

RESPONSE TO TASK & FINISH GROUP ON PLANNING SYSTEM REVIEW REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLACES AND COMMUNITIES

**REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND PLANNING
DATE REPORT CONSIDERED AND DECIDED BY CABINET MEMBER: 22 JUNE 2012
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FINAL CALL IN DATE: 27 JUNE 2012
DATE DECISION TO BE IMPLEMENTED: 28 JUNE 2012**

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To approve a response to the report.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

THAT:

the responses as set out in Appendix 2 are approved.

Key Points Summary

- The Task and Finish Group has recently considered the operation of key constitutional elements of the Development Control system.
- It has made detailed recommendations on service delivery.
- The proposed responses will assist in future service delivery.

Alternative Options

- 1 The report requires the preparation of a detailed response. Clearly there can be a variety of ways in which each recommendation can be addressed.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Andrew Ashcroft,
Assistant Director – Economic, Environment and Cultural Services
on Tel: (01432) 383098

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 The report has provided useful guidance on service improvements and which complement and extend improvements already being implemented or planned for the future.

Introduction and Background

- 3 In January 2010 new constitutional provisions for development control functions were introduced. In July 2011 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered that it was timely for a scrutiny review to explore their effectiveness and to make recommendations with regard to future modifications/amendments.
- 4 The Task and Finish Group met between July 2011 and March 2012. In particular it carried out research, convened meetings and sought views from a range of stakeholders. Its report is reproduced at Appendix 1.
- 5 A summary of the recommendation is set out in Appendix 2, together with a series of proposed responses

Key Considerations

- 6 The report of the Task and Finish Group has usefully set out in recommendations for the fine-tuning of the arrangements that have been in place since January 2010. In particular the proposed recommendations seek to clarify operational issues that members have raised in recent years.

Community Impact

- 7 The acceptance of the recommended responses will have a largely neutral impact on the wider community. The high degree of public involvement and interest in the planning process will continue and implementation of the recommendations are designed to enhance public confidence in the planning process. The ability of local members to engage in the planning process will be consolidated and extended. The proposals and recommendations are consistent with the Localism Act.

Equality and Human Rights

- 8 The report has no Equality and Human Rights implications.

Financial Implications

- 9 The implications of the recommendation are likely to be cost neutral.
- 10 A key part of the success of the 2010 arrangements has been the streamlining of the committee arrangements and the associated enhancement of member/officer contact in the planning arena.

Legal Implications

- 11 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

- 12 Appropriate changes will need to be made to the Constitution to give effect to the proposed changes.

Risk Management

- 13 The Planning Service will always have a high profile. This will continue as development proceeds following the agreement of future policies in the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework.
- 14 The effective operation of the planning system also has a significant impact on the wider reputation of the Council. The package of measures as new recommended to Cabinet will help to ensure that the Council has a development control service in which members are fully and properly engaged, and able to act as effective community champions.

Consultees

- 15 The Task and Finish Group engaged with Members and other key stakeholders and the formulation of their recommendations.

Appendices

- 16 Appendix 1 – Report of Task and Finish Group.
Appendix 2 – Recommendations and Proposed Action.

Background Papers

- None identified.