

PLANNING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN – ACTION PLAN

Summary: This report details the proposed Action Plan for addressing identified issues of planning performance, with the overall aim of improving the overall customer experience.

Options considered: Options considered within this report are as follows:

1. Support the Planning Service Improvement Action Plan
2. Do not support the Action Plan and recommend suitable revisions.

Conclusions: It is recommended that Overview & Scrutiny Committee supports the Planning Service Improvement Action Plan.

Recommendations: **That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supports the Planning Service Improvement Action Plan.**

Reasons for Recommendations: To ensure that an appropriate Action Plan is in place necessary to provide solutions to the identified service level issues in the agreed Planning Service Improvement Plan Strategy.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information, and which are not published elsewhere)

None

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Andrew Brown, Cabinet Portfolio holder for Planning and Enforcement	Ward(s) affected: All
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1. Introduction

1.1 During 2021, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered that the Planning Service should be subject to a performance review, following perceived concerns over the speed of decision making, communications

between stakeholders and Members and difficulties in obtaining information in relation to planning obligations (S106 contributions). It was also suggested that insufficient focus and/or cross-service priority has been attached to business related proposals. Following this, at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in March 2022 it was agreed that the Director for Place and Climate Change should undertake to create a Planning Service Improvement Plan (PSIP).

1.2 The PSIP Strategy was presented to this Committee on 28th September 2022 and received support. In addition, the following recommendations were made:

- The customer engagement aspects of the Plan are separated and progressed independently for Town and Parish Councils, District Cllrs, residents, and planning service users (applicants and agents).
- Future challenges caused by changes to the planning regime are adequately addressed within the Plan.
- That guidance be developed on the planning process for residential applicants.
- That consideration is given to expediting responses from statutory consultees to avoid delays in the planning process

1.3 This report now provides details of the concluding Strategy and Action Plan for review of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2. Planning Service Improvement Plan (PSIP) – Action Plan

2.1 The Action Plan provides specific measures in addressing the identified areas of improvement and is a comprehensive document covering a multitude of processes and activities.

3. Conclusion

3.1 The proposed Action Plan is intended to address the identified performance issues, with regular monitoring built into the process.

3.2 Should Committee support the proposed Action Plan, work can be expedited with a view to instigating most measures by Autumn 2023. Only those measures dependent on external factors are likely to extend beyond this date, however, every effort will be made to implement measures at the earliest opportunity.

4. Corporate Plan Objectives

4.1 The Council's Corporate Plan contains six key themes, these being Local Homes for Local Need; Climate, Coast, and the Environment; Boosting Business Sustainability and Growth; Financial Sustainability and Growth, Customer Focus and Quality of Life. The work of the Planning service relates to all six themes and therefore it is imperative that the service is performing to the best of its ability if all six themes and their objectives are to be realised.

5. Medium Term Financial Strategy

5.1 There are no direct implications for the MTFS as a result of this report.

6. Financial and Resource Implications and Risks

6.1 The delivery of service improvements is dependent on sufficient resources being in place. At this stage there are no direct financial or resource implications, other than that of service resources – this being one of the PSIP considerations.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications in relation to this report.

8. Sustainability

8.1 Sustainability is fundamental to town and country planning. Wherein the UK planning system is designed to enable the protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment. When operating as required, the planning service has the potential to contribute significantly towards achieving sustainability.

9. Climate/Carbon Impact

9.1 This report has no direct climate change or carbon impact implications; however, the work of the planning service is pivotal in achieving net zero and addressing climate change. The Place Directorate is at the forefront of this work and the planning service improvements will maximise every opportunity to encourage sustainability and reduce the environmental effects of all associated activities.

10. Equality and Diversity

10.1 There are no equality and diversity implications directly resulting from the recommendations or options considered in this report.

11. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

11.1 This report raises no matters of concern in relation to crime and disorder.

12. Recommendation

12.1 That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee supports the Action Plan, as detailed at Appendix 1 of the Planning Service Improvement Plan.