

# News release

Monday, 26 November 2007

## Planning good practice guide launched for London councillors

A new good practice guide to help London boroughs increase the role of councillors in all stages of the planning process was launched today (Monday).

Produced by London Councils, Government Office for London (GoL) and London First, the guidance is based on independent research carried out earlier this year which highlighted the different ways boroughs engage their planning members in complex applications.

'Connecting councillors with strategic planning applications: a good practice guide for London' draws on existing good practice undertaken by boroughs and shows how councillors can be involved in all stages of the planning process. The interactive guide is hosted online at [www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/councillorsandplanning](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/councillorsandplanning)

London Councils' Executive Member for Planning and Economic Development, Michael Snyder, said: "To ensure our local communities get the most benefit from any new development it is vital that councillors are fully aware of the key role they play in the planning process.

"This guide will be a valuable asset to boroughs and councillors in ensuring that planning applications are handled in the best possible way for all involved."

London First Chief Executive, Baroness Jo Valentine, said: "More councillor involvement will lead to better development and better planning decisions. Borough councillors have a unique role in securing high quality strategic development, vital to keeping London as an attractive place to live and work."

"Planning contributes to maintaining London's position as a truly world class city, the powerhouse of the UK economy. The good practice guidance clarifies the role councillors can play throughout the planning process, to support well informed decision making".

GoL's Regional Director, Liz Meek, said: "The government fully supports this good practice guide. It provides excellent practical information to help authorities and councillors handle major applications promptly and efficiently.

"It also strongly supports the important role of councillors, and is in accord with the messages in the recent Planning White Paper about improving local decision-making processes."

The good practice guide, backed by the Association of London Borough Planning Officers, aims to ensure that:

- councillors receive training on a range of issues including the Mayor's London Plan, planning law, sustainable design and how to engage with applicants without prejudicing themselves
- councillors can be involved in the pre-application and post-submission phases
- any member who will make a decision on a planning application is familiar with the application site
- boroughs have a protocol in place for all councillors involved in decision making, which should be regularly reviewed. It should detail how and when councillors, members of the public and other third parties will be involved in new procedures adopted from this guidance.

ENDS

Notes to editors

The guide, Connecting councillors with strategic planning applications: a good practice guide for London, is sponsored by Argent, British Land and London Communications Agency.

The interactive guide is hosted online at:  
[www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/councillorsandplanning](http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/councillorsandplanning)

Also available is a desk copy for download, and the research on which the good practice guide is based, which was carried out by Arup.

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