

Planning Service Improvements

November 2021

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Striving for excellence



Introduction

- We engaged with Regeneration and Economic Development Scrutiny Panel back in March 2021 – very useful feedback
- This fed in to production of Planning Service Plan 21/22 along with input of officers from across the service
- This presentation summarises progress since March, areas of challenge and next steps

The Planning Service (March 2021)

PLANNING SERVICE
Head of Planning
Vincent Lacovara

DEVELOPMENT
MANAGEMENT
Head of Service
Andy Higham

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND
DESIGN
Head of Service
Helen Murch

Planning
Decisions
North

Planning
Decisions
South

Special
Projects

Strategic
Applications

Enforcement,
Appeals and
Commercial
Nuisance

Building
Control

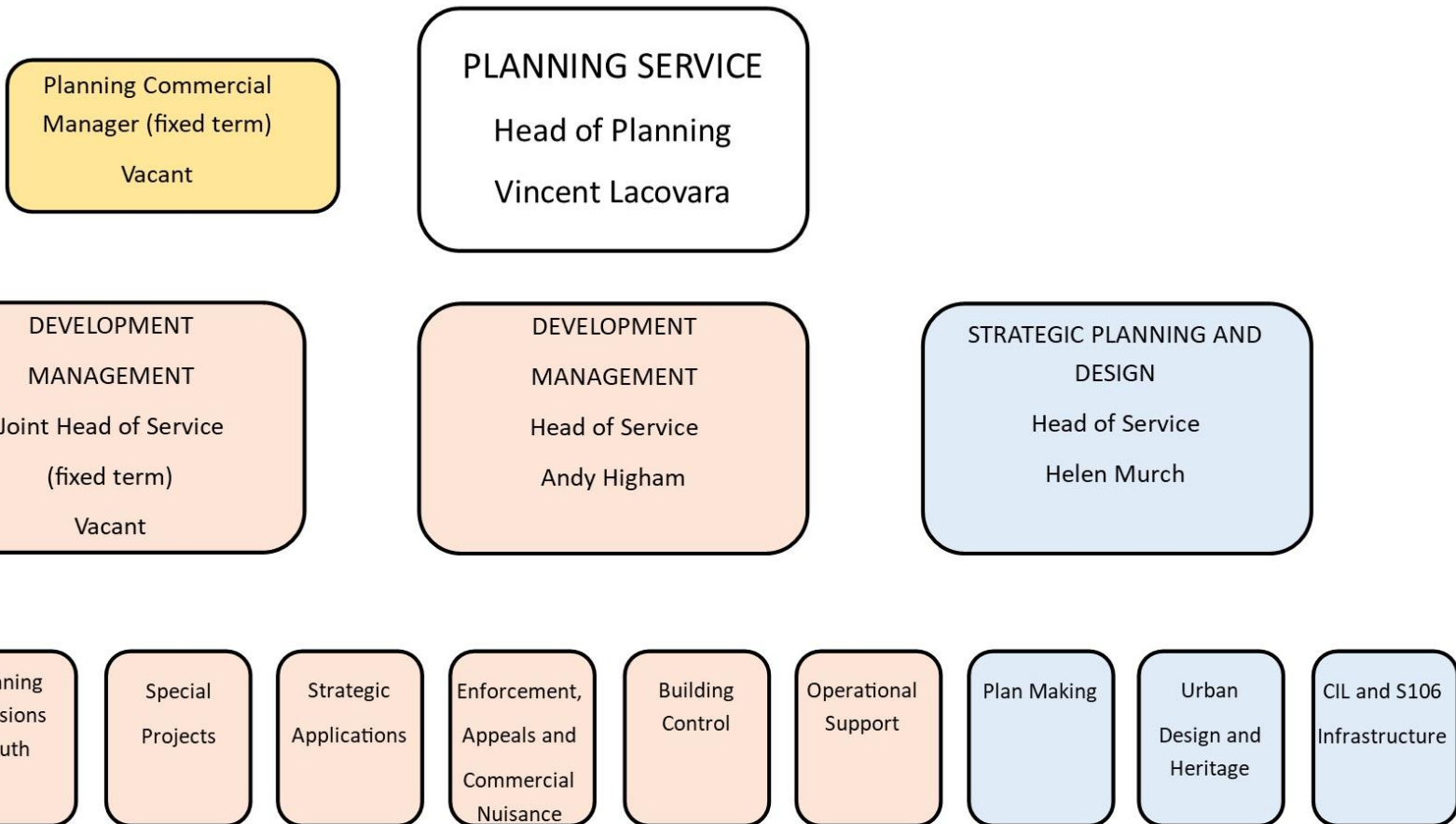
Operational
Support

Plan Making

Urban
Design and
Heritage

CIL and S106
Infrastructure

The Planning Service (November 2021)



It's about Placemaking – from strategy to delivery



Challenges (March)

- Perception and image of the service
- Customer service and member engagement including communications, responsiveness and accessibility
- Housing Delivery Test results
- There will always be some resistance to growth and development
- Enforcement – performance issues
- Impact of COVID on team wellbeing, working practices, capacity and financial position
- Service culture – continues to need to be developed
- Recruitment and retention
- Local Plan progress and adoption
- Government changes to the planning and building control systems
- Budget pressures
- Economic context and impact on development industry
- Performance on pre-applications and PPAs
- Sustaining recent performance improvements

Where we want to be

A service to be proud of

We want to be recognised as one of the best planning authorities in London; positively and proactively engaging with communities and stakeholders to enhance places and enable good growth.

We will have an up-to-date and joined up spatial planning framework; effective infrastructure planning; high performing development management, planning enforcement and building control functions and integrated specialist planning and design services

Service Improvement – key themes

- Communications – outward looking, joined up, engaging and responsive
- Culture and morale – positive, proactive collaborative
- Resources and capacity – team strength
- Team structure – clear and consistent
- Policies and processes - efficient and effective
- Performance management – getting the best out of people
- Learning and development – investing in our teams
- Technology – making the best use of tools
- Customer journey – joined up and easy to access
- Commercialisation – reducing costs/ generating income

Areas of focus

- Team culture, wellbeing and development
- Member engagement and communications on casework
- Customer service
- Planning Committee training programme
- Pre-application and PPA service
- Planning Enforcement
- Ongoing recruitment
- Commercial plan

Progress since March

Service-wide

- 21/22 Service Plan (including areas for service improvement) completed with input from members and officers
- Whole-service virtual events to support team culture and morale
- Gradual return to the Civic
- Commercial Plan developed in collaboration with the Commercial Team
- New Fixed Term Commercial Manager role created

Strategic Planning and Design

- Reg 18 Draft Local Plan and associated evidence base completed and approved for public consultation for 12 weeks over the summer
- CIL and S106 audit – progress on actions
- In house design services developed

Development Management

- New Fixed Term Joint Head of DM role created
- Sustained improvement in performance on determination of planning applications
- Additional capacity for Strategic Applications
- Technology – Uniform upgrade and progress on Enterprise for Enforcement
- Return to in-person Committee meetings
- More structured approach to PPAs / Strategic Applications
- Enforcement audit – progress on actions
- Consultation on Draft Planning Enforcement Plan
- Plan Drawing service ready for launch
- Building Control performing strongly

DM performance

Indicator
ENV142 % of valid planning applications registered within 5 working days of receipt
ENV142b % Pre-application advice given within 30 working days of registration of a valid enquiry
NI157a BV109a % MAJOR applications determined within target
NI157b BV109b % MINOR applications determined within target
NI157c BV109c % OTHER applications determined within target
ENV247 % 2 year rolling MAJOR applications determined within target
ENV247a % 2 year rolling MINOR applications determined within target
ENV247b % 2 year rolling MINOR & OTHER applications determined within target
ENV319 Undetermined applications validated over 6 months ago

Q2 2020/21	Q3 2020/21	Q4 2020/21	Q1 2021/22
Value	Value	Value	Value
94.4%	93.8%	96.9%	93.5%
74.1%	43.2%	57.1%	68%
100%	88.0%	84.6%	100%
91%	94.7%	84.4%	90.6%
96.2%	97.1%	96.9%	93.4%
84.2%	87.3%	89.6%	92.2%
81.2%	83.2%	86%	89.7%
84.3%	86%	89.3%	93%
370	371	362	381

Q2 2021/22		Annual Target 2021/22
Value	Target	
94.4%	90%	90%
78.9%	90%	90%
100%	90%	90%
96.2%	86%	86%
96.7%	88%	88%
95.5%	86%	86%
91.8%	85%	85%
94.1%	85%	85%
408		

New Challenges in 2021

- Housing Delivery Test results
- The 'Presumption In Favour' / the 'tilted balance' and implications for decision making on housing applications; including at Planning Committee
- Appeals and big Public Inquiries - implications
- Environment Act – implications for Planning Service (including skills and resources)
- Big government re-think on possible changes to the Planning System



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

August 2020



Coming soon

- New Joint Head of DM to start in early 2022
- Joint Head to lead on cross-cutting service improvements in DM
- Commercial Manager out to recruitment – role to assist optimise income to invest back in to service and to improve customer service
- Other roles across the service being advertised / to be advertised
- Additional capacity for Enforcement Team, Operational Support, Plan Making, CIL and Planning Decisions
- Refining approach to CIL and S106
- Apprentice roles across the Service
- Ongoing improvements to technology including customer interface

Discussion

- What has been your experience of the Planning Service since March?
- Are there other challenges that the service should be planning for?
- Are there any issues or opportunities that you would like us to address?