

Report to:
West Area Planning Committee
East Area Planning Committee

12th May 2015
14th May 2015

Title of report:
Planning Services Improvement Action Plan Pursuant to the Roger Dudman Way Review

Recommendation: Committee is asked to:

1. Recognise the substantial work undertaken by officer in the Planning Service.
2. Understand that such improvement work does not cease and so will continue.
3. Agree that the Steering Group should continue to review progress of this improvement work.
4. Ask officers to report to Committee in a year's time on such improvements.
5. Thank Vincent Goodstadt for his continuing support and feedback on the Action Plan work.

Main Report

1. At the WAPC and EAPC meetings in July and August last year the Committee received a progress report on the implementation of the Action Plan flowing from Roger Dudman Way Review Independent report from Vincent Goodstadt. This had been titled the "Planning Services Improvement Action Plan". The two committees asked to be kept informed of progress with the Action Plan.
2. The work outlined in the action plan has been largely implemented with the exception of a handful of longer term elements.
3. The Steering Group, established to oversee the implementation of the Action Plan, recently met to consider the Action Plan Schedule and a pair of supporting documents. These are all attached as appendices to this report.
 - A summary report from officers which outlined what the service has done to implement and embed the recommendations of the Action Plan. Appendix A
 - A feedback report from Vincent Goodstadt reporting on his assessment of the actions taken. Appendix B
 - The Action Plan Schedule itself. Appendix C
4. The summary report (attached as Appendix A) concluded:
 - The work on the action plan, carried out over the last year, has improved the quality, standard and consistency of planning service and has addressed the issues raised in the RDW report. The majority of the actions have now been implemented into the service but they will require on-going monitoring and review to ensure they continue to be relevant and embedded into the service.

- A table at the end of the Action Plan outlines those actions which are still to be fully implemented, many of which have become projects in their own right and independent of the original Action Plan. Their completion is beyond the remit and timescale of the Action Plan.
5. Vincent Goodstadt in his Feedback report (attached as Appendix B) concluded that:
 - A serious effort has been made by staff to respond to the recommendations of the RDW Review and embed them into the core processes and procedures of the department.
 - The progress on enhancing the design capacity of the Council has been particularly significant.
 - The outstanding tasks identified require a sustained commitment which would be best embedded into the departmental work programme and annual review and monitoring processes.
 - Work on the wider planning issues in terms of the managed expansion of the city and the University remain as priorities which would benefit from a clear timetable.
 6. The Steering Group recognised the considerable work that planning officers have carried out to respond to the RDW recommendations, implement the necessary changes and embed new and revised processes. It appreciated, however that the work to embed the processes and improve the planning service does not stop. Therefore, work will continue to monitor and review the service to ensure that the planning process responds to changing circumstances and expectations. In particular a number of projects are listed at the end of the Action Plan and work is planned to improve management effectiveness through workforce planning and embedding compliance with processes.
 7. Now the Action Plan is substantially complete, it is considered that the department is in a good position to put itself forward for a full external accreditation (Customer Service Excellence and ISO9001). This is scheduled to take place later this year.
 8. The Steering Group felt that it would be useful for it to retain its role and to meet on a 6 monthly cycle to review the further improvement actions.

Appendices

- A. Summary Report from Officers to the Steering Group
- B. Feedback Report from Vincent Goodstadt
- C. Planning Services Improvements Action Plan Schedule, including a table of future projects.

Background Papers: none

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Date: 30th April 2015