

CHIPPING BARNET RESIDENTS' FORUM

MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2009 ACTION NOTES

held at: Chipping Barnet Library, Stapylton Road, Barnet EN5 4QT

*Chairman: Councillor Bridget Perry Vice-Chairman: Councillor Caroline Margo
(apologies for absence)

*Denotes Councillor Present

	Issue Raised	Response	Update (and by whom)
1.	<p>Petition (48 signatures) Mr and Mrs Harbour</p> <p>Opposition to the exchange of land King Georges Field/Ravenscroft School</p> <p>The petitioners and several other residents challenged the need for the swap in that it is green belt land and not in a fit state to be used as a playing field. It has an abundance of wild life and residents were concerned that the present facility had been used by dog walkers in particular for many years and suggested that the nearby football pitches were a better alternative. It was some residents' views that the current land used by the school was underused. Staff from the school, including the Headteacher challenged some of these views and outlined why it was important to have the swap, including the health and safety issues involved if the school used the pitches available in the park at Barnet Lane. The Headteacher also</p>	<p>Peter Cridland – Written Response</p> <p>The Lead Petitioners will be attending the meeting and will put forward their views on the proposed exchange of land. These will be incorporated into a report which will be considered at the 29 June 09 meeting of the Chipping Barnet Area Environment Sub-Committee.</p> <p>At the meeting, residents were informed of the details of the meeting and that they could request to address members of the committee. They should direct their requests to speak to Democratic Services.</p> <p>Peter Cridland gave background information at the meeting which included how the decision had been made, which partner organisations had been involved with the proposals and confirmation that Education had permitted use on Green Belt land. Michael Jackson (Education) outlined the detail of the proposed swap and confirmed that the land was not going to be developed as a sports centre. He said that there was a desire to improve the school's facilities and that it was unsafe for children to use the alternative playing fields.</p>	<p>Peter Cridland to investigate Mr Ashwood's claim that there was a right of way over the land in question.</p> <p>Response from Kevin Bishop: There are no rights of way across the land on the definitive map and statement. Even though this is open space land it is still open to an application under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act for a claimed right of way to be added to the definitive map and statement. If such an application were made in the prescribed form and with the required supporting evidence of usage in excess of twenty years then the Council would be obliged to consider the claim and make a subsequent decision on the application.</p> <p>Details of the upcoming Chipping Barnet Area Environment Sub-Committee meeting, including how to request to speak, were appended to these action notes.</p>

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	<p>confirmed that the field was not used at the weekend.</p>	<p>Michael Jackson confirmed that the facilities could be used by other schools and that, with the school's permission, used by the general public.</p>	
	<p>Mr Ashwood said that there was a right of way over this land and that this should be investigated.</p> <p>Another resident highlighted the inconsistency whereby East Barnet students were expected to travel to their sports pitches, and that this was not the case with Ravenscroft.</p> <p>Mr Bird, a football coach, said that he had been impressed with the current pitches and that he understood they were underused.</p>		
2	<p>Mr Magnus When will the Council carry out its responsibility for repairing the footpath from Camlet Way to The Crescent alongside the road called Hadley Common?</p> <p>At the meeting, Mr Magnus outlined a timetable of events from 1967 to the present time. He raised a concern about the timing of the survey of use and said that this should be undertaken again at a time when the path could actually be used. Several residents who lived on the common supported the call for the Council to upkeep the path and outlined how dangerous it was to pedestrians who had to walk in the road due to the poor condition of the path.</p>	<p>Lynn Bishop – Written Response The Council have previously stated that no evidence could be found of any responsibility for the pathway and would welcome such information if the Trust could provide it. Surveys have been completed (October 2008) which show that the main use is linked with school activity and timing.</p>	<p>Lynn Bishop Feedback (if any)</p>

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	Mr Magnus said that the Trust had no funds to pay for the upkeep, and Mr Mallows, a former curator, said that the issue was that the path was for the public and not just for the commoners and that it had been previously recognised by the Council as its responsibility. The path was unsafe and needed repair and upkeep.		
3.	<p>Mrs Ballard In view of the news in the Barnet Press, what is the justification of a large rise in Councillors' allowances when Barnet has just lost £27 million due to the collapse of Icelandic Banks? Councillors knew their allowances when they presented themselves for office. If they had considered it too little, they should have stayed away.</p> <p>Mr Edward Carpenter What is the justification for the 53% increase in Members Allowances?</p>	<p>Nick Musgrove – Written Response</p> <p>The Members Allowances scheme for 2009/10 was adopted in line with the recommendations of an independent review panel. The key feature was a cost of living rise in line with the national pay settlement for local government.</p> <p>The Chairman and officers attending the meeting noted the issues raised by residents in respect of Members' allowances.</p>	Lynn Bishop
4.	<p>Mr Ashwood Barnet spent over £70 million on IT equipment; why does it take over 40 days to get answers to his questions: (a) Asked Barnet Homes (Cora Vigar) to produce the Council's VAT registration number which legally should be displayed on documents when charging VAT (b) Requests a copy of the Council's Options to Tax (HMR and C)</p>	<p>Cora Vigar – Written Response Barnet Homes is a separate entity to the London Borough of Barnet and can only answer questions relating to Barnet Homes.</p> <p>Mr Ashwood is aware that Barnet Homes and the Council are obtaining clarification from HMRC and a full written reply will then be sent.</p> <p>Barnet Homes' VAT registration number is 832 7638 13.</p> <p>Barnet Homes is unable to issue a copy of the Council's Options to Tax as it does not have access to their documents and has raised this with the Council who are investigating this point.</p>	

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5	Mr Ashwood The hourly rate for the chairman and vice chairman of the forum works out at two to three times the Prime Ministers hourly rate. Why are these rates so high? His view, that Councillors are not worth this rate	Democratic Services Manager – Written Response Mr Ashwood's views are noted.	
6	Mr Ashwood Mr Ashwood challenges the information given by Nick Musgrove that the requirement of a councillor to chair a forum is enshrined within the Constitution. What is the role of the Vice Chair at the Forum?	Democratic Services Manager – Written Response Mr Ashwood's challenge is noted. The Vice Chairman deputises for the Chairman	
7	Mr Ashwood Who authorised the erection of gates in Barnet Lane. No notices of intent were erected? At the meeting, the Headteacher of Ravenscroft confirmed the history of the access and the reasons for the erection of the gates.	Lynn Bishop – Written Response The gates have been installed by Ravenscroft School to deal with anti-social behaviour issues (fly tipping). At the meeting, Lynn confirmed that this area was no longer public highway (since 17 February 1971).	
8.	Mr Ashwood A request to see the independent review panel's report on Councillors Allowances	Democratic Services Manager – Written Response The report was submitted to the Council meeting on 3 March 2009 and is available on the Council's website. For those residents without access to the website, a hard copy of the report can be sent upon request.	
9.	Mr Ashwood Referred to the resignation of a finance officer in respect of the Council's frozen £27 million in Icelandic Banks. Mr Ashwood has been told in the past that the responsibility for the investments lay with Leo Boland and Clive Medlam.	Head of Legal Services – Written Response It s not known whether the Council has suffered a loss so questions as to actions for recovery are premature	

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	<p>His concern that a finance officer was able to move about vast sums of money without the knowledge of senior officers. Does Mr Lustig contemplate legal action should the money not be recovered?</p>		
10	<p>Mr Ashwood Cuts in the provision of services particularly to the elderly and vulnerable. What is the £320 million in reserves for? Why is it not being used to avoid cuts?</p> <p>Mr Austin Harney raised a particular concern in respect of the proposed cuts affecting the Welfare Rights Unit. He said that this was too valuable a resource a resource to lose.</p>	<p>Kate Kennally (Social Services provision) – Written response Adult Social Services as the largest budget in the Council have been asked to identify areas for potential budget savings and are currently consulting on changes to how support is provided to people living in sheltered housing as part of proposals regarding the budget of the Council. This proposal will see the cessation of the resident warden service and it's replacement with floating support available as and when people are assessed as needing it. The Council has also been consulting on a proposal to cease providing a Council run welfare rights unit and to provide welfare benefits advice through continued investment in the voluntary sector. The budget for</p>	
		<p>2009 / 10 however sees some significant investment into Adult Social Services in respect of meeting the costs of young people with complex disabilities requiring services and has protected investment in the voluntary sector which provide a range of invaluable services to help people stay independent.</p>	

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10.		<p>Clive Medlam (£320 million reserves) – Written Response The £320m is not reserves, it is cash balances.</p> <p>At any one point in time the Council has a significant amount of cash deposited in the money market. This cash comprises a number of things, e.g. balances and reserves, council tax income, grant income, capital receipts unapplied, business rates income, etc. It also includes amounts borrowed to fund future capital schemes as the Council undertakes this borrowing at the most opportune time rather than the day before the capital expenditure is incurred.</p>	
11.	<p>Mr Ashwood There has been a £55 million outlay in regeneration schemes in Barnet, producing only 58 extra properties for rent. Better use could be made of this money e.g. channel it into Social Services provision</p>	<p>Roger Arkell There is no further update than that given at the last meeting.</p>	
12.	<p>Mr John Dix Given that the Asda scheme in new Barnet is a Major Development which does not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated and is therefore a departure to the plan, and that Asda have paid £60,830 planning application fee, why does the Council refuse to hold a public meeting?</p>	<p>Martin Cowie - Written Response The planning application is now being assessed as part of the statutory planning process. The council have notified approximately 2500 local properties and have extended the statutory consultation period to give the community every opportunity to consider the proposals and make representations.</p> <p>The council will be undertaking further consultation over the course of the next 2 months as it prepares the town centre strategy for the area.</p>	

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	<p>Mr Dix again called for a public meeting so that clarification on what was proposed could be made. He said that the public had no opportunity to make comments and raise issues particularly in respect of the traffic implications. He requested that when this application goes before Planning Committee, that a large venue is used to accommodate the high number of residents who would wish to attend. Several other residents agreed with Mr Dix that a large venue should be used when this application was considered.</p>	<p>Martin Cowie Noted the views of residents that a large venue should be sought to accommodate the high interest the Asda planning application will attract. He said that the Council was aware of the level of interest already demonstrated.</p>	
13.	<p>Mr John Dix</p> <p>Is Barnet Council happy with the fact that traffic speeds will halve at peak times on East Barnet Road when the Asda and JCoSS schemes open?</p> <p>Pete and Sarah Mitchell The traffic that will be generated by the Asda proposals will be huge. It is proposed by Asda to introduce a traffic light controlled junction. When traffic lights were installed there before, there was gridlock and they had to be removed. What guarantee can Asda and the Council give that this will not happen again?</p>	<p>Martin Cowie – Written Response The local planning and highway authorities are currently assessing the proposals submitted by Asda. This will entail a careful examination of the Transport Assessment accompanying the planning application and associated highway implications for the local road network.</p> <p>Clearly the planning authority will want to ensure that the development proposals do not adversely affect existing traffic conditions. It is too early at this stage however to ascertain the extent of the local highway impact.</p>	

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	<p>There was general discussion in relation to the main hot spot areas which would be affected and residents' views that there were no mitigating options available for some of the local infrastructure, including the bridge and Station Road.</p>	<p>The points raised by Mr Dix and Pete and Sarah Mitchell will however be considered as the application was dealt with.</p> <p>Martin Cowie confirmed that any development proposal had a traffic impact that that there was a need to mitigate this. In answer to a question from Mr Howard, Martin confirmed that all partners had been consulted in respect of the traffic implications.</p>	
14.	<p>Mr Howard Referred to the responses in Issue 1 of the last meeting and his view that the response did not address his question as to whether any changes, especially those which were not in the last elections manifesto, would be the subject of a public vote. He wants to know how the public will be able to vote on the proposals of the Future Shape Programme. He had a concern that should services be contracted out for a period of 5 to 7 years It would cost millions of pounds to bring back in-house should the contracts not deliver the service levels required.</p>	<p>Richard Grice – Written Response Staff and service users are involved with the current phase of future shape work, which will report to Cabinet in the summer, on a targeted basis. Following Members' decisions on how to proceed, any change to what services are provided or who supplies them will be considered on a business case by business case basis, taking full account of the likely impact on residents and staff, and the risks involved. This is in line with the normal Council decision making processes, which do not and have never involved referendums or plebiscites.</p>	
15.	<p>Mr Howard It was understood from the last forum that there would be widespread public consultation over the Asda planning application in New Barnet. Public have been advised that 2,500 letters have been sent out but a number of streets listed have not received letters as at 13/3/09.</p>	<p>Martin Cowie – Written Response The local planning authority has undertaken extensive consultation as part of the statutory process. This has involved notifying 2500 local residential properties and businesses, erecting site notices and placing an advert in the local press.</p>	<p>Martin Cowie To feed back on the distribution of letters to Victoria Close and Victoria Road.</p> <p>Subsequent to the meeting it was confirmed that letters had been delivered to the roads in question and if residents had not received them, they would in any event be given sufficient</p>

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	<p>Those letters that were delivered gave an incorrect reference number for the applications and all attempts to log into the website were rejected. No e mail address was included on the public notices affixed to lamp posts and in the local press. It is Mr Howard's view that some would interpret this as an effort to restrict replies from the public re: an application that does not accord with the provisions of the development plan. Mr Howard ascertained that the plans had been registered on 16 February, one day prior to the last forum. He said that residents had been misled as to their registration. He outlined the problems experienced in obtaining CD roms and software problems and said that four week's consultation was too little for a major departure to the Council's planning regulations. development plan in force in the area and in which the land is situated and is therefore a departure from the plan application. He also puts forward a view that the Planning Department does not have sufficient resources to cope with all the large schemes at various stages of planning in the Borough. He asks whether this is 'a cock up or conspiracy'</p>	<p>The period of consultation has also been extended beyond the statutory 3 weeks to allow every opportunity for representations to be forwarded to planning authority for consideration.</p> <p>The issue in relation to the incorrect reference given was immediately rectified to ensure access to the plans via the website was available.</p> <p>The planning department has sufficient resources to manage large scheme such as the Asda submission and it has demonstrated this in its successful delivery of a number of significant schemes recently through the planning process.</p> <p>Martin Cowie understood that there were various residents who were not in receipt of the consultation letters, primarily in Victoria Close and Victoria Road. He undertook to look into this omission.</p>	<p>time to make any representations.</p>

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	<p>Pete and Sarah Mitchell They live at No. 30 Victoria Close. They are on the list of consultee addresses on the Council's website but they have not received a letter. To their knowledge no one else in their road has. They want an explanation and whether they should infer from this about the Council's attitude towards local democracy and accountability.</p>		
16	<p>Diane and Eddie Eatwell At the 16th September 08 Forum meeting, when Mr Standing raised the problem of dog fouling in Oak Hill Park, Mr Eatwell pointed out that pupils from East Barnet School were and would continue to use these playing facilities. Mr Cowie promised to look into how the playing fields could be kept free from dog excrement. Has he found a solution yet?</p> <p>In response to the written reply by Jenny Warren, Mr Eatwell said that he intended to contact the Ombudsman to inform him that the Council could not guarantee the clearance of dog faeces.</p>	<p>Jenny Warren – Written Response Park keepers address residents who are found allowing their dogs to foul and provide poop a scoop bags to enable residents to pick up after their dogs. We also participate in National poop a scoop week every year. It is not possible to keep the fields free from dog fouling at all times, dog fouling is removed when the park is cleaned of litter.</p>	

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17	<p>Mr T Hufford The Sheltered Housing budget has been cut from to £250,000 with the Council's ambition to spread the fund more evenly in other types of accommodation. How can you provide an adequate service with only £250,000? What will happen to residents' daily telephone call?</p> <p>Sheltered Housing residents are asked in a questionnaire where they would suggest cuts to the Council's Budget are made. How can residents be expected to know how to answer this?</p> <p>Another resident at the meeting said that people went into sheltered accommodation for comfort and safety and the removal of a valuable warden service was concerning and improper. Several residents raised their concerns, including those of Mr Park, from the Eleanor Palmer Trust.</p>	<p>Kate Kennally – Written Response The Council's proposals would mean a reduction of £950K in projected sheltered housing expenditure for 2009/10 of £1.3M. This would leave around £300K for continued investment in appropriate replacement services in addition to the existing range of visiting services that the council would make available to sheltered housing residents.</p> <p>The questionnaire has been designed for use by a range of different kinds of respondent. Sheltered housing residents have suggested at the consultation meetings a number of ways in which the council might make savings in other budget areas</p>	<p>James Taylor has phoned Mr Hufford (after the meeting) and discussed the various points he wished to make concerning the proposals. In summary the position on the specific questions asked in your message below are as follows</p> <p>1 The Council is proposing major changes to services for sheltered housing residents. It is not proposed to maintain the same service provision as tenants receive at present</p> <p>2. The Council's proposals include the withdrawal of the staffing services received by tenants at present. If this proposal were to be implemented, the council would also need to make decisions on the types of replacement services that would be provided, including the morning call service.</p> <p>3 As explained in the consultation booklet, the findings of the consultation are expected to be reported for decision by the council's Cabinet in June. The record of the consultation meetings conducted with sheltered housing tenants, including Eleanor Palmer Trust tenants, will be sent to the scheme manager for circulation to tenants.</p>

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18.	<p>Mr Hufford Is the proposed access road to the new JCoSS site set in stone?</p> <p>A resident raised health and safety issues involving construction traffic speeding, in particular along Mount Pleasant Road.</p>	<p>Martin Cowie – Written Response The access road was agreed as part of the planning application for the new school and cannot be altered. The road was proposed in order to facilitate direct access into the site and ensure the satisfactory movement of traffic in the local area.</p> <p>In respect of contractors' vehicles, Martin Cowie undertook to speak with them regarding their use of the surrounding roads.</p>	<p>Martin Cowie The contractors were contacted about the issue raised and they undertook to investigate immediately. It should be noted that Council officers were in close communication with the developers to ensure construction work was undertaken in accordance with the approved programme and did not cause a nuisance to local residents.</p>
19.	<p>Mr Gardiner Asks whether officers could provide an update on the situation regarding the market. In addition, he asks whether the owner has signed a new contract with the Council to secure the future of the market beyond June 09.</p> <p>Residents were pleased to learn that a meeting was taking place and asked when feedback would be available.</p>	<p>Martin Cowie/Peter Cridland – Written Response Property Services have a meeting set up with Mrs Walsh on 27th March to discuss further options.</p> <p>Peter Cridland said that the Council had not signed an extension to the current lease. If there was a resolution to this issue, feedback would be available for the next meeting.</p> <p>He confirmed that the Council did not own the markets but rented the owners space. He said that there were no funds to take over this market. Research had been undertaken to ascertain from the Royal Charter whether the Council had any responsibility. As an option, he said that the Council would prefer the market to return to its original site.</p>	<p>Peter Cridland The Council would be seeking an alternative operator on the Stapylton Road sit it Mrs Walsh refuses to sign a lease extension or doesn't take the market back onto her site.</p>
20	<p>Karen Miller Can you supply an update on the number of parks so far identified as those that will compile the list for application from the Central Government kitty of £235 million which is on offer for park regeneration</p>	<p>Issue Raised after the meeting</p>	<p>Jenny Warren The play builder grant requires that 22 play areas are delivered over 2 years, 12 in year one and 10 in year 2. The sites have not been identified but are also required to be in areas of deprivation, low levels of play provision and target child populations of 8-13 years. Barnet has been awarded £1.1 million to deliver the 22 sites.</p>

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21	<p>Karen Miller Why does Barnet not have a specific Directorate/ Director of Sports, Leisure and Health Related fitness</p>	<p>Issue Raised after the meeting</p>	<p>It would be unusual to have a director or directorate with such a narrow remit, but there are historical reasons why there is no single senior manager with responsibility for these services. The Council has progressively reduced the number of business units from about 25 a few years ago to around seven now. This has produced big efficiencies and savings, so that money can be moved from the administration and running of the Council to our priorities such as adult social care, services for children and young people and local environment and transport. Health, fitness, physical activity, sport etc are now the business of all Council departments. For example, the Sport, Physical Activity & PE Strategy has been agreed with not just Council departments, but a wide range of partners. This has enabled us to secure more funding than we would otherwise have been eligible for to start new projects in 2008. The one job that is held centrally is management of the contracts to run the leisure centres. This is undertaken by the Procurement Team with input from other parts of the Council as to what is needed.</p>
22	<p>Mrs Windsor Raised concerns regarding speeding traffic at the junction of Totteridge Lane and Barnet Lane. She asked whether traffic lights could be installed at this site.</p>		<p>Lynn Bishop To look into the speeding and possible introduction of traffic lights at this junction.</p>

	Issue Raised	Response	Update (and by whom)
	DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE MEETINGS	12 May 2009 16 June 2009 28 July 2009	Coppetts Wood Primary School, Coppetts Road, Friern Barnet, N10 1JS North London Business Park Chipping Barnet Library

The meeting finished at 8.30 pm

Officers Present:

Lynn Bishop

Lead Officer

Peter Cridland

Martin Cowie

Pauline Bagley

Councillor Lisa Rutter was also in attendance.

Assistant Director (Performance) Environment and Transport –

Property Services

Head of Planning and Development Management

Democratic Services

**FORTHCOMING PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
AND SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

(meetings usually start at 7.00pm)

AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE: - ALL TO BE HELD AT BARNET HOUSE, 1255 HIGH ROAD, N20

Chipping Barnet

Democratic Services Contact: Pauline Bagley, Tel: 020 8359 2023

Hendon

Democratic Services Contact: Paul Frost, Tel: 020 8359 2205

Finchley and Golders Green

Democratic Services Contact: Nazyer Choudhury, Tel: 020 8359 2031

Forthcoming meetings:

Finchley & Golders Green

30 April 2009

26 May 2009

23 June 2009

21 July 2009

Chipping Barnet

30 April 2009

26 May 2009

23 June 2009

21 July 2009

Hendon

30 April 2009

26 May 2009

23 June 2009

21 July 2009

Public requests to speak at Area Planning Sub-Committees on planning applications

Written requests to speak on planning applications should be notified to the relevant Area Planning Officer by 10.00am on the 2nd working day before the day of the meeting.

Public requests to speak at Area Planning Sub-Committees on matters other than planning applications

Written requests to speak on matters other than planning applications must be received by the Democratic Services Manager by 10.00am on the 2nd working day before the day of the meeting.

Public requests to ask questions at Area Planning Sub-Committees

Any request to ask a question (exact wording) on the work of the Sub-Committee must be received by the Democratic Services Manager by 10.00am on the 7th working day before the day of the meeting.

• **AREA ENVIRONMENT SUB-COMMITTEES:**

Chipping Barnet Barnet House, 1255 High Road, N20

Democratic Services Contact: Stephanie Chaikin, Tel: 020 8359 2019

Finchley & Golders Green Barnet House, 1255 High Road, N20

Democratic Services Contact: Nick Musgrove, Tel: 020 8359 2024

Hendon Barnet House, 1255 High Road, N20

Democratic Services Contact: Jonathan Regal, Tel: 020 8359 2012

Forthcoming meetings:

Finchley & Golders Green	Chipping Barnet	Hendon
29 June 2009	29 June 2009	29 June 2009
1 October 2009	1 October 2009	1 October 2009

Public requests to speak at Area Environment Sub-Committees

Written requests to speak on issues on the agenda must be received by the Democratic Services Manager by 10.00am on the 2nd working day before the day of the meeting.

Public requests to ask questions at Area Environment Sub-Committees

Any request to ask a question (exact wording) on environmental matters must be received by the Democratic Services Manager by 10.00am on the 7th working day before the day of the meeting.

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone N20

Democratic Services Contact: Maria Lugangira (tel: 020 8359 2761)

Public requests to speak at Planning & Environment Committee

Written requests to speak on planning applications should be notified to the relevant Area Planning Officer by 10.00am on the 2nd working day before the day of the meeting.

Public requests to speak at Planning & Environment Committee on matters other than planning matters

Written requests to speak on matters other than planning applications must be received by the Democratic Services Manager by 10.00am on the 2nd working day before the day of the meeting.

Public requests to ask questions at Planning & Environment Committee

Any request to ask a question (exact wording) on the work of the Committee must be received by the Democratic Services Manager by 10.00am on the 7th working day before the day of the meeting.

Forthcoming meetings:

6 May 2009, 3 June 2009, 1 July 2009, 29 July 2009