

Planning Services

Service Delivery Plan 2022-2023

Overview of the service

Activities of the Planning Service generally stem from legislative requirements, however close working with other internal departments is essential to providing a comprehensive service to our customers. We also work closely with a number of external clients such as the Local Highways Authority, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England as well as town and parish councils.

It is important that the Planning Service maintains a strong customer focus to the varied range and number of customers that the service has to manage. The range of customers accessing our service includes; applicants, architects/agents, developers, neighbours and community groups as well as internal and external colleagues and consultees.

Planning applications should be determined in accordance with adopted local and national planning policies. The Planning Service operates in the public interest and its main purpose is to facilitate sustainable development throughout the District. Place making is an important objective for the team, alongside the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment. Close working with internal and external bodies forms an important part of the planning process to ensure the service functions in an efficient and transparent manner.

Cost of service

The Planning Service is one that generates an income for the Council with planning applications fees being set by National Government and pre-application fees being set by the local planning authority. The budgeted income for 2022/23 from planning applications and pre-application advice is £1,015,884 and £58,561 respectively. The level of income received to date from 1 April 2021 – 28 February 2022 for planning applications £1,152,161 and pre-application advice is £40,423. The net income for the planning service is £106,599.

In the year 2021-22 (01/04/2021 – 18/02/2022) the Planning Service dealt with a total of 2010 valid applications, the breakdown of which is given below:

Majors	Minors	Others (includes householders, listed buildings, adverts, conditions, amendments, certificate of lawfulness, prior notifications)	Trees
55	359	1061	346

Staffing information

The Planning Service includes a number of functions. The team consists of a total of 26.6 full time equivalent (FTE) staff members. The team is broken into a number of different sections that all fall under the remit of the Planning Manager. The Planning Team consists of Planning Team Leaders, Senior Planning Officers, Planning Officers and a Planning Assistant.

The team also incorporates other staff and statutory functions; including Conservation Officer, Tree Officer, Enforcement Officers and the Planning Support Team. The structure of the team is outlined below with a summary of each function and staffing levels.

Support Team

The Support Team consists of 9.2 FTE staff members and they are the point of receipt for planning, tree and other applications. They check whether all the information submitted is correct through the validation process. They provide support to officers throughout the planning process as well as appeals, conservation, trees and enforcement and being the front face of the Council's general enquiries service.

Planning Officers

There are 3 FT Planning Team Leaders responsible for 2.8 FT Senior Planning Officers and 5 FTE Planning Officers and 1 Planning Assistant. They are responsible for managing planning applications. Their role involves giving pre-application advice, carrying out site visits, considering planning applications, determining applications, presenting to committee, defending appeals and providing specialist advice to customers.

Conservation Officer

The Council employs 1 FT Conservation Officer who is responsible for providing specialist advice on the historic built environment. It is their responsibility to secure the preservation and enhancement of East Cambridgeshire's rich and diverse heritage. They manage a case load of applications affecting this historic environment, comment on planning applications, provide pre-application advice and guidance to owners, applicants and agents as well as contributing to the production of local guidance and policy.

Trees Officers

There is 1 FT Trees Officer who is responsible for providing specialist advice on tree related enquiries. They manage a case load of tree works applications, comment on planning applications, serve Tree Preservation Orders, investigate unauthorised works and provide advice and guidance to owners. They also manage the Council's Voluntary Tree Warden Scheme.

Enforcement Team

The Enforcement Team consists; 2.6 FTE officers who are responsible for investigating complaints about unauthorised development and taking action where required. The provision of an enforcement service is a statutory function of the Local Planning Authority; however the taking of enforcement action is at the discretion of the local authority. The team are also responsible for monitoring development to ensure that it complies with what has been approved as well as dealing with high hedges complaints. They also offer advice to officers on enforcement proceedings as required, working in accordance with the Corporate Enforcement Policy and Local Enforcement Plan.

Forward planning for Councillors

Proposed date of decision	Item	Service Area	Committee
First Wednesday of every month	Planning Committee	Planning	Planning
TBC	Member Training	Planning	

Strategy map- 2022/2023



Commitments towards our Vision

Service Delivery Plan-Planning Services



Performance Measure	Link to Corporate Plan Priority	Target and reporting timescale (i.e. 6 monthly or annually)	Baseline from previous year/output from previous year	Owner and co-owners
To deliver statutory functions within specified timescales and within budget constraints	Sound Financial Management	90% of major applications determined within 13 weeks (or within an agreed timescale)	100% 46 out of 46 applications on time	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Andrew Phillips – Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass – Planning Team Leader Christopher Partrick – Conservation Officer All Planning Officers (including Seniors and Assistant)
	Housing	80% of minor applications to be determined within 8 weeks (or within an agreed timescale)	95% 390 out of 409 applications on time	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Andrew Phillips – Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass – Planning Team Leader Christopher Partrick – Conservation Officer All Planning Officers (including Seniors and Assistant)
	Cleaner, Greener East Cambridgeshire	90% of householder applications determined within 8 weeks (or within an agreed timescale)	99% 402 out of 406 applications on time	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Services Manager Andrew Phillips – Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass – Planning Team Leader Christopher Partrick – Conservation Officer All Planning Officers (including Seniors and Assistant)
		90% of all other applications to be determined within statutory timescales (or within an agreed timescale)	98% 116 out of 119 applications on time	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Andrew Phillips – Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass – Planning Team Leader Christopher Partrick – Conservation Officer All Planning Officers (including Seniors and Assistant)
		100% of Tree Preservation Order applications and Conservation Area Notices (trees) to be determined within statutory timescales.	100% 360 applications on time	Kevin Drane - Trees Officer Rebecca Saunt - Planning Manager
		100% of planning applications determined within 26 weeks of validation unless a planning performance agreement or extension of time has been agreed.	99.8% (1028 out of 1030 decisions)	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Andrew Phillips – Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass – Planning Team Leader Christopher Partrick – Conservation Officer All Planning Officers (including Seniors and Assistant)
		75% of planning applications validated within 5 working days.	69% (1406 out of 2043 applications)	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Lucy Flintham- Office Team Leader Sarah Parisi- Senior Support Officer All Support Team Members

Performance Measure	Link to Corporate Plan Priority	Target and reporting timescale (i.e. 6 monthly or annually)	Baseline from previous year/output from previous year	Owner and co-owners
		75% of discharge of condition applications determined within 8 weeks unless an extension of time has been agreed.	72.5% (285 out of 393 discharge applications on time)	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Andrew Phillips – Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass – Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader Christopher Partrick – Conservation Officer All Planning Officers (including Seniors and Assistant)
		To respond to all National Strategic Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) in accordance with the timeframe set by the Planning Inspectorate/process. Any NSIP that are within the district the case officer will seek a Planning Performance Agreement with the developer in order to recover reasonable costs while providing a comprehensive response back to the Inspectorate.	New Target	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Andrew Phillips – Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass – Planning Team Leader All Senior Planning Officer
		Implementation of further electronic working processes and procedures within 1 year – to include emailing decision notices and correspondence	Working files being weeded once decision is issued to remove information stored on document management system. Begun initial contact with Parishes to find out what they do with the information we provide for them. Working on customer templates to email correspondence where they have provided email addresses.	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Lucy Flintham – Office Team Leader Sarah Parisi – Senior Support Officer
To take a proactive approach to enhancing and improving the places in which people live: balancing economic, environmental and social needs	Housing	Continue work on the Cambridgeshire Local Heritage Project (CLHP), within the next year:	New Target	Christopher Partrick – Conservation Officer Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager
	Cleaner, Greener, East Cambridgeshire Improving Transport Social and Community Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer of 2017 Buildings of Local Interest Register to Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (CHER) website Extend to cover the remainder of the district Formulate and agree scheme of delegation for additions/deletions to the CHER Agree amendment to SLA to secure CLHP legacy 		
		To help facilitate the successful delivery of North Ely through the planning process	Care Home now part occupied. School occupied up to Year 5 (currently 2-form entry). Ongoing work with Redrow and Hopkins on discharge	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader

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			of conditions. Hopkins and Redrow developments part occupied. Pre-application discussions continuing. 2 Deed of variations in relation to the Sports Pitches and Extra Care Facility, and affordable housing approved to facilitate future phases.	
		<p>To work proactively with any Enterprise Zone within the district to bring forward appropriate development in order to provide a range of jobs to the district in a timely manner. Biannual meetings between the Enterprise Zone and a Planning Team Leader (as well as other relevant professionals) in order to mitigate problems and find solutions to significant problems at the earliest opportunity. Annual meeting with Planning Manager and Enterprise Zone to cover any strategic problems or concerns.</p>	<p>Lancaster Way only Enterprise Zone.</p> <p>Planning Team Leader met with the Lancaster Way Project Group Meeting every 3 months.</p> <p>Planning Team Leader and the Planning Manager have worked with the Infrastructure and Strategy Manager and Director (Commercial) with the developer to try and overcome a highway capacity problem on the site and met on a regular basis to discuss applications.</p> <p>Applications dealt with as a priority.</p>	<p>Rebecca Saunt - Planning Manager Andrew Phillips - Planning Team Leader</p>
		<p>To meet with the Lead Local Flood Authority, Highways, Anglian Water and other key stakeholders on a quarterly basis to increase the level of service we are able to provide to our customers.</p>	<p>Carried out on a monthly basis with Anglian Water and LLFA and weekly basis with highways</p>	<p>Rebecca Saunt - Planning Manager Andrew Phillips - Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass - Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader</p>
<p>Undertake activities which help to mitigate/adapt to climate change</p>	<p>Cleaner, Greener East Cambridgeshire</p>	<p>To contribute to the implementation of the Council's Climate and Environment Action Plan</p>		<p>Cross-council activity</p>

Performance Measure	Link to Corporate Plan Priority	Target and reporting timescale (i.e. 6 monthly or annually)	Baseline from previous year/output from previous year	Owner and co-owners
To improve the quality of the built & natural environment throughout the district	Housing Cleaner, Greener East Cambridgeshire	Undertake review & update Design Guide SPD for adoption within 1 year	Officers reviewed the first draft and passed comments to Strategic Planning to progress with the drafting of the SPD	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Christopher Partrick – Conservation Officer Andrew Phillips- Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass- Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader Kevin Drane - Trees Officer All Planning Officers (including Seniors and Assistant)
		Monitor 20% of approved tree works	9% - 36 inspections out of 80 needed	Kevin Drane - Trees Officer Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager
		Annual update to Tree Strategy	Update not completed due to retirement of Senior Tree Officer	Kevin Drane – Trees Officer Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager
		80% of enforcement complaints to have preliminary investigation completed within 10 working days of receipt and the complainant contacted within 15 working days to advise of findings	100% 100%	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Juleen Roman – Planning Enforcement Team Leader All Enforcement Officers
		80% of Building Control applications received monitored for pre-commencement condition compliance within 2 months. Monitor the condition compliance of one development per month to identify and resolve issues and improve customer understanding. NB. Wording amended to allow target to be easily measurable and include condition compliance.	Not measurable for 2019/20 due to work processes, will be measurable for 2020/21. Total of 114 applications actively monitored of 476 commencements recorded in BC	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Juleen Roman – Planning Enforcement Team Leader Sarah Parisi – Senior Planning Support Officer Lucy Flintham – Office Team Leader All Enforcement Officers
		Undertake visits during works to listed buildings for 25% of approved consents	Target achieved	Christopher Partrick - Conservation Officer Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager
		Improve customer information in relation to advertising, focussing on Conservation Areas in particular.	New Target	Juleen Roman – Enforcement Team Leader Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager All Enforcement Officers Christopher Partrick – Conservation Officer
		Investigation and implementation of a programme of biodiversity net gain for development sites in light of the Government's focus (NPPF, the publication of "A Green Future" and the Environment Bill 2021) and the Council's adopted Natural Environment SPD within 1 year. NB: Target wording amended to reflect adoption of Natural Environment SPD and Environment Bill. Awaiting secondary legislation from the Secretary of State in relation to the Environment Bill	Two Seminars attended to highlight areas to concentrate on. This has fed into the new Natural Environment SPD (currently out for consultation) which will provide the policy structure to enable officers to insist on net gains within planning proposals.	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Andrew Phillips- Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass- Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader Kevin Drane - Trees Officer All Planning Officers (including Seniors and Assistant)

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		Review and update our Standard Conditions and Reasons Manual within 1 year to ensure they meet the 6 tests set out in paragraph 56 of the NPPF, 2021 and cover all necessary aspects required by legislation/policy	New Target	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Andrew Phillips- Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass- Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader Christopher Partrick – Conservation Officer Kevin Drane - Trees Officer All Planning Officers (including Seniors and Assistant)
		Assist and attend meetings in the East Anglian Great Crested Newts District Level Licencing (DDL) Steering Group to provide local knowledge and obtain updates on the use of DLL within our district.	New Target	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Catherine Looper – Senior Planning Officer Molly Hood – Planning Officer
To Improve staff motivation, participation and involvement in service provision and encourage staff development	Sound Financial Management	20 hrs of CPD to be identified and to be provided annually (pro-rata for part time positions). Following attendance of courses/seminars staff to feedback and discuss with the team at the next team meeting. NB. Target updated to include feedback	685 hours completed by 25 members of staff resulting in 28.54 hrs/person	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager All Officers
Ensure that the Council's corporate risks are managed effectively and mitigations are put in place to reduce impact		To regularly review higher level corporate risks, including: Judicial review- the decision making process has not been carried out lawfully, which could lead to a financial risk on the Authority and judicial review by aggrieved party	No Judicial Reviews	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager
To provide excellent customer services at all times and to improve communication with all customers	Sound Financial Management Housing	Proactively engage with Parish Councils and Agents through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish meetings (to attend at least one meeting per Parish request, per year) and e-newsletters (x 2 a year) Agent Forums/Newsletters (x 2 a year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parish meetings attended and newsletter produced 2 Agent forums and newsletter completed Breakfast meeting postponed due to PURDAH and elections 	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Andrew Phillips – Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass – Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader Lucy Flintham – Office Team Leader Sarah Parisi – Senior Planning Support Officer Kevin Drane - Trees Officer Christopher Partrick - Conservation Officer All Planning Officers (including Seniors and Assistant)
		Produce new guidance/general information leaflets and review current leaflets and publish a minimum of 2 on website every 6 months	Reviewed, amended and published leaflet on Trees FAQ – Living with Trees and Your Planning Services: Frequently Asked Questions	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Christopher Partrick - Conservation Officer Andrew Phillips – Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass – Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader Kevin Drane - Trees Officer All Planning Officers (including Seniors and Assistant)

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		<p>Use of Twitter to support the planning process and keep customers and the general public up to date with committee meeting information, planning information, the release of new SPD's and appeal decisions.</p> <p>NB Target amended to be more specific about the use of Twitter.</p>	Twitter reported all validated and decided applications.	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Gemma Driver – Planning Officer Molly Hood – Planning Officer
		Produce customer enquiry forms to help capture all of the relevant information required when a customer contacts Planning. This will help officers look into general enquiries straight away rather than having to follow-up with requests for further information. Request feedback from officers yearly and update forms to include any additional content that would be useful in order to build and improve on this.	New Target	Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager Andrew Phillips – Planning Team Leader Barbara Greengrass – Planning Team Leader Angela Briggs – Planning Team Leader All Planning Officers (including Seniors and Assistant) All Support Team Members
Undertake activities which help to mitigate / adapt to climate change	Cleaner, Greener East Cambridgeshire	To contribute to the implementation of the Council's Climate and Environment Action Plan		Cross-council activity