TERMS OF REFERENCE - STANDING PANEL

Title: Planning Services

Status: Standing Panel

Terms of Reference:

1.   To consider matters which arise through the process that the Government is driving to bring in an East Of England Plan as issued in May 2008; these may range from how to respond to the initiatives or views of those who support or oppose us, and how we may support or oppose the views taken by others, and how to work in partnership with others to secure delivery of the plan with adequate infrastructure. In particular, those Portfolio Holders with planning and economic development responsibilities to remain tuned in to local views.

2.   In association with 1, to keep an overview of work associated with securing a sound New Local Development Framework; in particular how the core strategy will cater for the adequate delivery of infrastructure of all types, the limited rolling back of the Metropolitan Green Belt to allow the regeneration and expansion of Harlow, the increased provision of affordable housing, and the maintenance of the existing settlement pattern elsewhere in the District.

3.   To consider what changes are practical and desirable to Council policies concerning the Metropolitan Green Belt; including those concerning the extension of existing dwellings, and the reuse of redundant and other buildings; in particular, are further restrictions necessary (changes in policy required) to ensure that such developments are truly sustainable.

4.   To consider in detail the provision of Value for Money within the following Planning Services focusing specifically on:
- Development Control (including Appeals)
- Forward Planning
- Building Control
- Enforcement
- Administration and Customer Support
- Economic Development
- Environment Team

5.   To gather evidence and information in relation to these functions through the receipt of:
- performance monitoring documents,
- Best Value Review of Planning Services (updated version)
- benchmarking exercises,
- consultation with Planning Committee Members, customers and IT Suppliers.

6.   To identify problems, possible solutions, barriers to success; **(DELETED)**

7.   To review the measures introduced since 2004 to improve performance within Development Control namely the success of

- the 'Hit Squad',
- the Service restructure(s),
- the new IT system
- the application of the Planning Delivery Grant.

8. To review a selection of controversial planning decisions to see if lessons can be learnt from their consideration. (TRANSFERRED TO PANEL WORK PROGRAMME)

9. To consider whether the reporting arrangements for all of the above matters and

those for the Section 106s (including how they are negotiated agreed and implemented strategically to secure community benefit), and appeals are sufficient (including how new legislation impacts on these) and to recommend accordingly. (TRANSFERRED TO PANEL WORK PROGRAMME)

10. To evaluate all relevant facts in relation to the topics under review in an objective way and to produce recommendations for future action accordingly;

11. To establish whether there are any resource implications arising out of the topics under review and advise Cabinet for inclusion in the Budget Process 2009/10;

12. To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at appropriate intervals and to submit an interim report on Development Control in the June 2008 cycle, and a final report on all matters by March 2009. To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Council and the Cabinet with recommendations on matters allocated to the Panel as appropriate.

Chairman: Cllr Mrs Wagland