

Actions: Cabinet and Directors' Priority Sessions – Planning Service

22 November 2021

-: Present :-

Anne-Marie Bond, Councillor Christine Carter, Councillor Darren Cowell, Councillor Steve Darling, Councillor Cordelia Law, Councillor Swithin Long, Councillor Mike Morey, Martin Phillips and Councillor Jackie Stockman

(Also in attendance: June Gurry, David Edmondson and Wendy Ormsby)

1. Apologies

Apology from Councillor Loxton.

2. Format and Scope of Session - Anne-Marie Bond to introduce and facilitate

Resulting Action Plan and Way Forward as attached.

Cabinet and Directors' Priority Session – Planning Application Process Improvement: Action Plan

22 November 2021, 9.30 am to 1 pm, Torre Abbey

Scope

What outcomes are we are seeking to achieve

- Identify what we want our Planning Service to look like and confirm the tangible changes needed, including additional resources needed, Enforcement and S215 Torbay Tidy Up
- Confirm we are progressing in the right direction with the changes identified
- Agree actions and timescales, including next steps for Local Plan, HEELA and Land Supply

Resulting Action Plan and Way Forward

This Priority Session revised the Action Plan originally adopted in March 2021 – as attached below.

Way Forward

1. Agree revised action plan and timescales – Directors Overview Meeting 7 December and Cabinet Briefing 22 December 2021
2. Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Environment & Culture and Director of Place 1:1's meetings to monitor and ensure deliverability, with escalation of issues to Leaders via Cabinet & Directors Business Plan Delivery Focus Meetings: Place & Growth
3. Review Action Plan with recommendations from PAS Feedback Report when available; and provide update to Cabinet members – Councillor Morey/Kevin Mowat/David Edmondson

Revised Planning Service Action Plan

(approved O&S/Cabinet March 2021 updated by Cabinet and Directors Priority Session November 2021)

Agreed vision for the Planning Service

The service will be efficient, engaging, proactive, and responsive. Officers will always be firm but fair and will take an appropriate interventionist approach for the benefit of the Bay.

Original Actions, plus Next Steps and New Actions	By when	Update Nov 2021
Engagement		
<p>Re-establish regular Agents Forums, customer feedback</p> <p>Next steps/additional actions:</p> <p>Broaden attendance and hold additional combined Neighbourhood Forum and Agents Forums – David Edmondson;</p> <p>Junior officers to attend to build relationships – Wendy Ormsby</p>	<p>April 2021 then ongoing</p> <p>By January 2022 then ongoing</p>	<p>2 Forums held, next is on January 26th.</p>
<p>Greater use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPA), including the payment for dedicated officers – see additional actions under Staff Matters.</p> <p>Next steps/additional actions:</p> <p>Establish arrangement for TDA to fund PPA for TDA led projects – Kevin Mowat</p> <p>Progress PPA for signing for HIP2 with ICO – Cllr Steve Darling/Anne-Marie Bond</p>	<p>Immediately on appropriate cases</p> <p>January 2022</p> <p>January 2022</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>Greater use of the Design Review Panel, to help improve the quality of larger schemes submitted to the Council</p>	<p>Immediately on appropriate cases</p>	<p>Need to re-emphasise to team,</p>

<p>Next steps/additional actions:</p> <p>Review existing Design Review Panel and develop/embed culture of stated approach – David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby</p>	<p>January 2022</p>	<p>only been one recently</p>
<p>Engagement with Neighbourhood Forums in pre-application processes</p> <p>Next steps/additional actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue reinforce with officers and link to joint Agent and Neighbourhood Forum Sessions (see action above) – David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby 2. Develop joint protocol for working approach with the Council, Neighbourhood Forums and Agents – David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby 	<p>By June 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>January 2022</p>	<p>Encouraged with developers in all meetings</p>
<p>Continue close partnership working with Homes England, Historic England, registered providers, NHS Partnership Trust, South Devon College, etc.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing regular meetings. Interventions planned in several sites.</p>
<p>NEW: Strengthen relationship with TDA and Planning for delivery and management of Council projects, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish clear expectations required of project leads eg. PPA and how DRP will be conducted – Anne-Marie Bond/Kevin Mowat - hold monthly meetings with TDA – David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby/Liam Montgomery 	<p>January 2022, then monthly meetings</p>	
<p>NEW: Review Site Visits as opportunity for to develop member/officer relations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review ability for physical site visits for Planning Committee urgently with Public Health – June Gurry; 	<p>Complete – Public Health advise against due to risks of covid</p>	

- Officer sites visits required for applications unless very clear/straight forward application with no objections – Wendy Ormsby	November 2021, ongoing	
NEW: Review criteria and approach to Site Review Meetings to enable established criteria and trigger points for virtual meetings and where no resolution ability to escalate to physical visit or refer to Planning Committee. – David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby for Cabinet members to consider	January 2022	
Members		
Member Training Programme - Including Chair's training programme Next steps/additional actions: Evaluate Planning Committee training following receipt PAS feedback report; Consider Planning Committee induction programme and ongoing annual training programme including specific training for Chairman of Planning Committee; Revisit Member Job Descriptions in the Constitution to build in skills and expectations David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby/Teresa Buckley	Beginning shortly Start January 2022	Started with Historic Environment (Sept) & Role of Councillors.(Oct) Flooding & Drainage on 2 nd December.
Climate change		
Sustainability Checklist for Validation purposes, enhancing the energy efficiency of proposed development.	By June 2021	Drafted by Jacqui Warren, Wendy incorporating into revised Validation Checklist
NEW : Prepare/combine Climate Change and Healthy Living in one Supplementary Planning Guidance document – David Edmondson/Adam Luscombe	By February 2022	
Staff Matters		
NEW: To resource PPAs, identify HR Strategy for recruitment, backfill and ensuring sufficient resources to	Dec 2021	

deliver PPAs quickly – David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby/Sue Wiltshire		
NEW : Review strategy for specialist posts and purchase of services with sharing resources across neighbouring authorities to build resilience – David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby	January 2022 and ongoing	
Establish new ‘team within the team’, dealing with design, public realm & historic environment issues	By June 2021	Successful
Improved Officer e-mail & telephone communication Next steps/additional actions: 1. PAS to deliver training on customer standards – all officers 2. Establish standards/criteria for response times and consider more use of phone calls/Teams meetings instead of emails – Wendy Ormsby 3. Introduce standard auto out of office response to manage expectations – Wendy Ormsby 4. Consider how to facilitate informal discussions between members and officers using Children’s Practice Week or ‘day in the life of’ formats – David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby/Teresa Buckley	By February 2022, ongoing	Ongoing, all officers on Customer Service training.
Contact with Ward Councillors regarding local applications Next steps/additional actions: As above	Immediately	Still needs re-emphasising
Staff development programme, avoid poaching from neighbouring authorities. Next steps/additional actions: Introduce new training and development package for team to enable them to deliver an excellent service (meeting vision outlined above), including potential of setting up Planning Academy (similar to our Social Worker approach working with Plymouth University), to ensure staff feel valued – David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby	July 2021 Start January 2022, ongoing	Retained all staff to date. Opportunity being offered to one who nearly left.

Embed the new culture in the recently started new planning staff.	Immediately	Achieved with June & Trenton, started with Carlo.
NEW : Undertake options appraisal for meeting conservation statutory functions, including training and development for wider team on conservation/heritage matters as well as dedicated officer – David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby	By February 2022	
NEW : Housing Enablement (viability assessments) to be delivered by the Council to achieve transparency. Review approach adopted by Exeter and Plymouth. – David Edmondson	By February 2022	
Embed the new culture in the recently started new planning staff. Next steps/additional actions: Prepare specialist induction for new Planning Staff – links to training and development plan above.	Immediately	Achieved with June & Trenton, started with Carlo.
Administrative support/Validation/Digitalisation		
Filling Vacant Administrative post	April 2021	
Trial the outsourcing of the Validation process, following Business Process Mapping recommendations. Next Steps/additional actions: Identify resource needs and solutions to resolve short term capacity issue, including looking at other councils' approach, to make changes within 6 months and to enable the service to progress – Martin Phillips/Kevin Mowat/David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby Review following PAS feedback report, to identify firm proposals for validation process, staff resource requirements and where this sits within the planning team's structure – David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby	April 2021 December 2021 By February 2022	Pulled out of this, pending PAS work and changing Role Profiles building more flexibility.
Temporary additional cover for Land Charges Team, to handle backlog and high demand due to Stamp Duty Holiday.	Started	Cover worked incredibly well and supported the team.

Installation of new Land Charges back office System	By June 2021	Govt finance coming our way which will help pay for it.
Further digitalisation of information to allow for faster delivery of Land Charges Searches	Six months	Linked to the above.
<p>Establishment of the Exacom new back office Section 106/CiL system.</p> <p>Next steps/additional actions:</p> <p>Set up project board (to include interface with wider Council teams) and prepare detailed project plan to ensure delivery. Consider wider digitalisation across Planning service, prepare scope for project and link as sub-set of CRM Project Board. – David Edmondson/Wendy Ormsby</p>	<p>Started</p> <p>By February 2022</p>	Nearly in place.
Other		
NEW: Prepare Section 215 action plan		