

Business Plan

Head of Planning – Planning & Building Control

Head of Service: Peter Babb

Service Summary

Planning & Building Control is primarily a fee earning statutory service that provides a development control and building regulations service to a wide range of customers. Other activities include preparation of the statutory development plan, development advice, provision of an efficient land charges service, energy management, control of demolitions, dealing with dangerous and or derelict buildings, dealing with sporting and major public events and a range of associated activities.

The service links strongly with policies, initiatives and regulations relating to economic development and regeneration, for example, quality design, access for disabled people, safety & security, environmental sustainability, conservation, removal of derelict structures and support to communities in the implementation of area/neighbourhood initiatives, including a joined up approach to enforcement.

Headline Priorities

- To improve customer service.
- To develop a stronger and more robust performance management strategy.
- To develop a 'People Strategy' that enables the workforce to deliver current and proposed service improvement objectives.
- To maintain a high quality effective Building Regulation service.
- To maintain Development Control Performance.
- To ensure developments comply with principles in the Development Guide.
- To prepare the new statutory development plan in accordance with the Local Development Scheme.
- To develop and maintain an effective business model for the Local Land Charges Service.
- To consolidate and enhance planning and building control enforcement processes.
- To implement new staffing structures to create greater value for money.

Key Activities

- Implement new staffing structures to improve customer service through: consolidating application processing; development of information systems, performance management and independent quality assessments; and establishing a 'development team' approach.
- Continue to meet and exceed national development control targets and negotiate added value to schemes with validation through the introduction of a system for measuring outcomes against the Development Guide.

- Progress the Local Development Framework Core Strategy preparation through inclusive consultation and ensure integration with emerging initiatives for climate change.
- Develop a better understanding of the potential for high-density residential developments on brownfield sites, and their extent within and around the City Centre / Regional Centre, to contribute to housing growth and creating sustainable communities.
- Develop approaches to issues associated with the spread of student and 'transient' populations and their impact on neighbourhoods.
- Deliver higher quality development across the City to improve the character of neighbourhoods and improve 'liveability'.
- Work with Regeneration Teams to secure economic opportunities from development including those arising from the Airport for Wythenshawe.
- Deliver access to affordable housing through the Housing Choice Supplementary Planning Document & Planning Guidance, as part of the wider strategy.
- Implement any changes required in the business model for local land charges services.
- Integrate enhanced enforcement activity with other service areas to maximise effectiveness for citywide and locally developed strategies.

Key Challenges facing the service

- Inability to independently set planning application fees to help resource development control.
- Increased competition from private sector building control bodies and inability to promote higher environmental and other standards in all developments.
- Potential loss of Housing & Planning Delivery Grant (the successor to Planning Delivery Grant) if targets are not met.
- Increased concerns of residents about major developments.
- Impact of Planning White Paper proposals on the householder consent regime.
- Inability to retain and recruit staff, losing the required levels of expertise and experience.

Workforce priorities to support the delivery of the service

- Address issues relating to recruitment and retention of staff.
- Continued development of the Planning Enforcement Team including the addition of Building Control support.
- Develop training and development programmes to ensure staff have the level of skills to deal with increasing complexity of development schemes and changes to legislation.
- Implement Service Improvement Project outcomes to consolidate the front of house customer service team and business support to respond to customer needs and expectations.
- Enhance staff IT skills in accordance with new staffing requirements.

