



Planning Services Service Delivery Plan 2024 to 2025

Overview of the service

Activities of the Planning service generally stem from legislative requirements, however close working with other internal departments is essential to providing a comprehensive service to our customers. We also work closely with a number of external clients such as the Local Highways Authority, the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England as well as town and parish councils.

It is important that the Planning service maintains a strong customer focus to the varied range and number of customers that the service has to manage. The range of customers accessing our service includes: applicants, architects/agents, developers, neighbours and community groups as well as internal and external colleagues and consultees.

Planning applications should be determined in accordance with adopted local and national planning policies. The Planning service operates in the public interest and its main purpose is to facilitate sustainable development throughout the District. Place making is an important objective for the team, alongside the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment. Close working with internal and external bodies forms an important part of the planning process to ensure the service functions in an efficient and transparent manner.

Planning enforcement will work inline with the adopted Local Planning Enforcement Plan and will respond to queries in a proportionate manner.

Cost of service

The Planning service generates an income for the Council with planning application fees being set by national government and pre-application fees being set by the local planning authority.

The budgeted income for 2024 to 2025 from planning applications and pre-application advice is £1,133,348 and £75,192 respectively.

The level of income received to date from 1 April 2023 to 31 January 2024 for planning applications is £495,700 and pre-application advice is £38,440. The net expenditure for the Planning services is £678,019.

In the year of 2023 to 2024 (01 April 2023 to 31 January 2024) the Planning service dealt with a total of 1303 valid applications, the breakdown of which is:

- majors - 23
- minors - 223
- others (includes householders, listed buildings, adverts, conditions, amendments, certificate of lawfulness, prior notifications) – 725
- trees - 332

Staffing Information

The Planning service includes a number of functions. The team consists of a total of 28.6 full time equivalent (FTE) staff members. The team is broken into a number of different sections that all fall under the remit of the Planning Manager. The Planning team consists of Planning Team Leaders, Senior Planning Officers, Planning Officers and a Planning Assistant.

The team also incorporates other staff and statutory functions, including Conservation Officer, Tree Officer, Enforcement Officers and the Planning Support Team. The structure of the team is outlined below with a summary of each function and staffing levels.

FTE	Role title
1.0	Planning Manager
3.8	Planning Team Leaders
1.0	Office Team Leader
1.0	Enforcement Team Leader
1.0	Tree Officer
1.0	Conservation Officer
9.0	Career Grade Planning Officers/Senior Planning Officers
1.0	Planning Assistant
1.6	Enforcement Officers
1.0	Senior Planning Support Officer
7.2	Planning Support Officers

Forward planning for Councillors

Proposed item	Proposed date of decision	Committee
Planning Committee	First Wednesday of every month	Planning
Member training	June 2024 In house by Planning Manager and external day event	Planning
Half year report 2023 to 2024	November 2024	Operational Services
End of year report 2023 to 2024	March 2025	Operational Services
Service Delivery Plan 2024 to 2025	March 2025	Operational Services

Planning Services Service Delivery Plan 2024 to 2025

This Service Delivery Plan describes what the Planning service will be doing to deliver continuous improvement (service objectives). Each performance measure relates to the Council's strategic outcomes and Corporate Plan 2022 to 2023.

Council's strategic outcome: Maintain sound finances. Improve systems and practices.

Planning services' strategic objective: Deliver statutory functions within specified timescales and within budget.

Link to Corporate Plan: Sound financial management. Cleaner Green East Cambridgeshire. Sustainable Communities.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2023 to 2024	Owner and co-owners
Major applications to be determined within agreed timescales	90%, annually	100%	Planning Manager All Officers
Minor applications to be determined within agreed timescales	80%, annually	92%	Planning Manager All Officers
Householder applications to be determined within agreed timescales	90%, annually	96%	Planning Manager All Officers
All other applications to be determined within within agreed timescales	90%, annually	91%	Planning Manager All Officers
Tree Preservation Order, Trees in Conservation Areas or compliance with tree condition applications to be determined within agreed timescales	100%, annually	100%	Planning Manager All Officers
Discharge of condition applications determined within agreed timescales	75%, annually	85%	Planning Manager All Officers

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2023 to 2024	Owner and co-owners
All applications determined within 26 weeks unless otherwise agreed extension	100%, annually	100%	Planning Manager All Officers
Applications validated within 5 working days	85%, annually	94%	Planning Manager All Officers

Council's strategic outcome: Safe, vibrant and inclusive communities. Community sustainability.

Planning services' strategic objective: Take a proactive approach to enhancing and improving the places in which people live: balancing economic, environmental and social needs.

Link to Corporate Plan: Cleaner Green East Cambridgeshire. Sustainable communities.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023	Owner and co-owners
<p>Continue to work on the Cambridgeshire Local Heritage Project (CLHP), within the next year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> complete data for candidate list entries continue vetting process via county assessment panel commence rolling consultation programme with owners and parishes for adoption of new entries on a parish-by-parish basis 	As identified, annually	<p>Survey complete for 35 Parishes resulting in circa 600 sites identified.</p> <p>First Parish consultations to be undertaken for Coveney and Witcham during March, with other vetted Parishes to follow.</p>	Conservation Officer Planning Manager
<p>Project manage major applications as a team (approx. 50+ dwellings and commercially important schemes) through action tracker management and other project management tools</p> <p>Build collective understanding of major projects and business focus for customers</p> <p>Manage expectations of stakeholders and build in resilience across the team for complex project management</p> <p>Seek consistency across outcomes</p>	Meet bi-weekly, annually	Major projects meeting has been set up to discuss and agree options on major planning applications. Reduced outstanding major applications to 36 cases.	Planning Manager Planning Team Leaders All Planning Officers as needed

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023	Owner and co-owners
Achieve consistency across S106 agreements and timing of Committee decisions Aim to require agreed and completed S106 agreement before reporting planning applications to Committee. Display draft legal agreements on website before decisions are made and before Committee resolutions Monitor throughput of S106 agreements through action tracker and other project management tools	As identified, annually	New performance measure.	Planning Manager Planning Team Leaders All Planning Officers as needed
Contribute to the implementation of the Council's Climate and Environment Action Plan	As identified, annually	New performance measure.	Cross-Council activity Planning Team Leader
To reduce the amount of paper used by the Department in relation to its day-to-day work	10%, annually	Reduction of 27%	Planning Manager All Officers

Council's strategic outcome: A clean, green and attractive place.

Planning services' strategic objective: Improve the quality of the built and natural environment throughout the district.

Link to Corporate Plan: Cleaner Green East Cambridgeshire.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023	Owner and co-owners
Monitor 20% of approved tree works	20%, annually	70 application sites reviewed/visited = 19.5% of total applications determined.	Trees Officer Planning Manager
Review Tree Strategy to reflect changes to service provision	As identified, annually	Tree strategy to be fully reviewed as the responsibilities for trees within the council have been split between the planning trees officer and the parks and open spaces trees officer as well as the use of new technology.	Trees Officer Planning Manager
80% of enforcement complaints to have preliminary investigation completed within 10 working days of receipt	80%, annually	99%	Planning Manager Planning Enforcement Team Leader All Planning Enforcement Officers
80% of enforcement complaints to have complainant contact within 15 working days to advise of findings	80%, annually	100%	Planning Manager Planning Enforcement Team Leader All Planning Enforcement Officers

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023	Owner and co-owners
Review and update our Standard Conditions and Reasons Manual to ensure they meet the 6 tests set out in Paragraph 56 of NPPF, 2021 and cover all necessary aspects required by legislation/policy	As identified, annually	Initial ideas shared with Team Leaders, Enforcement and Planning Manager. Completed as part of the Planning Review	Planning Manager Planning Team Leaders Conservation Officer Trees Officer All Planning Officers

Council's strategic outcome: Be an excellent employer.

Planning services' strategic objective: Improve staff motivation, participation and involvement in service provision and encourage staff development.

Link to Corporate Plan: Sound Financial Management.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023	Owner and co-owners
20hrs average of CPD per person to be identified and to be provided annually (pro-rata for part time positions); following attendance of courses/seminars staff to feedback and discuss with the team and the next team meeting.	As identified, annually	850.25 hours completed by 26 members of staff resulting in 32 hrs/person average.	Planning Manager All Officers
Skills assessment of officers to ensure adequate training and expertise are available, for example biodiversity net gain, design, viability	100%, annually	New performance measure. To be completed as part of the Planning Review.	Planning Manager All Officers
Regularly review high level corporate risks, including judicial review – the decision making process has not been carried out lawfully, which could lead to a financial risk on the Authority and judicial review by aggrieved party	As required, annually	No judicial reviews.	Planning Manager

Council's strategic outcome: Customers are at the heart of everything we do.

Planning services' strategic objective: Provide excellent customer services at all times and to improve communication with all customers.

Link to Corporate Plan: Sound Financial Management. Sustainable Communities.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Baseline/output from 2022 to 2023	Owner and co-owners
Parish councils to be invited to Planning and related subject training session(s)	As required, annually	Parish training and update session took place 29 November 2023 which received positive feedback. Next session to be booked in mid 2024.	Planning Manager All Officers
Website review of content and customer experience and contact form	As identified, annually	Identified as part of the Planning Review. Production of a document log detailing all publications including author and a review programme. New Contact form created for Customer Services use.	Planning Manager Planning Team Leaders Conservation Officer All Planning Officers Office Team Leader
Implementation of further electronic working processes and procedures as per the outcome of the Planning Review and Government funded Digital Planning project	As identified, annually	All templates set to email where an email address is provided. Working files are disposed of after a check that all relevant information is present and correct on the document management system following decision.	Planning Manager Office Team Leader Senior Support Officer
Review implementation of separate inbox for updates on individual planning applications, in between duty officer and direct email to case officers to provide updates when case officer unavailable; email address to be on acknowledgement of applications receipt	As identified, annually	New email mailbox set up and major templates to be updated to direct customers to use it.	Planning Manager Officer Team Leader Senior Planning Support Officer