

Cabinet Response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Board – Review of the Planning Service

Resolutions of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

No.	Recommendation:	Cabinet Response:
1.	that the initial Planning Review Action Plan set out in the submitted report be endorsed;	Cabinet endorses the Overview & Scrutiny Board's endorsement of the Action Plan.
2.	that regular liaison sessions be established with the Scrutiny lead for Place, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment and Culture and the Assistant Director – Planning Housing and Climate Emergency, these sessions to include an early warning in respect of planning delivery risks;	These regular liaison sessions have started and been diarised for the rest of the year. They are already providing good opportunity for discussion around hot topics within planning and clearer understanding of pressures and priorities. In addition engagement continues between these key members outside of these sessions, as issues arise.
3.	that the Overview and Scrutiny Board reviews the progress in implementing the Planning Review Action Plan at its meeting on 14 July 2021 and explores further options for improvement;	Further report scheduled to be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 14th July 2021.

4.	that the Assistant Director of Housing, Transport and Climate Emergency be requested to work with the Chairman of the Planning Committee to review the report format for planning applications to ensure that it includes all relevant information and links to policies and legislation to provide balanced recommendations, options and reasons for the recommendations;	First meeting diarised for Chairman of Planning Committee, Development Management Head of Service & Assistant Director, to interrogate Planning Committee Reports - their structure, content and style to ensure they are providing Planning Committee Members with the right information, in a clear format, in order to make their decisions.
5.	that updated information on land supply be published on the Council's website to enable this information to be publicly available	Upon completion of the annual monitoring of housing completions, undertaken in the last week of March, all figures will be publicised clearly on the website and shared with Neighbourhood Forum colleagues. The issue of Land Supply is indeed a cornerstone of all that the Planning Service do and the Assistant Director will ensure that there is no loss of focus on the importance of striving towards and maintaining a 5 year Housing Land Supply. Pro-active engagement continues with registered providers, Homes England, local agents and developers to bring forward priority (stalled) sites.
6.	that regular update training be provided to members of the Planning Committee to ensure that they are kept up to date with key issues, policy and legislation;	Annual Programme of training being prepared and will be open to all Councillors and our Neighbourhood Forum colleagues, not just to Planning Committee members. Due to start in the next two months with a mixture of external speakers from Statutory Bodies, Partner Organisations, Technical expertise and Council Officers.

Overview and Scrutiny Board Recommendations to Cabinet:

No.	Recommendation:	Cabinet Response:
A.	To ensure that a dedicated resource is established to work with the TDA to progress new housing development working with the Planning Department to ensure that these projects can be progressed at pace.	Discussions taken place between the Assistant Director and the TDA, in order to establish a new Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) which would provide a dedicated planning officer resource to handle the TDA submissions on behalf of Torbay Council.
B.	To consider providing funding for a temporary additional Planning Officer post to help progress the backlog of planning applications.	<p>Six months of an additional planning officer, to assist in clearing the backlog of applications, particularly heritage related cases and allowing the team to provide better levels of service to applicants, agents and Councillors. Work begun on looking for available Planners in the market, with relevant experience.</p> <p>In addition we are securing additional resource, dedicated planning officer posts, through funding from the NHS Trust and TDA for hospital and TDA promoted developments.</p>
C.	To support a review and investment in appropriate planning IT software to ensure it is fit for purpose.	New Total Land Charges system links to the planning back office system and along with the wider digitalisation work, will allow for better efficiency in the processing of Land Searches. Support required from specialist company to get s106/CiL back office system set up and operating.