

WHITE PAPER: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Head of Service:	Viv Evans, Head of Planning
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1: EEBC response to the White Paper: Planning for the Future

Summary

To respond to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) published Planning for the Future White Paper on 6 August 2020.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Note and approve the draft response to the government's White Paper "Planning for the Future".**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The White Paper: Planning for the future was published on 6 August 2020 for a 12 week consultation to the 29 October 2020. Comments are invited on the numerous proposals that are likely to have significant impact on the Council's Planning service and it is important that the Council responds accordingly outlining its concerns.

2 Background

- 2.1 The White Paper comprises a number of proposals set out under five main headline proposals, these are summarised in paragraph 1.15 to 1.20 in the White paper. Under the five headline proposals are a number of detailed proposals, these are:

1. To streamline the planning process with more democracy taking place more effectively at the plan making stage, and replacing the entire corpus of plan-making law in England.
 - Simplifying the role of Local Plans with rules rather than general policies for development

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- Local Plans to categorise land into three categories-1.growth, 2.renewal and 3.protected.
 - Local councils re-invent the ambition, depth and breadth with which they engage with communities
 - Local Plans to deliver nationally-determined, binding housing requirement
 - Local Plans to be subject to a single statutory “sustainable development” test
 - Local Plans to be visual and map-based, standardised, based on the latest digital technology, and supported by a new standard template
 - Local authorities and the Planning Inspectorate will be required through legislation to meet a statutory timetable (of no more than 30 months in total)
 - Decision-making would be faster and more certain, with statutory deadlines
 - enforcement powers and sanctions strengthened with the move to a rule based system
 - Government commitment to a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support the implementation of the reforms
2. Radical, digital-first approach to modernise the planning process. This means moving from a process based on documents to a process driven by data.
- Supporting local planning authorities to use digital tools to support a new civic engagement process for local plans and decision-making
 - Insist local plans are built on standardised, digitally consumable rules and data
 - Standardise, and make openly and digitally accessible, other critical datasets that the planning system relies on
 - Work with tech companies and local authorities to modernise the software used for making and case-managing a planning application
3. To bring a new focus on design and sustainability

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- Ensure the planning system supports efforts to combat climate change and maximises environmental benefits
 - Facilitate ambitious improvements in the energy efficiency standards for buildings
 - Ask for beauty where new development should be beautiful, and create a 'net gain' not just 'no net harm',
 - introduction of a fast-track for beauty
 - Introduce a quicker, simpler framework for assessing environmental impacts and enhancement opportunities
 - Expect design guidance and codes to be prepared locally and to be based on genuine community involvement
 - Establish a new body to support the delivery of design codes in every part of the country
 - Ensure that each local planning authority has a chief officer for design and place-making,
 - Updating Homes England's strategic objectives to give greater emphasis to delivering beautiful places
 - Continue to protect our historic buildings and areas while ensuring the consent framework.
4. To improve infrastructure delivery in all parts of the country and ensure developers play their part,
- The Community Infrastructure Levy and the current system of planning obligations will be reformed as a nationally-set value-based flat rate charge ('the Infrastructure Levy').
 - affordable housing to be part of the levy
 - local authorities to determine how developer contributions are used
 - extending the scope of the consolidated Infrastructure Levy and remove exemptions from it
5. To ensure more land is available for the homes and development people and communities need, and to support renewal of our town and city centres.
- A new nationally-determined, binding housing requirement

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- To provide better information to local communities, to promote competition amongst developers, and to assist SMEs and new entrants to the sector,
- Ensure publicly-owned land and public investment in development supports thriving places

2.2 The white paper is published with 26 questions which the government is inviting views on. The Council's draft response is to be set out in Appendix 1

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

3.1 Impact Assessment

3.1.1 The proposed changes are likely to have significant impact on the Council's Local Plan programme and wider day to day planning decisions, it is important that the Council responds accordingly outlining its concerns.

3.2 Crime & Disorder

3.2.1 None arising from this report

3.3 Safeguarding

3.3.1 None arising from this report

3.4 Dependencies

3.4.1 None arising from this report

3.5 Other

3.5.1 None arising from this report

4 Financial Implications

4.1 The proposed changes are likely to have significant impact on the Council's Local Plan programme and day to day planning decisions. The proposals outline significant reforms in the planning system which is likely result in unexpected additional workload that will affect internal and external resources, including the appointment of new roles e.g a chief officer of design and costs associated with new digitised systems. Officers will closely monitor proposals and consider the impacts.

4.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** Resourcing and financial implications will need to be considered as they arise.

5 Legal Implications

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- 5.1 None arising from the contents of this report.
- 5.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

6 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 6.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- 6.2 Green and Vibrant, Safe and Well, Cultural and Creative, Opportunity and Prosperity, Smart and Connected, Effective Council
- 6.3 The Planning service, including the Local Plan and day to day planning decisions are fundamental towards delivering the Council's Visions and Objectives identified in the Four Year Plan. The White Paper reforms will have a significant impact.
- 6.4 **Service Plans:** The matter is not included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 6.5 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None arising from the contents of this report
- 6.6 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None arising from the contents of this report
- 6.7 **Partnerships:** None arising from the contents of this report

7 Background papers

- 7.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- None

Other papers:

- MHCLG [White Paper: Planning for the Future](#) published on the Government's website on 6 August 2020.