidance on 'Quality Design' embracing all forms of development & 'Small & Medium Sized Housing Sites' to replace existing guidance.		October 2005
	Future guidance likely to include Development & Flood risk; the Thames and Thames Landscape Strategy linkages.		To be programmed
Historic Buildings & Conservation areas	10-12 amendments or additions to CA since last year. 200-300 new Buildings of Townscape Merit. Only 11 Buildings at Risk which is very low given overall numbers.		

	Continuing review of existing CA statements		
	Examples given of environmental enhancements including Kew plaza; Heath Rd; Lower George Street		
Design Panel	Meeting advised of forthcoming Design Panel. Advert in the paper & on Council Web site. Similar to dissolved Conservation Areas Advisory Committee but will only deal with very large schemes, site briefs, CA studies etc Will report to officers and Planning Cttee		September 2005
Concept supported by agents and seen as adding value, particularly if contemporary architecture supported.	Noted.		

2. Planning Application Process

General			
Appreciate need to consider Supplementary Planning Guidance but clients don't always agree with it.	Noted, but it's a materiel consideration and should be addressed in any planning submission where relevant. It is also normally supported on appeal by Planning inspectors, so clients should be made aware of guidance and weight given to it.	Develop the concept of a protocol between agents and planning department to improve time scales etc. Officers are considering producing a check list of planning issues to be addressed by applicants. Would identify material factors that, if properly dealt with, would expedite applications	March 2006 December 2005

Are Design statements required?	Generally recommended & referred to in Unitary Development Plan policies. Should include sustainability and renewable energy issues.	Supplementary Planning Guidance to be developed with regard to renewable energy	December 2005

<p>Concern about some officers not returning phone calls. Better response from emails.</p>	<p>Should return calls within 24 hours.</p> <p>Env Contact Centre introduced which should assist in general inquiries freeing up officer time to deal with reports etc.</p> <p>Use of emails encouraged as quick response time.</p>	<p>Staff to be reminded of need to be vigilant in returning calls</p> <p>Management reports from Env Contact Centre will allow responses to be monitored.</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>Regular reports</p>
<p>Concern that once statutory period expired applications are not dealt with.</p> <p>Good idea. Saves agents visiting office.</p>	<p>Not deliberately left 'on the shelf'. Must be dealt with as pressure continues from agents etc and appeal process possible.</p> <p>It is possible to track application online which should help agents to advise clients without needing to speak to a planner.</p> <p>Trial system due to scan documents into a live e-file rather than at the end of the process.</p>	<p>6 month trial to resolve teething problems with one area team.</p>	<p>Late 2005</p>
<p>Concern that plans on line can be 'stolen'</p> <p>Presentation recognised as crucial. Quality presentation important.</p>	<p>Copyright law clear that Local Planning Authority can use this system. If abused, open to agent to pursue contravenor.</p> <p>Officers emphasized need for clear and accurate plans. Can cause significant delay if inaccuracy found. If strip elevation provided, clearly it must be accurate in terms of height etc of adj. buildings.</p>		
<p>Clients pressure agents to speak with planners. How can they be kept up to date?</p>	<p>See above. Also officers are considering a system of contacting agent by a certain date, say 4 weeks into application, if a possible</p>	<p>System to be developed.</p>	<p>March 2006</p>

	<p>problem. If no call made, it means the case is likely to be approved. Will vary with size of case. Likely to relate to Householder cases initially. Most are approved within 8 week target. (80%) + the refusal rate is below London average. However, if case clearly contrary to Unitary Development Plan policies/Supplementary Planning Guidance then decision will be taken without discussion. This follows Govn best practice example.</p>		
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Can case officer be known at the start of the process on ack letter.	Agreed this would be helpful.	Action subject to not delaying validation process.	October 2005.
Is pre-application advice encouraged.	Yes, subject to time constraints on officer time. However, it is not always necessary to meet all pre application inquirers especially if they have addressed the Supplementary Planning Guidance/policies of the Unitary Development Plan.		
Will charging be introduced for pre-application advice. Example of Barnet given of how it has not worked.	It is an option and some Council's have introduced it but not on Richmond's agenda yet as bureaucratically it's unwieldy.	Will be reviewed with other options in the future	To be programmed.
Concern about apparent inconsistencies over advice.	Difficult to comment without precise cases being known. However, it is rare for any site to be completely identical to another one and slight differences in location, orientation etc can lead to different decisions. Consistency meetings are held on a regular basis to minimise inconsistent decisions & to ensure fairness.		
Duty system			
Can specified days be identified for specific areas so that officers dealing with inquires know the area..	Agreed.	Will develop a rota and publish on Web etc	November 2005
Committee procedures			

Could agents be advised of when their cases are likely to be heard before the meeting.	Difficult to provide this as Chairman sets running order shortly before meeting but the audience is advised of likely timing then so can leave meeting for a couple of hours.		
Query over Cllr involvement in process.	Probity explained to agents. Voting members need too remain above pre meeting discussions (& be seen to be so doing). Non voting Cllrs can act for neighbour or agent.		
Reversals at Committee frustrating.	This is the democratic process & is subject to strict code of conduct. Often the cases are marginal ones and thus a different decision to that recommended can be taken. Some reversals have gone to appeal and have been dismissed which vindicates Cllrs' decisions.	Officer training of members continuous including debriefing of key appeal decisions	
How many speakers can address Cttee	Varies with type of application and at Chairman's discretion but see Web site for more information. Normally a maximum of 2 per side for small scale and 3 + for large schemes.		

3. Appeals

No comments offered.			
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4. Enforcement

No new issues raised although some one agent notified difficulty of resolving issues when building works are on site	Officer described various initiatives. i) red card system ii) temporary stop notices iii) new street team iv) blitzes on illegal	Setting up better linkage with Development Control, Building Control, Env Health Office & Streetscene Inspectors to monitor/identify breaches of planning control.	March 2006
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<p>and quick decisions on changes need to be made.</p>	<p>v) advert signs action against shutters</p> <p>vi) more prosecutions of adverts plus higher fines</p> <p>Officers noted that enforcement could be better prioritized and requested feed back from Groups. Members take unauthorized development very seriously and very rarely sympathetic to contravenor.</p>		
<p>Other Matters</p>			
<p>Amend sign on Second floor to specifically identify Planning & Building Control</p>	<p>Agreed this needs further clarification</p>	<p>Better signage</p>	<p>October/November</p>