

**Brighton and Hove Council  
Planning Peer Review  
Response and Improvement Plan**

<b>ACTION 1</b>
<p><b>Summary</b> Establish a standing Planning Policy Committee</p>
<p><b>Indicative areas to be addressed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role and significance of planning policy in the delivery of the Planning Service</li> <li>• The role and significance of planning policy in the delivery of the regeneration agenda in general, and the major projects captured in Part 1 of the City Plan in particular</li> <li>• The need to establish commonly agreed long term plan policy for the well-being of the City and the wider community</li> <li>• The profile of planning policy in the council</li> <li>• The impact of planning policy in delivering an effective and resilient development management process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Owner(s)</b> Acting Executive Director – EDH/EEC; Leader of the Council; Lead Member for Planning</p>
<p><b>Timetable</b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Reporting Mechanism</b></p> <p>Economic Development and Culture Committee.</p> <p>Discussions since the receipt of the PAS report have recognised the importance of addressing these related matters. The Committee is best placed to provide an oversight and to give direction on these important issues. Cllr Cattell has been appointed as the Deputy chairman of the Committee to provide the connection with the day to day operation of the development management service.</p>

## **ACTION 2**

### **Summary**

Ownership of City Plan Part 1 / engagement in site allocation work for Part 2

### **Indicative areas to be addressed**

- Understanding of and ownership of City Plan Part 1
- Training/Familiarisation day on Part 1
- Understanding of process and timetables for the production of City Plan Part 2 and community engagement
- Training/Familiarisation day on Part 2
- The merits of setting up a cross-party working group to oversee the work on City Plan Part 2

### **Owner(s)**

Lead Member for Planning;  
Interim Head of Planning;  
Planning Policy Manager

### **Timetable**

Ongoing

Monthly briefing sessions now take place with Cllr Cattell and Cllr Mitchell

A briefing session has already been organised for all members on the scoping stage of Part 2. A briefing session will be arranged to feedback on the scoping consultation for Part 2.

Thereafter briefings will be delivered at all key stages of plan preparation. Part of this process will be 121 briefings with ward members affected by emerging site allocations.

### **Reporting Mechanism**

Economic Development and Culture Committee

### **ACTION 3**

#### **Summary**

Creation of streamlined planning policy framework

#### **Indicative areas to be addressed**

- Review of the saved policies from the 2005 Local Plan
- Assessment of the extent to which the National Planning Policy Framework is able to provide guidance for development proposals until the adoption of City Plan Part 2
- The extent to which the range of SPD/SPG notes are worthy of retention and/or are compatible with the NPPF
- The extent to which the existing policy context provides a barrier or disincentive to the promotion of sustainable development.

#### **Owner(s)**

Lead Member for Planning;  
Interim Head of Planning;  
Planning Policy Manager

#### **Timetable**

November 2016

#### **Reporting Mechanism**

Economic Development and Culture Committee

The timetable has been designed to allow the scoping work on City Plan Part 2 to run its natural course and to address these matters in the round.

This exercise will also overlap with work on Action 12 (Proactive development management approach). It will be useful to understand the relationship and interplay between the policy context and the approach taken by officers and the extent to which they contribute to the matters that were raised with the PAS team earlier in the year.

**ACTION 4****Summary**

Operation of Planning Committee

**Indicative areas to be addressed**

- Delegation arrangements
- Procedures for members to call in applications to the committee
- Report formats/length/level of detail
- Procedures at the committee meeting
- Frequency and detail of committee briefings
- Processes for handling motions contrary to recommendation

**Owner(s)**

Interim Head of Planning  
Chair of Planning Committee

**Timetable**

December 2016

Some of these matters have already been addressed (report formats/procedures at the meetings). The important other matters (mainly the call in procedures and handling motions contrary to recommendation) were initially been addressed at the Members' Working Group earlier this month

**Reporting Mechanisms**

Economic Development and Culture Committee  
Planning Committee

**ACTION 5****Summary**

Performance Quick Fixes

**Indicative areas to be addressed**

- Streamlining/not producing delegated reports on low risk planning applications
- Checking processes for decision notices
- Checks and balances in decision making on delegated planning applications
- Staff capacity to address and reduce the planning application backlog
- Targeted approach towards fast-tracking of straightforward planning applications

The quick fixes have now been implemented. Significant improvement has already been made in the turnaround of planning applications. The service is working to a detailed timetable of 30 September 2016 and which is the currently anticipated end of the 24 month rolling programme that will determine whether or not the service is designated for poor performance. The Service has a working target of 425 planning application to determine either in time or with an extension to time between 1 August and 30 September.

**Owner(s)**

Interim Head of Planning

**Timetable**

September 2016

**Reporting Mechanism**

Planning Modernisation Board

**ACTION 6****Summary**

Release Management Capacity

**Indicative areas to be addressed**

- The number of officers involved in signing off case officer reports
- Empowerment and delegated responsibilities
- The extent to which managers' time is allocated to key value added areas
- The organisation and delivery of performance management
- Management capacity to concentrate on service redesign
- Management capacity to focus on developer, applicant and member engagement

Changes need to be embedded into day-to-day systems and practices. They are a key part of the cultural change element of the Planning Modernisation Board.

**Owner(s)**

Interim Head of Planning

**Timetable**

December 2016

Significant progress has been made on this matter. Procedures are now much more streamlined than those that were in place at the time of the PAS peer review visit. The merger of the City Regeneration and Planning Service has now been achieved and managers within the Planning Service are now concentrating their time and energies on performance management, service redesign and modernisation.

This process will need to be monitored in the period up to the end of the calendar year. In particular management capacity will need to be concentrated on designing a development management service that properly addresses the need to maintain a high performing service beyond the current target date of September.

**Reporting Mechanism**

Planning Modernisation Board

**ACTION 7**

**Summary**

Delivery of Modernisation Agenda / Implementation of new ICT (Uniform) system

**Indicative areas to be addressed**

- The extent to which a digital by design service can be achieved
- The extent to which capacity, resources and knowledge are in place to provide assurance on the implementation of the Uniform system
- The extent to which the new ICT systems can enable the re-engineering of business processes
- Roll out of new Uniform system
- Systems testing and reassurance

Several of these initiatives are already being managed by the Modernisation Board. The ICT project is being reported to and managed by the Corporate ICT management board.

**Owner(s)**

Acting Executive Director  
Interim Head of Planning

**Timetable**

Completed

The new Uniform system was installed during August 2016 and became fully operational on 5 September with the completion of the data migration project

**Reporting Mechanism**

Planning Modernisation Board  
Customer First in a Digital Age Board

**ACTION 8****Summary**

Delivery of developer contributions policy/Community Infrastructure Levy

**Indicative areas to be addressed**

- Review the options available
- Review the current operation of the existing Section 106 arrangements
- Review the impact of the recent legislation changes on pooling of Section 106 payments
- Assess whether or not the City Plan Part 1 viability information remains appropriate and up-to-date
- Explore the availability of specialist consultants to refresh the viability information if required
- Consider the appointment of specialist consultants.

**Owner(s)**

Lead Member for Planning  
Interim Head of Planning  
Planning Policy Manager

**Timetable**

Agree the approach - September 2016

Implementation - Summer 2018

**Reporting Mechanism**

Economic Development and Culture Committee

The Committee is considering a report on this matter on the same agenda



**ACTION 9****Summary**

Establish customer service standards

**Indicative areas to be addressed**

- Mapping of national best practice
- Understanding relationship with existing corporate standards in the council
- Managing the competing demands of performance improvement and recovery up to (and beyond) September 2016 and customer service standards
- Understanding the needs of the business community and regular planning agents
- Produce realistic and deliverable customer service standards

**Owner(s)**

Acting Executive Director EDH  
Interim Head of Planning  
Drawing in external support and guidance where appropriate

**Timetable**

March 2017

This is an important matter. Whilst performance has improved very significantly in the last six months significant work remains on customer service standards. In particular there is a need to ensure stable and consistent standards – some applications receive exceptionally high levels of services whereas others experience a more patchy experience.

**Reporting Mechanism**

Planning Modernisation Board

**ACTION 10****Summary**

Bespoke approaches for different types of applications

**Indicative areas to be addressed**

- Streamlining procedures for domestic and minor planning applications
- Assessing and evaluating the 'added-value' element of planning applications
- The introduction of a development team approach for major/strategic planning applications

**Owner(s)**

Interim Head of Planning

**Timetable**

Completed. Proportionate arrangements are now in place for the determination of the different types of planning applications. Applications that generate jobs and investment are now fast-tracked. Major and strategic planning applications are being handled in a development team style. In particular planning performance agreements are now embedded in the delivery of the system.

**Reporting Mechanism**

Planning Service Management Team  
Planning Modernisation Board

**ACTION 11**

**Summary**

Improve engagement with key developers

**Indicative areas to be addressed**

- Meetings with key partners to understand what type of engagement would be expected by key developers
- Looking a best practice elsewhere either within the UK or within the Greater Brighton area
- Working with the industry to construct an appropriate model
- Working with the industry to construct a series of meetings and protocols

**Owner(s)**

Acting Executive Director  
Interim Head of Planning

**Timetable**

December 2016

This is an important area to address. There is widespread support within the development community to be involved in the on-going recovery of the Planning Service. Initial signs are promising and the Professional Forum has been reconvened

**Reporting Mechanism**

Planning Modernisation Board  
Economic Development and Culture Committee

**ACTION 12**

**Summary**

Establishment of proactive development management culture

**Indicative areas to be addressed**

- Identify with the development industry which elements of the current service cause the greatest inconvenience and perception of a regulatory and/or negative approach
- Identify what a proactive development management culture will look like in the City
- Look at national best practice
- Look at the relationship with service standards in general and the introduction of pre-application charges in particular

**Owner(s)**

Interim Head of Planning  
Planning Management Team

**Timetable**

Ongoing.

Some significant changes have already taken place with the roll out of planning performance agreement protocol and the introduction of structured meetings for pre-application advice. Nevertheless ongoing work is needed to understand how best a proactive development culture can be delivered in the City and to address the needs of the local development community.

**Reporting Mechanism**

Planning Modernisation Board

**ACTION 13****Summary**

Investment in personal development

**Indicative areas to be addressed**

- Assessment of training needs arising from the most recent round of personal development plans
- Assessment of the training needs of the staff who have joined the service in recent weeks
- Assessment of the training needs of the roll out of other elements of the PAS Improvement Plan
- Assessment of the recruitment and retention policies within the service to ensure longer term resilience, continuity and capability

**Owner(s)**

Planning Management Team

**Timetable**

Ongoing.

Significant progress has been made on this matter. In particular a programme of training has been delivered to staff that have recently joined the service. This has included lunchtime training sessions and participation in the RTPi SE region season ticket training scheme. Significant success has been achieved in recruiting students and apprentices into the Service

Detailed work is also being carried out on recruitment and retention policies. In effect the Council is competing for skilled and experienced staff with other local planning authorities within the SE of England and often wider afield.

**Reporting Mechanism**

Planning Modernisation Board  
Planning Services Management Team

Staff Personal Development Plans