

PLANNING GAIN SUPPLEMENT

The report of the Director of Planning and Transportation advised Members of the consultation proposals for a charge to be levied on the uplift on land values arising from the grant of planning permission and the carrying-out of the subsequent development and suggested a recommended response on behalf of the Council. The deadline for response to the consultation was the date of the meeting, but an extension to 28 February 2006 had been received. In discussion, Members condemned the Government's proposals and expressed lack of confidence that money collected centrally through the proposed charges would fund the type of local projects currently undertaken through Section 106 agreements. They felt the proposals would have the effect of restricting the availability of land for development, consequently reducing the supply of affordable housing, be difficult to implement fairly, and considerably lessen the ability for the local determination and provision of community infrastructure. With unanimous cross-party support and after consultation with the three Group Leaders it was

RECOMMENDED: That confirmation be given to the action taken in advance of the Cabinet meeting, with the agreement of the three Group Leaders, in authorising a response to be made to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and copied to local Members of Parliament in the following terms: The Borough Council rejects the concept of introduction of the Planning Gain Supplement, but would rather see guidance and any necessary legislative changes to allow development of local tariffs and the pooling of funds in appropriate circumstances. In particular Members were very concerned that the proposed PGS system would: •

- put at risk the availability of land both coming forward for development while the debate over PGS took place and during the first years of implementation; •
- result in a loss of opportunities to deliver housing and, in particular, much needed affordable housing. This latter issue is a major concern in SE England. This Council's record in facilitating good quality housing and a generous supply of affordable housing for local people would be disrupted;
- act to "top slice" on the contributions that could be afforded by any development scheme and therefore it would seriously undermine the ability of Local Planning Authorities to negotiate contributions to important local facilities that are anticipated still to be secured by S106 Agreements as suggested in the consultation paper. This would put further constraint on the delivery of adequate levels of affordable housing and the necessary community infrastructure to support it (which remain local matters for negotiation by LPAs according to Box 5.4); and
- remove the link between local impacts and the ability of Planning Authorities to ensure "local mitigation". This is technically undesirable as necessary infrastructure could not be guaranteed to be available to mitigate the impact of development and to provide necessary community services. In the south east of England where development pressure is great, the public expect, quite rightly, that developers will be able to deliver local solutions to the detrimental impacts their developments generate. This seems to fly in the face of the very latest ideas of a "new localism" by removing from local determination those factors associated with development that local communities through their elected local authorities' operation of the planning system are best placed to deal with.