

BRIEFINGS ON EMERGING PLANNING PROPOSALS
(“Developer Briefings”) **REVISED 29 AUGUST 2013**

Introduction

Sometimes it will help the planning process if **DCC members and relevant Ward and Cabinet Members are briefed about emerging proposals for Major development or development with significant corporate or political implications.**

Usually there will be a developer presentation at the Briefing but occasionally officers may brief members about proposals without any developer presence.

Primary Purpose of Briefings

The Briefings are not statutory Council meetings but are now established as a useful and productive part of the evolution of a proposal that will lead in most cases to an application being considered by Committee. They are intended to serve a number of overlapping purposes including:

- to assist members in **gaining an initial understanding** of often very complex proposals and their planning implications
- to **reassure Camden communities that they are being listened to** and that their elected representatives are helping to ensure their views are fed into the planning process
- to help **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 members**
- to **give members an involvement in emerging development proposals without compromising their ultimate role as decision makers** by allowing them to provide their provisional input/ steer in particular by
 - (i) highlighting what they see as **the Council’s policy based aspirations for the site and area**
 - (ii) Identifying aspects where in their view **proposals may not be policy compliant**
 - (iii) giving their preliminary opinion on how **competing or contentious issues** could be balanced

Whilst there is no requirement for members to attend any Briefing **their presence is strongly encouraged and welcomed** - the more members giving their views through Briefings, the more “value” is added to officers’ processing and assessment of planning proposals. This will strengthen the robustness of the ultimate decision.

The role of members at Briefings

DCC Members, ward members for the ward where the site is situated and relevant Cabinet members will be invited to Briefings.

As noted DCC Members are strongly encouraged to attend Briefings. However nonattendance will not prevent their subsequent participation in deciding an application.

As with any other discussion in a public forum **DCC Members** should be careful about saying things at Briefings 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, DCC (and other members) should feel free to ask questions to understand and explore the nature of proposals being considered by the Briefing.** Questions primarily should be factual but it would be perfectly in order for example for a member to ask whether a particular option or approach had been explored or why a particular approach had not been explored or whether it could be explored in the future.

Also **a DCC member commenting (or not commenting)** on any aspect of proposals will not in any way “bind” the member or the Committee on any subsequent application which DCC should as always determine with an open mind based on all the information before them at that point.

Process around the Briefings

The **Chair and the Head of Development Management** will agree an ongoing **programme** of schemes where they consider it would be beneficial for **DCC and relevant Ward and Cabinet members** to receive a **Briefing** because of the proposals' size, impact, controversy or complexity.

In order to build in continuity and to enable 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 only take place following a DM Forum and prior to submission of a planning application.**

An **agenda** will be circulated to DCC Members plus relevant ward members at least **5 working days before each Briefing** containing a short summary of the proposals and key issues including

- (i) **why the scheme was selected** as being suitable for Briefing
- (ii) what the **Council's policy aspirations** are for the site and **potentially non policy compliant aspects** and
- (iii) issues **emerging from the DM Forum** (including the views of ward councilors expressed at the Forum) or **any other issues specifically raised by members** (although on occasion, time constraints may necessitate some or all of this being covered by a verbal update at the Briefing itself)

The Chair will **usually adopt the following indicative format at the Briefing-** but this may be varied at the Chair's discretion in particular cases to assist meeting management or e.g. if the Briefing is conducted without a developer presence. .

Briefings for each item will usually be 75 mins but again this is indicative so less or more time may be allocated if the Chair thinks this appropriate having regard to the complexity of the issues to be considered

- The **Chair introduces** the Briefing highlighting its **function** as a discussion based member forum to facilitate members giving non-binding input on proposals at a preliminary stage
- asks members to **disclose relevant interests** for reasons of transparency
- Officers will make a **short introductory presentation** based on the circulated summary and also including the context of the site with plans/photos to show site context and main issues raised in DM Forum (usually around 5 minutes)
- The **Developer will make a presentation** (usually up to 15 minutes) including all significant planning issues
- Firstly **DCC Members** and then **other members** may **comment** and **ask questions primarily** to the Developer (but also officers) on the Developer presentation and officer report and presentation
- The Developer and Non- DCC members will leave the room and there will be a **round table style discussion** of the proposals.
- A short **Note summarizing key outcomes** of the discussion will be agreed with the Chair and then **circulated** to all DCC and Ward members and the Developer.

Glossary/ Housekeeping

- "DCC" means Development Control Committee
- "Chair" means Chair of DCC
- "Head of DM" means the Head of Development Management
- Meetings are to be held approx 8 times pa in the early evening. on dates to be agreed between the Chair of the Development Control Committee and the Head of Development Management;
- The meeting dates will usually be agreed for a six month period in advance.
- Meetings will usually hear one presentation at each meeting
- The meetings will be held at Camden Town Hall unless otherwise advised.
- Applicants 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 Briefings
- This Protocol will be reviewed at 6 monthly intervals