

Service Area Plan - Development Management and Building Control (CHDMBC)

Synopsis of report:

This report provides a summary of this year's Service Area Plan for Development Management & Building Control for approval. The full proposed Service Area Plans in the Council's standardised format can be found in Appendix A.

Recommendation(s):

- i) Members note and approve the 2023/24 Service Area Plans for Development Management and Building Control**

1 Context and background of report

- 1.1 The annual business planning cycle for 2023/24 commenced with each Corporate Head of Service submitting any planned activity for the next Financial Year which requires growth.
- 1.2 In addition, in conjunction with the relevant Service Chair and Chair of Member Working Party, priority areas arising from Corporate Strategies have been agreed for the 2023/24 MWP work programme. These form the majority of the Service area's planned activity for 2023/24.
- 1.3 Business cases for growth items have then been prepared either as outline or final business cases. The budget and all growth items were then agreed in February 2023 at the Council's annual budget setting meeting.
- 1.4 In addition to any growth bids, Service Area Plans have been further developed to include planned activity that does not require growth, a Mission Statement to document a narrative of the service area's current position and its direction of travel over the lifecycle of the Corporate Business Plan, and a summary of each of the teams that form the service area and their business as usual activity and key statistics.
- 1.5 To ensure a 'golden thread' between Service Area Plans and team and individual plans, Corporate Heads of Service will use the planned activity to set team and individual objectives for 23/24.
- 1.6 Any projects identified as part of planned activity will be added to the project portfolio for 2023/24 and progress monitored and reported on a Quarterly basis to Corporate Management Committee as per the project management methodology.
- 1.7 The final non-corporate Service Area Plans go to their relevant service committee for approval first. A final approval is then sought from Corporate Management Committee approving the Corporate Action Plan (which is an amalgamation of all the plans for the year). In addition, Corporate Management Committee is also asked to approve any business cases requiring General Fund growth because growth cannot be approved by a service committee with the exception of HRA expenditure up to £100,000 which can be approved by the Housing Committee. Any growth exceeding £250,000 will require the approval of full Council.

2 Report

- 2.1 The full DM&BC Service Area Plan can be found in Appendix A. A short summary is provided below.
- 2.2 The Council's Development Management and Building Control services are currently performing to a demonstrably high level. This is demonstrated by a high level of performance against national and local targets, outstanding appeal performance and low level of customer complaints.
- 2.3 Both services have delivered a number of key projects in recent years including process updates, system roll outs and service restructures. In 2023/24 it is intended to build upon this work and deliver service objectives and statutory services from these strong foundations that have been laid in recent years.
- 2.4 For Development Management the service remains in a key delivery phase delivering the Local Plan allocated sites, windfall sites and its normal planning service for householders in the Borough. This delivery is focused on quality, with the service looking to deliver good infrastructure rich communities where people wish to live and visit as well as good conditions for businesses to deliver and thrive. The service will look to maintain its high level of service and performance even with the continued increase in complex work expected over the coming years. Growth of half a post FTE was proposed and agreed in the budget to help meet these challenges and improve the resilience of the service. Following recent enhancement of the Planning Enforcement team the service is planning for significant enforcement progress in 2023/24.
- 2.5 Having entered in to shared management arrangements with Surrey Heath in 2022 the Building Control service has continued to deliver a high standard of performance and is looking to potentially progress in to a full partnership in the 2023/24 municipal year. A one year growth item was requested and agreed in the budget to help facilitate the delivery of such a shared service and meet any resultant set up costs. A full partnership is likely to significantly improve the resilience of the service in both Boroughs, increase market share and provide economies of scale.
- 2.6 Both sections have potential legislative changes on the horizon. In planning, changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and the Levelling Up Bill have the potential to impact upon the service. Similarly the new obligations set out in Building Safety Act 2022 are likely to be rolled out in this plan period. The Council is in a good position to plan for and react to changes as they arise.
- 2.7 Other key areas of work relate to processes and procedures relating to the recently adopted CIL Governance arrangements, work on efficiency and procedure refreshes in both service areas and work on IT systems to ensure good returns on our recent investments in technology.

3 Policy framework implications

- 3.1 This Plan supports the delivery of the Corporate Business Plan. The Delivery of a good planning service clearly has very close linkages with the successful delivery of all 5 key themes of the business plan (Climate Change, Empowering Communities, Health and Wellbeing, Economic Development and Organisational Development).

3.2 The delivery of the Development Management service is required to have regard to the development plan for the borough which is the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan. The National Planning Performance Framework and the associated Guidance is also important for decision making and service delivery. The statutory Building Regulations set out the requirements for the Building Control service delivery. There is the possibility of changes to the planning system as the result of the Planning White Paper.

4 Resource implications

4.1 The following proposed initiatives required growth to be able to be delivered:

- Additional 0.5 FTE Career Grade planner capacity. (This partially replaces lost capacity to forward fund growth in the Enforcement Service in previous years which was a member and corporate goal)
- Funds for set up costs of Shared Building Control service.

4.2 Budgets for these schemes have been incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the budget was approved at the annual budget Full Council meeting in February.

5 Legal implications

5.1 The business unit service plan will be delivered under the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended, the statutory Building Regulations and the Local Government Act 2003.

5.2 The Council has the powers and authority to carry out all parts of the plan. Indeed much of the work undertaken by the service is statutory.

6 Equality implications

6.1 The Equality Act 2010 identifies 9 'Protected Characteristics' (being age, disability, race / ethnicity, pregnancy and maternity, religion, sexual orientation, sex, gender reassignment and marriage / civil partnership). Section 149 of this Act provides that a public authority must, when exercising a public function, have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a Protected Characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between those who share a relevant Protected Characteristic and persons who do not share it.

6.2 It is not anticipated at this stage that the projects within the new Development Management and Building Control Business Plan will unfairly disadvantage any individuals or groups who share a particular Protected Characteristic(s), when compared against those who do not share it.

7 Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 The discharge of the Development Management and Building Control services will have regard to environmental standards including policies and regulations relating to climate change, biodiversity and sustainability. These are significant and growing

areas within policy and legislation for both parts of the service, the service looks forward to working on and delivering these objectives.

8 Other implications

- 8.1 The delivery of the Development Management and Building Control services will have regard to Human rights.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 The proposed Development Management and Building Control Business Unit Plan 2023/2024 is recommended to the Committee as it sets out the key priorities and areas of work for the coming financial year, in accordance with corporate priorities and objectives.

(To resolve)

Background papers

Appendix A – DM&BC Service Plan