
PLANNING

2020-2021

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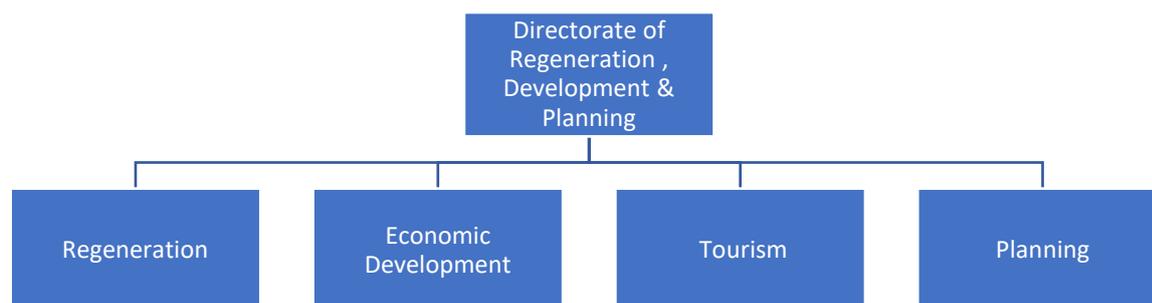
1. Introduction.

1.1 Section Profile:

The Planning Service comprises of:

The Head of Planning to whom three Service Unit Managers report. Within the Unit there are 10 admin staff (8.5FTE) and 37 professional and technical staff (33.1 FTE).

The chart below shows where Planning sits within the organisation.



1.2 Why do we deliver the service?

In April 2015 the planning system was reformed and restructured from a unitary system where all planning powers rested with the central government, to a new two-tier model of delivery whereby councils have primary responsibility for the implementation of the following key planning functions:

- Preparation of a **Local Development Plan** to guide the future use of land in the borough and inform developers, members of the general public, communities, government, public bodies, representative organisations, and other interests of the policy framework that is used to determine development proposals;
- **Determination of planning applications** (local and major) ensuring a proportionate and responsive approach to processing planning applications, with resources and decision-taking mechanisms tailored according the scale and complexity of the proposed development;
- **Planning Enforcement** - the Council has a general discretion to take enforcement action when it regards it as expedient to do so, having regard to the provisions of the development plan and any other material considerations. Effective enforcement of breaches of planning control is important as a means of maintaining public confidence in the planning system. In exercising this discretion, the Planning Service will use the full range of powers available to it to ensure that enforcement action is effective, speedy and appropriate.

1.3 What is the purpose of the service?

The objective of the planning system, consistent with Part 1, Section 1 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011, is to secure the orderly and consistent development of land whilst furthering sustainable development and improving well-being. This means the planning system should positively and proactively facilitate development that contributes to a more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable Northern Ireland. The Council, as a planning authority, should therefore simultaneously pursue social and economic priorities alongside the careful management of our built and natural environments for the overall benefit of our society. This will be achieved through the various functions of Development Management, Development Plan and Policy, and Planning Enforcement.

2. Customers/Stakeholders

2.1 Who are your customers and what do you know about them?

Customers	Profile / characteristics	Interest <i>How much does our work and our plans impact upon this stakeholder and vice versa? (Low, Medium or High)</i>	Power <i>How much influence does this stakeholder have over the success or failure of our work and our plans? (Low, Medium or High)</i>	Support <i>What is this stakeholder's current view of our work and our plans? (Supporter, Neutral or Critic)</i>
<i>Residents</i>	<i>Population: 157,000</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Neutral/Critic</i>
<i>Elected Members</i>	<i>40 members – 15 of whom are on the Planning Committee</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Supporter/Occasionally critic</i>
<i>Statutory Stakeholders</i>	<i>E.g. Transport NI, NIEA, NIWater, Rivers Agency</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Supporter</i>
<i>Business Sector/Investors</i>		<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Supporter/Occasionally critic</i>
<i>Lobby Groups / Community Groups</i>	<i>Often objectors to further development, supportive of quality placemaking</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Neutral/Occasionally Critic</i>
<i>Other Service Units</i>	<i>Carrying out related projects into which planning must feed</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Supporter/Neutral</i>

2.2 What are your customers' needs/demand levels?

Customers	Needs / demands from the service
<i>Residents</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Positive place making that is not detrimental to socio, economic and environmental factors;</i> • <i>Quality decisions on planning applications in a timely fashion;</i> • <i>Delivery of a Local Development Plan to provide for the needs of the Borough over the next 15 years;</i> • <i>Effective enforcement of breaches of planning control so that the integrity of the planning system is not undermined</i>
<i>Employees</i>	<i>Quality and supportive working environment with adequate resources and ongoing training and development</i>
<i>Elected Members</i>	<i>As residents (above)</i>
<i>Business Sector/Investors</i>	<i>Proactive Planning Service which reacts positively and in a timely fashion – enabling sustainable development</i>

2.3 Customer satisfaction / needs

The Planning Service introduced an appointment-based reception service staffed by a duty planner, which has been well received by the public. This has provided for a more meaningful engagement on planning queries whereby the Planning Officer can prepare more meaningful feedback in advance of the appointment, leading to more detailed and timely provision of relevant information.

3. Context, Challenges and Assumptions

3.1 Context

Planning is a transferred function, reformed from a unitary system to a new two tier system incorporating an overhauled suite of primary and subordinate legislation.

The majority of decisions on planning applications are delegated to the Head of Planning with the Planning Committee, comprising of 15 elected members, making determinations on major applications and other applications specified within the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Planning.

3.2 What changes are you expecting in the next few years?

- There will be many changes due to the impact of COVID-19 – from home working of our own staff, remote support delivery to applicants/agents to increased use of technologies.
- A more stable planning system, after an initial bedding-in period in the first term of Council post transfer of planning functions.
- Increased pressure is expected in respect of development of the Local Development Plan in the context of the Council Corporate Plan and Big Plan as policies and proposals in current Departmental Development Plans continue to be applied to development decisions which may be at odds with the preferred direction of the Council.
- The Preferred Options Paper (first stage in the Local Development Plan process) has set out the key plan issues for the Borough and the Council's preferred options available to address them. Further to consultation on this and engagement with elected members on planning policy, the Council will prepare and publish its draft Plan Strategy, which will set out the Council's objectives in relation to the development and use of land in our Borough, and the strategic policies for the implementation of those objectives and other relevant matters. The Plan Strategy will be based on both the information gathered and also the public and stakeholder's responses to the POP.
- Improvements are expected in the provision of services to the public and the developer through the introduction of a Good Working Practice Guide for applicants to encourage positive front loading of planning applications to enable significant proposals to be fast tracked as appropriate, promoting confidence for investors in the borough.
- Continued proactive enforcement of breaches of planning control will assist in promoting the Council's positive attitude to the planning process and its integrity in processes and procedures.
- Introduction of new software - the NI Planning Portal (NIPP) system is used by the Department for Infrastructure, the 11 councils and the Regional Property Certificate Unit to process planning applications and consents,

enforcement cases, property certificates, tree preservation orders etc. The system is used by the public, Departmental and council staff, planning agents, solicitors and consultees. There are almost 9,500 registered users in Public Access. The NIPP was developed over ten years ago when the Department was the single planning authority. While the system is still operational, it is reaching the end of its operational life and no longer meets all of the needs of users. The contract for the maintenance and support of the system ends in December 2021. The Department is in the process of finalising the Business Case and appointing a preferred supplier.

- Adhering to a protocol for checking Building Control applications against planning approvals to advise of anomalies early in process and ensure retrospective applications submitted as appropriate, ensuring no undermining of the planning system.
- Developing a protocol with colleagues in Environmental Health for assessing applications for licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation – a new function transferring from NIHE.
- Potential legislative changes to assist in the delivery of planning. The Department for Infrastructure alongside the 11 Councils has set out an Action Plan to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Planning System with particular regard to the role of statutory consultees. Key recommendations from an investigatory report will be carried forward via a Cross-Government Planning Forum to build capacity and capability in the planning system and to deliver and oversee continuous improvement in Development Management aspects of planning. That report has also emphasised the need for access to adequate resources for statutory consultees. Proposed legislative changes to address poor quality applications and enhance responsiveness of the planning authority will be vital in reinforcing Planning as a key enabler for the delivery of a range of outcomes at local government and regional level.

3.3 What are your future challenges?

- In light of the national pandemic (COVID-19) the manner in which we deliver planning services on behalf of the Council has had to adapt in the context of home working and in ensuring that Planning is contributing to economic recovery. In the period since initial lockdown (March 2020) Planning Enforcement staff were redeployed to assist in processing of planning applications within Development Management. Only priority 1 enforcement cases have been progressed within this time. Additionally, due to the nature of the business support for Planning, only certain activities can be progressed at home, therefore a rota system for administrative staff has been introduced to deal with physical working in the office in the context of PHA guidance on social distancing. The reduction in the number of administrative staff being able to work physically within the Church Street office will have inevitable impacts on processing of planning applications accordingly.
- We will need to adapt our working practices to support the Service Unit to carry out their roles effectively but also in the way we deliver support to the

public/applicants and agents. We will need to ensure that our engagement meets needs and is accessible through technology or other means.

- To manage delivery of the development management (planning applications) function under the hierarchy of development for major and local applications within the associated timeframes of 15 weeks and 30 weeks respectively, with commitment from statutory and non-statutory consultees to assist in meeting statutory performance targets in the context of stretched resources, in terms of both staffing and fiscal challenges;
- Delivering planning (both through Development Management and Development Plan) in a difficult economic framework given the monetary constraints being experienced by major players, such as Northern Ireland Water in respect of sewerage capacity within NI and particularly our Borough, and DFI Roads in respect of physical infrastructure and public transport;
- Prioritisation of cases to ensure continued inward investment whilst ensuring good quality design and positive place making. Supporting work of other service areas within the Council such as the Rural Development Programme and Capital Projects and other Council projects within financial and time constraints;
- Supporting other service areas and Council partners in delivery of action plans stemming from the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy. This will involve assisting in provision of pre application advice on submission of planning applications that support the outcomes from the Integrated Strategy, review of planning policy and guidance in the context of supporting Directorate functions; processing of planning applications aligned with outcomes from the Strategy; and supporting the establishment of an Economic Forum through enabling development and positively supporting economic development for existing businesses in the borough, and supporting and encouraging investment;
- Supporting the Council's contribution to the Belfast Region City Deal to improve infrastructure in the region, develop innovation skills and attract more, and better, jobs, via input to economic assessment and appraisal of key projects, including potential development of an Investment zone, a regional park, and key infrastructure projects;
- Carrying out a detailed review of the consultation responses to the Preferred Options Paper and ongoing engagement with elected members to review the 120+ current planning policies for inclusion within the draft Plan Strategy;
- Adhering to our Local Development Plan timetable in context of evolving LDP process and input from the Department for Infrastructure and Planning Appeals Commission;
- Supporting the Council and Department for Communities in the regeneration of Queen's Parade, Bangor, through expediting assessment and determination of the planning application submitted by the preferred developer

and expediting appropriate planning proposals to determination alongside assisting the Directorate in realising the overall development of the Bangor Coastal Masterplan incorporating Queen's Parade as a key destination;

- Breaking down on internal silos to ensure each service unit is aware of the impact of Planning and therefore engages early in any project initiation/business case preparation to ensure realistic and deliverable targets are set;
- Resourcing a Development Plan team without adverse impact on staffing structure in the other critical planning areas of Development Management and Enforcement;
- Alignment of the spatial components of the Plan with the outcome of the Community Plan and the revised Housing Growth Indicators from the Department for Infrastructure's Regional Development Strategy (RDS);
- In the context of Enforcement, ensuring the Council is committed to securing enforcement objectives to ensure that the credibility and integrity of the planning system is not undermined. Additionally, undertaking scrutiny of Building Control applications (with appropriate resource) to ensure joined-up working to enable a proactive response to potential planning offences;
- Managing the risk involved with the ongoing development of the replacement Planning Portal system in absence of software support post December 2021 of current system. Also provision of staff as Subject Matter Experts throughout the development and testing phase of the new system;
- Development of and attaining support for a Good Practice Guide for applicants and developers to promote front loading of planning applications to enable expedition of planning proposals to positive quality outcomes.

4. Opportunity for Improvement

4.1 Reflection of Service Performance

Introduction of an appointment based reception service

This was introduced in November 2017 and has enabled better provision of an advice service by preparation in advance of an appointment of details of planning histories, relevant planning policies and guidance and checking of application forms. In tandem with the benefit to customers this system has enabled staff resources to be more readily managed.

Preparation of a Preferred Option Paper

With elected member support and contribution from all service areas, the Planning Service published its Preferred Options Paper for public consultation to engage

discussion on the Council's preferred options for dealing with key issues in the Plan area. Feedback has been positive and content of responses continue to be reviewed.

Introduction of a householder development team to manage local applications within an 8-week target

This objective was introduced on the basis of managing resources and prioritising specific applications where appropriate. Improvement in processing times has been realised within this team, and frees up resource for dealing with other local applications within the statutory performance indicator of 15 weeks. Further to this, the agreement of the Council to progress householder applications, with no objections and recommended for approval, straight to decision without appearing on the weekly delegated list has enhanced processing times accordingly. Additionally, the removal of local applications associated with previously approved major applications from the Scheme of Delegation has been welcomed by planning agents and developers. Performance within this team continues to be hampered by lack of submission of timely information with some applications.

Protocol between Planning Service and Building Control

This joined up working is enabling the Planning Department to review submitted Building Control applications against planning history to identify potential breaches at an early stage in the process, and potentially before a breach occurs. Amendments to Building Control application forms to reference planning approval references (where appropriate) has assisted the process but also highlights scrutiny and potentially deter deliberate offenders. Any deviations have been addressed swiftly and appropriate enforcement initiated as necessary. Fee income from retrospective applications is a monetary benefit from this protocol.

Frequently Asked Questions on Planning web pages

Commencement of structuring FAQs for the web will continue to assist provision of a service to the public who often are daunted by the planning process. A web-based Tree Preservation Order system to enable self-service and provide detailed information to landowners and developers in relation to trees will be live shortly. The Annual Housing Monitor will also be available as a web-based solution to enable self service by the public, detailing approvals on sites and completions.

5. How will the Planning Service contribute to corporate objectives?

The Planning Service can be expected to have a direct impact on the following:

Outcome/Objective	Service objectives
Prosperity	Assessment of responses to the Preferred Options Paper (POP) leading to critical decisions on the first of the Council's LDP documents – the draft Plan Strategy, including specifically in relation to employment land
Prosperity, Environment, Pride, Life and Excellence	Adherence to Schedule 3 Planning Indicators of the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015
Excellence	Demonstrate value for money in the delivery of the Planning Service
Excellence	Provide excellence in service delivery encompassing robust governance arrangements
Environment	Completion of health and condition surveys on all existing historical Tree Preservation Orders and publication of web-based interactive guide

6. Key activities for 2019/20

SERVICE AREA:	Planning
Community Plan Outcome:	Outcome 2, 3, 4 and 5
Corporate Priority:	Prosperity – Growing our Economy; Environment – Growing a cleaner, greener, local and global environment; Pride – Growing empowerment, respect and safety of our community; Life – Growing the health and wellbeing of our residents; Excellence – Growing a high-performing Council
Service Objective:	Adherence to Schedule 3 Planning Indicators of the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (NI) 2015

What are the Business as Usual activities we will deliver (actions)?	What difference will it make (outputs/outcomes)?	How will we know (measures)?	Lead Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal/External partners)
Process local applications from date valid to decision within average processing time of 15 weeks	Enable sustainable development and promote local investment	% approval of planning applications determined	Service Unit Manager for Development Management	Statutory and non-statutory consultees and Planning Committee
Process major applications from date valid to decision within average processing time of 30 weeks	Enable sustainable development and promote local investment	% approval of planning applications determined	Service Unit Manager for Development Management	Statutory and non-statutory consultees and Planning Committee
Process householder applications from date valid to decision against internal performance target of 8 week average processing time	Enable sustainable development and promote local investment	% approval of planning applications determined	Service Unit Manager for Development Management	Statutory and non-statutory consultees and Planning Committee
Take proportionate and appropriate enforcement action against breaches of planning control within 70% conclusion time	Promote confidence in the planning system and underpin its integrity	% progress of all enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint	Service Unit Manager for Enforcement	Residents and elected members and Building Control

SERVICE AREA:	Planning
Community Plan Outcome:	N/A
Corporate Priority:	Excellence – Growing a high-performing Council
Service Objective:	Demonstrate value for money in the delivery of our services

What are the Business as Usual activities we will deliver (actions)?	What difference will it make (outputs/outcomes)?	How will we know (measures)?	Lead Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal/External partners)
Measure performance against operating budget	Ensure value for money in the delivery of our services	% spend against budget	Head of Planning and Service Unit Managers	Finance and Performance and Improvement input

SERVICE AREA:	Planning
Community Plan Outcome:	N/A
Corporate Priority:	Excellence – Growing a high-performing Council
Service Objective:	Provide excellence in service delivery encompassing robust governance arrangements

What are the Business as Usual activities we will deliver (actions)?	What difference will it make (outputs/outcomes)?	How will we know (measures)?	Lead Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal/External partners)
Further refine the working protocol between Planning Service and Building Control	Reduce incidents of breaches of planning control by identifying difference between planning approvals and Building Control application – reinforcing the integrity of the planning system	% of Building Control applications checked against planning history where potential breach identified	Service Unit Manager for Enforcement	Building Control Service Unit Manager
Deliver service in line with established processes and procedures	Safeguard against reputational damage to the Council	% audit reports satisfactory	Head of Service & SUMs	Performance Improvement

What service development/improvement will we undertake in 2020/21?	What difference will it make (outputs/outcomes)?	How will we know (measures)?	Lead Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal/External partners)	Is a Business Case required?
Develop protocol between Planning Service and Environmental Health regarding licensing of Houses of Multiple Occupation (function transferring from central government)	Ensure appropriate assessment of applications for licensing to align with requirement for planning permission	Ensure all licence applications are reviewed by Planning Service prior and attain requisite planning permission prior to licence being issued	Service Unit Manager for Enforcement	Environmental Health	No
Publish a Good Practice Guide for developers and the general public who will be submitting planning applications	Ensure planning system is front loaded thus avoiding delays in processing time, and reduction in advertising costs and neighbour notification costs to Planning Service	Continued reduction in processing times and less enquiries	Service Unit Manager for Development Management	Statutory and Non-statutory consultees in application processing, planning agents and developers	No

What service / activities will we be stopping in 2020/21	Reason for stopping activity	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
Immediate investigation of alleged breaches of Planning control with exception of Priority 1 cases as set out in the Enforcement Strategy until further notice – subject to review	COVID-19 and need to assist Development Management Team in processing of applications to aid economic recovery and including processing of grant-funded shop improvement applications and various staff vacancies within Development Management	May result in failure to achieve statutory performance indicator of 70%; however, priority 1 cases and cases approaching immunity continue to be processed	Frustration by complainants that Council not responding urgently enough to cases; belief by potential offenders that Council will not investigate/enforce	Mobilisation of enforcement staff to get up to speed with processing applications, whilst balancing enforcement work as appropriate

Performance Measures (should include those outlined above and relevant measures from Community, Corporate and Performance Improvement Plans plus those that are Statutory)	Is the measure Statutory, Corporate, Existing or New?	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Qtr1-3	2020/21 Target
Process local applications from date valid to decision within average processing time of 15 weeks	Statutory	21.2 weeks	20.2 weeks	17.2 weeks	15.6 weeks	15.7 weeks	15 weeks
Process major applications from date valid to decision within average processing time of 30 weeks	Statutory	51.8 weeks	37.6 weeks	53.0 weeks	151 weeks	269.9 weeks	30 weeks
Process householder applications from date valid to decision within average processing time of 8 weeks (introduced 2017/2018)	Existing	-	-	53% of 358 householder decisions issued	40% of 351 householder decisions issued	55% of 206 householder decisions issued	60%
Take proportionate and appropriate enforcement action against breaches of planning control within 70% conclusion time	Statutory	82%	77.7%	73.6%	76.9%	83.4%	70% - subject to impact as result of COVID-19
% spend against budget	Existing	90%	94.07%	95%	99.6%	103.2%	100%
% Staff attendance	Existing	-	92.93%	95%	91.64%	92.93%	95%

Resources:

Are all actions resourced within the current (2020/21) budget plan? Yes

Will additional resources be required? No

All actions require staff resource and revenue budget, continued staff training and development, access to appropriate legal services as required, and to consultees (statutory, non-statutory and procured). The appropriate business cases have been prepared and approved for additional ad-hoc services to support the main planning functions as follows:

Development Plan – Retail Study, Landscape Character Appraisal, Open Space Study, Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment;

Development Management/Enforcement – adhoc services for retail impact assessment review and structural/condition surveys;

Trees – arboriculturalist health and condition surveys of existing Tree Preservation Order sites.

Further to the response to COVID-19, discretionary spend allocated toward finalising health and condition surveys of existing Tree Preservation Order sites has been reduced. Work will continue within a re-prioritised schedule against remaining budget.

Consultancy work required for building a robust evidence base for the LDP will inevitably be affected by COVID-19 (most particularly Retailing) and it may be appropriate to re-prioritise the procurement of these studies accordingly.

7. Risks

Ref:	Risk Description	Gross Risk			Current controls	Residual Risk			Risk Status	Further Action Required	Action Due by	Risk Owner	Notes to explain rationale for scoring, etc.
		I	L	R		I	L	R	Tolerate / Action				
1	Failure to secure human and financial resources leading to an inability to fully provide service	Major	Probable	High	Acting up and backfilling.	Moderate	Possible	Medium	Tolerate			Head of Planning	

Ref:	Risk Description	Gross Risk			Current controls	Residual Risk			Risk Status	Further Action Required	Action Due by	Risk Owner	Notes to explain rationale for scoring, etc.
		I	L	R		I	L	R	Tolerate / Action				
2	Lack of resource in statutory consultees leading to inability to deliver service within performance targets; also quality of responses	Major	Probable	High	Escalated with Deputy Permanent Secretary of DFI and Strategic Planning Group	Major	Probable	Medium	Action	Action Plan agreed between DFI and Councils	End of March 2021	Head of Service	Review into the efficiency and effectiveness of the Planning System in NI with particular focus on the role of statutory consultees published November 2019 by DFI – Action Plan now agreed across councils with DFI

Ref:	Risk Description	Gross Risk			Current controls	Residual Risk			Risk Status	Further Action Required	Action Due by	Risk Owner	Notes to explain rationale for scoring, etc.
		I	L	R		I	L	R	Tolerate / Action				
3	Failure to procure new IT system to replace current Planning Portal for which contract ends December 2021– either on individual or collaborative basis cross council	Major	Probable	High	Current engagement with DFI through Planning Portal Governance Board	Major	Possible	Medium	Action	Continued engagement through Planning Portal Governance Board and updating of Chief Executive and Members; Sacrifice of staff to assist in project development	On-going	Head of Planning	Action required in order to assure progression of project
4	Learning from Independent Examination of Belfast City Council's draft Plan Strategy – regards 'soundness' in context of preparation of ANDBC's draft Plan Strategy	Major	Moderate	Medium	Ongoing engagement with DFI through LDP Working Group and adhoc meetings and learning from Independent Examination	Minor	Moderate	Low	Tolerate			Service Unit Manager – Development Plan	Will require scrutiny of ongoing 'evolving' process and introduction of further guidance on process by DFI in response

Ref:	Risk Description	Gross Risk			Current controls	Residual Risk			Risk Status	Further Action Required	Action Due by	Risk Owner	Notes to explain rationale for scoring, etc.
		I	L	R		I	L	R	Tolerate / Action				
5	Judicial Review of Planning Decisions or Enforcement Decisions	Major	Moderate	Medium	Regular staff training and cross-council working groups and access to legal advice	Moderate	Possible	Medium	Tolerate			Relevant Service Unit Managers	
6	Refusal of Shared Environmental Service to carry out HRAs on planning applications in absence of additional monies	Major	Moderate	High	N/A	Major	Moderate	High	Action	Paper presented to October Planning Committee and CX to write to Minister for Infrastructure and Communities for intervention	Qtr4	Head of Planning	Threat to environmental governance
7	Lack of confidence in planning system as result of reallocation of enforcement staff to processing applications	Major	Moderate	High	All Priority 1 cases being investigated, and all cases approaching immunity being prioritised. Other cases being opened and investigated/progressed in tandem with applications when time prevails	Moderate	Possible	Low	Tolerate				

Ref:	Risk Description	Gross Risk			Current controls	Residual Risk			Risk Status	Further Action Required	Action Due by	Risk Owner	Notes to explain rationale for scoring, etc.
		I	L	R		I	L	R	Tolerate / Action				
8	COVID-19	Major	Probable	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and dissemination of advice and guidance. Adherence to C19 Health and Safety guidelines. Staff working from home where possible. Move to remote working/support 	Major	Moderate	Medium	Tolerate	Ongoing monitoring and advice	Ongoing	Head of Planning & SUMs	

8. Resources

8.1 Staffing

Backfilling of vacant posts required as quickly as possible to ensure continuity of service and cover for sickness/maternity leaves

8.2 Financial

Budget agreed by Council for forthcoming financial year

8.3 Other

Continued access to legal service as appropriate for advices on specific applications, enforcement cases, and preliminary discussions on progress of Local Development Plan (LDP) process moving to independent examination.

Continued access to independent consultants as appropriate to advise on specific assessment related to planning applications/enforcement cases and topic specific areas for preparation of LDP, namely Retail Study, Landscape Character Analysis, Open Space Study, and Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment).

9. Monitoring and Review

This Service Unit Plan will be reviewed on quarterly basis as appropriate by Head of Service in conjunction with Service Unit Managers and Business Support Manager.

10. Conclusions

The Planning Service will continue to strive to deliver an excellent and efficient service to residents and investors for the benefit of the Borough. The key targets detailed above are a means by which to measure this. Collaborative working with other Council service areas will be essential to assist in delivering the outcomes from the Integrated Tourism, Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy, in addition to achieving core planning principles.

11. Appendices

N/A