

NOTICE OF MOTION
CONSERVATIVE GROUP
PLANNING REFORM

“This Council recognises that the ongoing problems in providing an efficient and effective planning service risk damaging relations with residents, businesses and potential investors in the city. This Council therefore, requests that the Policy & Resources Committee establishes a fundamental review of how the service is provided, looking at all potential options for its future management.”

Proposed by: Councillor C. Theobald Seconded by: Councillor Wealls

Supported by: Councillors Simson, Peltzer Dunn, Brown, A. Norman, K. Norman, Taylor, Cobb, C. Theobald, Mears, Lewry, Bell, Nemeth, Janio, Barnett, Bennett, Miller and Wares.

Supporting information:

The Development Management Update sent to all councillors on 22nd July this year by the Planning and Building Control Applications Manager outlined some emergency measures being introduced which severely restrict the service to be provided to its customers – Brighton & Hove’s residents and businesses from both within and outside the city. These included scrapping both face to face appointments and giving residents and businesses pre-application advice. We believe that these measures, whilst clearly well-intentioned, are symptomatic of some fundamental problems within the planning service. These problems have been apparent for the last few years and can only be addressed properly by carrying out a fundamental review of the service. The review should learn from other councils that operate alternative service delivery models for their planning function. A key part of the Council’s review should include the advice of Planning Minister, Brandon Lewis MP, who recently told the Communities and Local Government Select Committee that councils could do “a lot more” to cut costs and increase efficiency in planning. He said: “Both economically and in terms of dealing with good planning, I think local authorities can go a lot further with shared management and the shared delivery of planning [departments], and potentially using the private sector as well.” Mr Lewis also said there was “work to do” to get every council to view planning as an “absolutely vital part of the local authority” which drives economic growth and increases income.