

Planning Services

Service Delivery Plan 2017-2018

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 2017/18 from planning applications and pre-application advice is £745,166 and £49,290 respectively. The level of income received to date from April 2016 – January 2017 is £851,677. The net expenditure for the planning service is -£108,816.

In the year 2016-17 (01/04/2016-31/01/2017) the Planning Service dealt with a total of 1639 applications, the breakdown of which is given below:

Majors	Minors	Others (includes householders, listed buildings, adverts, conditions, amendments, certificate of lawfulness, prior notifications)	Trees
40	426	839	334

Staffing information

The Planning Service includes a number of functions. The team consists of a total of 24.1 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 Senior Planning Officers and Planning Officers.

The team also incorporates other staff and statutory functions; including Conservation, Tree

Officers, Enforcement 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 9.1 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 conservation, trees and enforcement and being the front face of the Council's general enquiries service.

Planning Officers

There are 3 FT Senior Planning Officers responsible for 5 FTE Planning Officers. A new full time Planning Assistant post is also currently being recruited to. 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 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 are 2 FT Trees Officers that are 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 tree stock and planting programme as well as the Council's Voluntary Tree Warden Scheme.

Enforcement Team

The Enforcement Team consists; 2 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	Service Delivery Champion	Committee
First Wednesday of every month	Planning Committee	Planning	Cllr Lis Every	Planning
TBC	Member Training	Planning	Cllr Lis Every	

Strategy map- 2017/2018



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	Maintain sound finances. Improve systems and practices	80% of major applications determined within 13 weeks (or within an agreed timescale) N.B this is an increase of 10% from last years' target	100%	Rebecca Saunt- Planning Services Manager Andrew Phillips- Senior Planning Officer Barbara Greengrass- Senior Planning Officer Julie Barrow- Senior Planning Officer All Planning Officers and Conservation Officer
		80% of minor applications to be determined within 8 weeks (or within an agreed timescale) N.B this an increase of 5% from last years' target	92%	Rebecca Saunt- Planning Services Manager Andrew Phillips- Senior Planning Officer Barbara Greengrass- Senior Planning Officer Julie Barrow- Senior Planning Officer All Planning Officers and Conservation Officer
		90% of householder applications determined within 8 weeks (or within an agreed timescale)	97%	Rebecca Saunt- Planning Services Manager Andrew Phillips- Senior Planning Officer Barbara Greengrass- Senior Planning Officer Julie Barrow- Senior Planning Officer All Planning Officers and Conservation Officer
		90% of all other applications to be determined within statutory timescales (or within an agreed timescale)	90%	Rebecca Saunt- Planning Services Manager Andrew Phillips- Senior Planning Officer Barbara Greengrass- Senior Planning Officer Julie Barrow- Senior Planning Officer All Planning Officers and Conservation Officer
		100% of Tree Preservation Order applications and Conservation Area Notices (trees) to be determined within statutory timescales.	100%	Cathy White- Senior Trees Officer Neil Horsewell- Trees Officer Rebecca Saunt - Planning Services Manager
		100% of planning applications determined within 26 weeks of validation unless a planning performance agreement or extension of time has been agreed.	99.5%	Rebecca Saunt- Planning Services Manager Andrew Phillips- Senior Planning Officer Barbara Greengrass- Senior Planning Officer Julie Barrow- Senior Planning Officer All Planning Officers and Conservation Officer
		90% of planning applications validated within 5 working days.	71%	Lucy Flintham- Office Supervisor Rebecca Saunt- Planning Services Manager Sarah Parisi- Senior Support Officer All Support Team Members
		90% of discharge of condition applications determined within 8 weeks unless an extension of time has been agreed.	61%	Rebecca Saunt- Planning Services Manager Andrew Phillips- Senior Planning Officer Julie Barrow- Senior Planning Officer Barbara Greengrass- Senior Planning Officer All Planning Officers and Conservation Officer

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
		10% increase in planning and pre-application fees from current budget This year we have budgeted to bring in: £745,166 from planning fees- 10% increase would be £7451 £49,290 from pre-app fees- 10% increase would be £4,929	Planning 47% Pre-app 93% Equating to; Pre-app £56,117 Planning £823,596 We budgeted in 16/17 to bring in £559,273 for planning and £29,000 for pre-app for the whole financial year.	Rebecca Saunt- Planning Services Manager Andrew Phillips- Senior Planning Officer Julie Barrow- Senior Planning Officer Barbara Greengrass- Senior Planning Officer All Planning Officers and Conservation Officer
		Introduction of fees for listed building advice and retaining a percentage of the fee for invalid applications within 6 months	n/a	Rebecca Saunt- Planning Services Manager Lucy Flintham- Office Supervisor Lorraine Brown – Conservation Officer
		Develop a toolkit based upon the CABE building for life criteria as part of Design Guide review within 12 months.	Outstanding	Rebecca Saunt- Planning Services Manager Lorraine Brown- Conservation Officer Andrew Phillips- Senior Planning Officer Julie Barrow- Senior Planning Officer Barbara Greengrass- Senior Planning Officer
To take a proactive approach to enhancing and improving the places in which people live: balancing economic, environmental and social needs	Safe, vibrant and inclusive communities. Community sustainability	Carry out a scoping exercise for establishing Design Review panel to assess completed development schemes within 1 year.	Outstanding	Rebecca Saunt- Planning Services Manager Lorraine Brown- Conservation Officer Andrew Phillips- Senior Planning Officer Julie Barrow- Senior Planning Officer Barbara Greengrass- Senior Planning Officer
		To help facilitate the successful delivery of North Ely through the planning process	The LPA has now received the first reserved matters application from a residential house builder on the Endurance Estate application. The discharge of condition applications for this site which have been received have been determined.	Rebecca Saunt- Planning Services Officer Julie Barrow- Senior Planning Officer

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
			There are also ongoing discussions/meetings with the Church Commissioners.	
		To help facilitate the successful delivery of the leisure centre through the planning process	Approval has been granted for the reserved matters application and there has been a number of ongoing meetings and discharge of condition applications received.	Rebecca Saunt
		To meet with the Police, Fire Brigade, Lead Local Flood Authority and other key stakeholders on a quarterly basis to increase the level of service we are able to provide to our customers.	n/a	Rebecca Saunt Barbara Greengrass Julie Barrow Andrew Phillips
To improve the quality of the built & natural environment throughout the district	Clean, green and attractive place	Undertake review & update Design Guide SPD for adoption within 12 months	Ongoing	Rebecca Saunt Lorraine Brown Andrew Phillips Barbara Greengrass Julie Barrow Cathy White All Planning Officers and Tree Officers
		Monitor 20% of approved tree works	20% 62 inspections	Cathy White Rebecca Saunt
		Carry out scoping exercise for establishing biennial district Design Awards within 12 months	Outstanding	Rebecca Saunt Lorraine Brown Andrew Phillips Julie Barrow Barbara Greengrass
		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 Julie Barrow All Enforcement Officers
		Undertake visits during works to listed buildings for 25% of approved consents N.B. this is an increase from last years' target.	30%	Lorraine Brown Rebecca Saunt
		Develop a Tree Strategy within 12 months to link with the new Local Plan	n/a	Cathy White Neil Horsewell

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
				Rebecca Saunt
		Proactively identify unauthorised adverts and satellite dishes in Soham within 6 months	n/a	Julie Barrow Rebecca Saunt All Enforcement Officer
		Proactively identify unauthorised adverts and satellite dishes in Ely within 12 months.	n/a	Julie Barrow Rebecca Saunt All Enforcement Officer
To Improve staff motivation, participation and involvement in service provision and encourage staff development	Be an excellent employer	20 hrs of CPD to be identified and to be provided annually	100%	Rebecca Saunt All Officers
		Hold quarterly working party meetings to look at IT processes and systems for planning and enforcement	100%	Rebecca Saunt Andrew Phillips Barbara Greengrass Julie Barrow Lucy Flintham Cathy White Lorraine Brown Gareth Pritchard Oli Haydon
		Meet quarterly with the Planning Service Delivery Champion	100%	Rebecca Saunt
		Introduce information videos on our website for a minimum of 3 topics	Outstanding	Rebecca Saunt Andrew Phillips Barbara Greengrass Julie Barrow Oli Haydon
To provide excellent customer services at all times and to improve communication with all customers	Customers are at the heart of everything we do	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 4 a year) Agent Forums/Newsletters At least one evening/breakfast agents meeting a year 	n/a	Rebecca Saunt Lucy Flintham Sarah Parisi Julie Barrow Andrew Phillips Barbara Greengrass Lorraine Brown All Planning Officers
		Produce new guidance/general information leaflets and review current leaflets and publish a minimum of 2 on website every 6 months	100%	Rebecca Saunt Lorraine Brown Andrew Phillips Barbara Greengrass Julie Barrow Cathy White
		Use feedback from customer surveys to inform improvements in the planning service	n/a	Rebecca Saunt Lucy Flintham Lorraine Brown
		Expand further the use of social media (Facebook and Twitter) into the planning service to support the planning process and keep customers and the general public up to date with news and information.	n/a	Rebecca Saunt Gareth Pritchard Oli Haydon