

## **Development Management Service – Peer Review Extract**

### **Background and Scope of the Development Management Service Peer Review**

**Dates of the Peer Review - 13 December 2016 ~ 30 January 2017**

**Final Report issued - 13th February 2017**

#### **The Brief**

1. The brief for this work was issued by Torbay Council on 23rd November 2016. The reasons stated for the review were:

- **Quantity and Quality**

Development Management performs well in terms of DCLG statistics and continues to make improvements to that performance, but less well in other areas such as levels of electronic submission, utilising technology and delivery of enforcement.

- **Resilience and Devolution**

There is an opportunity, through the better sharing of resources with like-minded Councils, to improve resilience whilst also enhancing the best elements of development management services, such as staff, quality outcomes and local accountability.

2. Torbay Council wanted the review to assess 3 key areas – “smart working”, a “cradle to the grave” approach to inward investment, and a “one team approach” to development.
3. Specifically Torbay Council wanted the Service Review to answer the following questions:

#### **“Smart Working”**

- What does that mean for development management ?
- Should it include a more risk based approach to process and priorities ?
- How is that embedded ?
- How much change is required to historic and outdated working practices and constitutional requirements (e.g. Scheme of delegation, SRM process) ?
- Does this respond positively to stakeholder needs ?

#### **“Cradle to Grave”**

- Considering the Council’s pro-activity towards development through to delivery of projects on the ground.
- Whether a project and outcome based approach is needed, alongside process requirements.

## Appendix 1

### **“One Team”**

- Is the existing structure / resourcing appropriate to manage the development management process ?
  - How well does the development management function work with / respond to Corporate requirements (e.g. Corporate and Delivery Plans; Efficiency Plan ?
  - Is the team fit for the future, taking account of devolution and budgets ?
  - Is the existing structure / resourcing appropriate to manage the development management process ?
4. The Service Review was asked to comment on “outcomes”:
- How does Torbay’s development management service compare to its peers ?
  - Is a redesign of the service required and, if so, what does that look like ?
  - Are efficiencies required or does the service need more / different resources ?
  - Is the service fit for the future? What opportunities are there for change/improvement and what would be the benefits ?
  - What are the mechanisms and timescales for, including any costs and budgetary implications of, implementing recommended changes to the development management function ?

### **The Process**

5. The review took place between 13th December 2016 and 30th January 2017. Initial feedback presentations highlighting key messages were made to senior managers, Councillors and service managers, and planning service staff on 30th January 2017. This report sets out the detailed findings of the Service Review. The Service Review Team from Plymouth City Council comprised:
- Paul Barnard – Assistant Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure, Plymouth City Council.
  - Peter Ford – Head of Development management, Plymouth City Council.
  - Rebecca Boyde – Planning Officer, Plymouth City Council.
6. The Service Review Team undertook this review at the invitation of Torbay Council and was undertaken as ‘critical friends’. Torbay Council wanted the Service Review to be undertaken by an experienced nearby Local Planning Authority team with a proven track record of service improvement with experience of sector-led improvement approaches. These approaches can provide added value to the Council’s own performance and improvement focus arising from its recent Corporate Peer Challenge and its own recognition that the current operation of the planning function in Torbay requires improvement.
7. The Service Review is based on the identified high level challenges from Torbay Council which sought to focus on the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the development management function.