

Oxford City Council

Planning and Regulatory Services

Service Plan 2016/17 – 2017/18

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1. Service Overview

1.1 Description of Current Service

The Planning and Regulatory Services (P&R) includes a range of statutory and discretionary frontline services that directly or indirectly contribute to the Council's corporate ambition to make Oxford a world-class city for all its citizens. Some parts of the service are dictated by mandatory national legislative requirements and performance targets whereas others are discretionary and locally set.

The services help to ensure the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors; the provision of housing, employment, social and recreational facilities to provide a strong and sustainable economy and active communities whilst protecting and improving the natural and built environment of the city. Underpinning the service is the need to ensure all customers receive a timely and constructive response, especially in the case of service delivered to the most vulnerable sections of the population.

The P&R service is being restructured in 2016 which will alter some of the management arrangements but the key parts of the service will remain and comprise the following:

Business Regulation Team - delivers a broad range of proactive and reactive regulatory services and programmes connected with commercial activities in the City. The purpose is to protect public health & the environment through regulation and includes food safety intervention in about 1300 premises; investigation and control of case of infectious disease; control of noise and other nuisance from commercial premises – with a focus on dealing with noise and vibration issues from rail and other major developments; regulation of street trading; environmental permitting of nearly 30 polluting industries and processes; coordination of the Oxford City Safety Advisory Group. The team also delivers a food hygiene training programme, offering accredited courses for different levels of ability and in different languages.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Enforcement Team - helps to manage and improve the health, safety and welfare of residents living in HMOs. The private rented sector accounts for 25 percent of the city's housing stock providing essential accommodation for key workers, students and others. About 1 in 5 persons live in HMOs.

Private Sector Safety and Combined P&R Enforcement Team – the primary role is the protection of the health and wellbeing of those who live in the private rented sector and the investigation and enforcement against breaches of planning control. Services include interventions and enforcement to deal with poor dwelling conditions or energy performance, unlawful dwellings, licensing of caravan/mobile home parks, burials, the Landlords/Agents Redress Scheme, the Oxford City Landlords Accreditation Scheme and landlord/agent training. Planning enforcement seeks to ensure unauthorised buildings, uses and other works do not cause unacceptable harm and that planning conditions imposed on planning permissions are complied with. The work of the team contributes to raising private sector housing standards, preventing homelessness, reducing inequalities, promoting wellbeing, protecting the living conditions of nearby occupants and protecting the built and natural environment.

Home Improvement Agency – the maintenance, improvement or adaptation of housing for the over 60s, the disabled and those with long term illnesses through the provision of repairs, minor works, improvement loans, grants and key safe installations. Such works enable residents to remain in their own home, prevent hospital admission and /or allow hospital discharge.

Building Control – the purpose is to ensure the health and safety of persons in or around buildings, energy conservation and access to buildings for all persons. Parts of the service can be provided by others through the Approved Inspectors. There are two elements of the service: fee earning and non-fee earning. The fee earning part focuses on ensuring compliance with Building Regulations by assessing plans and carrying out site inspections at the notifiable stages of the building process. The non-fee earning part includes statutory or necessary functions relating to dangerous structures, demolitions, enforcement of the Regulations, processing disabled person applications and the provision of advice in respect of the regulations and safety.

Planning Policy and Design, Heritage and Trees – prepares the statutory planning policy framework which guides development in Oxford in order that the area's housing, employment, social needs are met whilst preserving and/or improving the quality, character and appearance of the city. The section protects and manages change to the city's built and historic environment, archaeology and forest resources, and undertakes community consultation to inform the development and neighbourhood plans, supplementary planning documents and other documents. It also implements the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which secures developer contributions towards infrastructure in order to address the needs of new development.

Development Management – implements the Council's policy set out in the development plan and manages development within the City by assessing and determining a wide variety of planning and other applications and consents. It also advises and makes recommendations to Councillors for those applications determined by a planning Committee. Development Management also provides advice and guidance to help ensure development proposals comply with the Councils policies and standards and to improve the quality of development in the city.

Service customers

The P&R services are provided to a wide range of customers who may live, work, visit, study or wish to develop in Oxford. Some of the services, such as the Home Improvement Agency, specifically address the needs and welfare of the most vulnerable members of the population. Others, such as Planning Policy and Development Management serve those living in the city, running businesses or wishing to build and customers may include a wide range of residents, local and national developers. In addition, the service contributes to the health and safety of all who are in the City and protects and manages the built and natural environment which contributes to Oxford's economic, historic and educational importance and quality of life.

Demographic and other factors that affect the services

Whilst Oxford offers residents a high quality of life and visitors many opportunities there are, however major inequalities in the city. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 places Oxford in the top half of the most deprived local authority areas in England with twelve areas of the city being among the 20% most deprived areas in England. Oxford's population is estimated to be growing by about 6,000 persons a year which makes it the eleventh fastest growing city in the UK. A third of the population is aged 18-29 with about 32,000 students enrolled in full-time education in the two universities. The percentage of over 65s is increasing faster than other age groups.

Oxford has a growing economy with about 114,000 jobs provided primarily in the knowledge intensive industries. There are more jobs within the city than residents and approximately 46,000 people commute into Oxford for work. As a tourist destination the city attracts around 7 million visitors annually which support over 13,000 jobs.

The city is facing a housing crisis and according to Cities Outlook 2015, Oxford is now the least affordable city in terms of housing. This is causing hardship with poor and overcrowded housing and increasing numbers of 'beds in sheds'. This is adversely affecting the most vulnerable in the city and a number of P&R services specifically seek to improve the quality and safety of housing and close down illegal or dangerous accommodation. The housing problems are also impacting on the local economy with employers finding it difficult to attract people to the city. This threatens Oxford's position as a world class knowledge economy and it's concentration of high value businesses.

As a result of these factors there is a growing demand for the services to ensure the quality and availability of suitable housing, including affordable housing in the city. The state of the national economy and factors such as taxation also influence the number of developments proposed and those being constructed which affects the demand for planning and building control services.

1.2 Summary of Service's Future Direction

The P&R service faces a number of challenges which will influence the level of demand for its services and future direction. The P&R restructure will put in place the service structure and leadership to deliver the Council's ambition for a top performing, high quality national exemplar planning and regulatory service. It will also improve the resilience of the service, customer satisfaction, enhance capacity and the provision of specialist skills to enable it to be better placed to address the challenges it faces. The future direction of and demand for the P&R Service is or could be influenced by the following:

- The Growth Agenda including Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal to deliver significant growth including businesses, housing and infrastructure;

- Government and County Council funding changes and cuts – reductions in public expenditure and the assumed loss of government grant by 2018-19 will mean the Service will need to deliver greater efficiencies;
- The Devolution Deal for Oxfordshire – budget pooling, changes to service delivery and the potential for significant investment in the city’s infrastructure;
- Housing and Planning Act - proposed changes in regulatory and planning responsibilities, legislation and reform.
- Demographics - growing population with increasing percentage over 65 years

The implementation of this Service Plan will be underpinned by operational team plans and the associated service improvement plan. Monitoring of the plan will be undertaken at intervals with the Executive Board member and an annual update will be produced and incorporated as part of each year’s service planning process.

1.3 Key Service Objectives and targets for 2016/17:

Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
Corporate Plan Targets for Planning and Regulatory Services				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Employment Floorspace delivered in the City 	Patsy Dell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of available planning permissions 	Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment floorspace being delivered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New homes granted planning permission – target is 400 in 2016 and 2017 	Patsy Dell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable sites being granted planning permission 	Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers of new homes being granted planning permission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the living conditions and wellbeing of those living in the private rented sector and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) by reducing the number of unlicensed HMOs 	Ian Wright		Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of identified HMOs that are licensed

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Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
Service Specific Objectives and targets				
1. Restructure the Planning and Regulatory Service to deliver the structure, leadership and improvement plans and actions to start to move the service to national 'best in class'	Patsy Dell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment Staff retention 	Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New P&R structure fully in place by Autumn 2016 Vacancies recruited to permanent posts, agency staffing numbers reduced Performance improvement in Development Management Development of clear service and team improvement plans by August 2016 Implement team moves so planning enforcement is part of Private Sector Safety Team and Building Control is line managed by the Environmental Health Service Manager by June 2016 Review Building Control and develop sustainable business model for 2016/17 by Autumn 2016
2. Produce and implement service improvement plan by end July with steps to move the service onto a 'best in class' direction of travel by the end of 2016 - 2017.	Patsy Dell		Timeline for individual actions set out in service and team action plans.	
Planning and Regulatory Services - Team Specific Objectives and targets				
Business Regulation				
1. Develop and implement Council's strategy for street trading to ensure it supports the regeneration of the city and improves consumer and business satisfaction	Ian Wright	Emerging City Centre Strategy Emerging Local Plan Emerging Market Strategy	March 2017*	New Street Trading Strategy adopted (*subject to compatibility with other city centre strategies having been agreed)

Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
2. Protect the health and wellbeing of people who work, live and visit by dealing with occurrences of pollution and nuisance generated from rail and major development project	Ian Wright	Network Rail Planning Performance Agreement	Annual	95% of s61 Consent Applications and Notifications processed within 30 days.
3. Improving standards in food businesses through food hygiene intervention programme	Ian Wright		Annual	Reduction in number of food premises rated 0 or 1 by 50 %
Private Rented Sector				
4. Education and training of landlords and agents	Ian Wright		Annual	30 No of landlord and agents training places delivered per year 90 % positive satisfaction feedback
5. Targeted improvements to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency	Ian Wright		Annual	Influencing increased number of property energy performance ratings of 'F or G' to 'E' or higher.
HMO Enforcement Team				
6. Improve living conditions and the management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) by: a) Reducing the number of unlicensed HMOs in the City	Ian Wright		Annual	Percentage of identified HMOs that are subject to licensing provisions The number of unlicensed HMOs identified by the HMO enforcement team that will be required to be licensed with a finders/ category A fee applied.

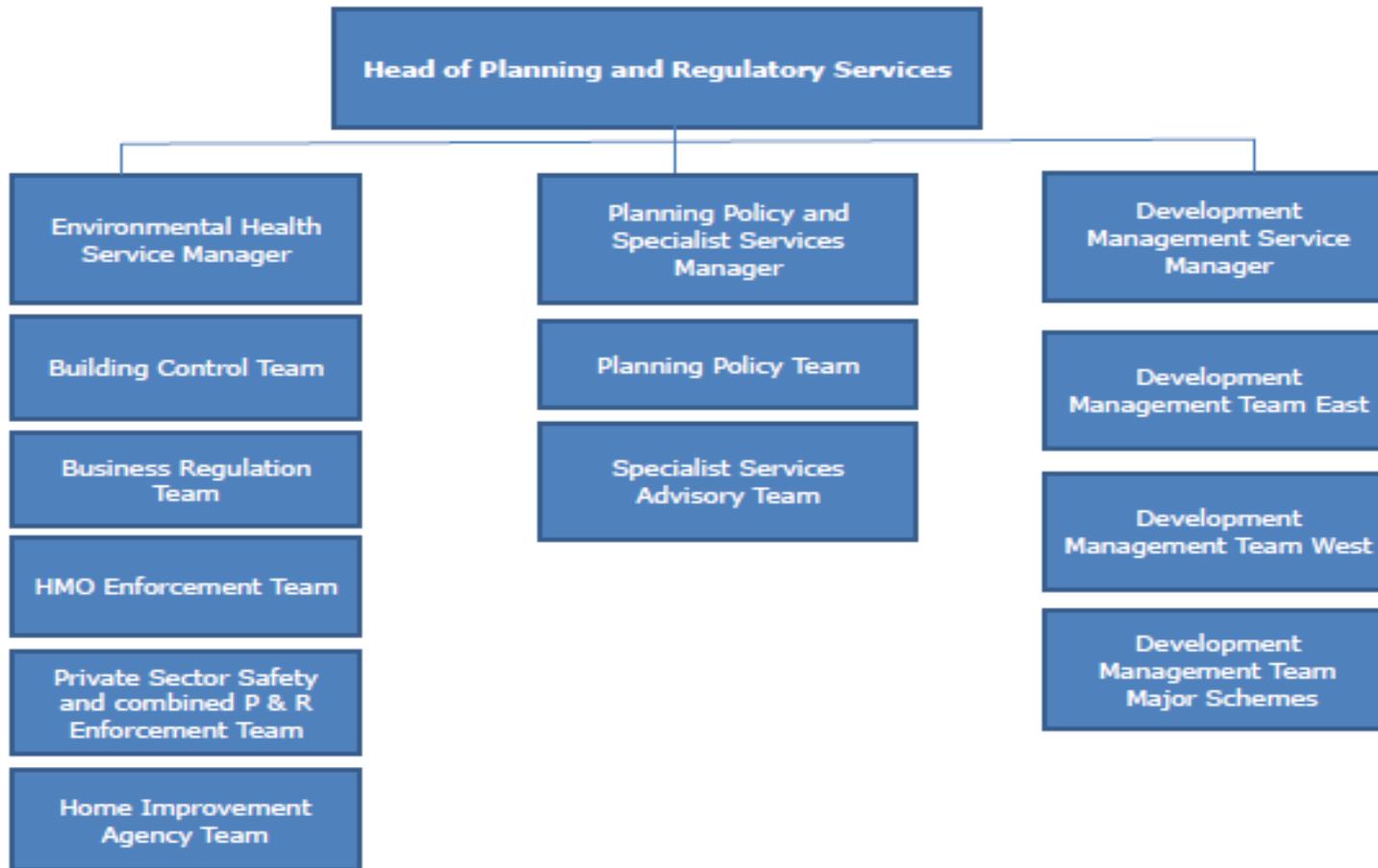
Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
b) Educating and training landlords and agents	Ian Wright		Annual	3 Landlord Information Exchanges per year
c) Prevention and reduction of Homelessness	Ian Wright		Annual	The percentage of Tenancy Relations Officer service requests responded to within 5 working days
Home Improvement Agency				
7. Increase the number of elderly, the disabled and those with long term illnesses able to remain in their home through property adaptation, maintenance and improvement	Ian Wright	Customers, direct services, Small Repairs Technician	Ongoing	Number of properties maintained, improved or adapted enabling occupant to remain living Percentage of DSG grant spent - target 100% Customer satisfaction – 100%
Development Management				
8. Deal with planning and other applications efficiently and effectively meeting agreed targets and quality of outcome	DMSM	Recruitment and retention	Ongoing	Percentage of applications and other matters determined or substantive response given: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major applications* – 70% in 13 weeks, (including agreed extension of time cases(EOT) and planning performance agreement cases (PPA)) Minor applications – 70% in 8 weeks or within agreed EOT Other applications – 80% in 8 weeks or within EOT <p>* Where an application is subject to an EIA 70% in 16 weeks.</p>

Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For all types of application (other than those where EOT agreed) which have not been determined in accordance with above - 100% in 26 Prior Approvals and other similar applications – 100% within the statutory response time limit.
9. Deliver high quality new development and excellent customer service	DMSM		<p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Number</p> <p>On-going measure, review outcomes annually</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain ISO9001 approach and accreditation as a minimum service level Maintain Customer Service Excellence approach and accreditation as a minimum service level , reduce complaints from 15/16 base year level No. of external compliments and/or design awards won by new developments in the City Percentage of major app decisions overturned at appeal – target less than 20%
Building Control				
10. Deliver an efficient and effective Building Control service	Paul Smith	<p>Building Control Team</p> <p>Applications Team</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>Issue 95% of plan check decisions within 8 weeks.</p> <p>Complete 85% of plan -check assessments within the internal target time of 15 working days.</p>
Planning Policy and Design, Heritage and Tree Team				
11. Preparation and	Mark		In accordance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All project milestones met in year

Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
adoption of the Oxford Local Plan 2036	Jaggard		with milestones set out in Local Development Scheme (adoption October 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed engagement approach, governance and communications delivered successfully, high levels of engagement and response/participation achieved Submission of the OLP36 to the Planning Inspectorate for examination at end 2018
12. Oxford Growth Strategy – maximise likelihood of achieving strategic site allocations or outline permissions for urban extensions through effective partnership working	Mark Jaggard		On-going	<p>Housing allocation provision for Oxford's unmet housing needs confirmed by neighbouring Oxfordshire Councils</p> <p>Responses submitted in accordance with deadlines to all Local Plan consultations by neighbouring councils and to Government consultations.</p>
13. Provision of infrastructure through collection, management and spending of CIL and S106 developer contributions.	Mark Jaggard		<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annual</p>	<p>Receiving 100% of CIL and S106 (financial and in kind) contributions due</p> <p>Preparation and updating of policy and a programme of projects to be funded by CIL/S106</p> <p>Publication of the required information as part of the Annual Monitoring report</p>
14. Protection and management of the built and natural environment by:	Mark Jaggard			Consultation and adoption of Design Supplementary Planning Document by end of 2016/17

Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
a) Ensuring development conserves or enhances the heritage and built environment			Jan 2017	

1.4 Chart: Planning and Regulatory Services management structure 2016/17



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Financial Health

1.5 Detailed Budget for 2016/17

Service Budget 2016/17

Expenditure/Income	Employees £	Premises £	Transport £	Supplies & Services £	External Income £	SLA's and Capital £	Total Net Budget £
Development	1,038,698	-	7,810	45,980	(1,457,000)	406,429	41,917
Support Services	134,282	-	440	15,255	(10,000)	329,709	469,686
Information Services	(100)	8,720	600	12,045	(213,650)	115,656	(76,729)
Spatial Development	804,129	-	790	732,010	(103,000)	230,347	1,664,276
Environmental Health	961,286	-	7,300	45,326	(730,000)	587,489	871,401
Total Net Budget	2,938,295	8,720	16,940	850,616	(2,513,650)	1,669,630	2,970,551

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1.6 Budget Projections 2016/17 to 2019/20

	2016-17 £000s	2017-18 £000s	2018-19 £000s	2019-20 £000s
Functions				
Development	42	32	(18)	(28)
Support Services	470	470	470	470
Information Services	(77)	(77)	(77)	(77)

Spatial Development	1,664	1,104	1,104	1,104
Environmental Health	871	826	826	826
Totals	2,971	2,356	2,306	2,296

1.7 Savings and Efficiency Targets to Achieve the Budget

Savings & Pressures 2016/17

Reference	Description	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
17PR1101	NEW - pressure as external income has not been possible to be raised	70			
14EF1202	Extension of fee charging proactive work across private rented sector (moved back a year)	(45)	(45)		
16PR1101	ADJUSTED - Re-base budget income estimate for Building Control.			(40)	
17FC1101	NEW - Pre-application planning advice	(15)			
17FC1102	NEW - Pre-application householder developments	(10)			
17FC1103	NEW - Pre-application listed buildings	(20)			
17FC1104	NEW - Planning Performance Agreements		(10)	(10)	(10)
15NI1101	Planning design and review panel - Reversal of previous years bid	(25)			
16NI1104	Oxford Growth - Local Plan work - Reversal of previous years bid	(170)			
16NI1105	Oxford Growth - Housing Growth Work - Reversal of previous years bid	(80)			
17NI1101	NEW - Preparation work in readiness of the production of a new Local Plan	100			

17NI1102	NEW - Grenoble Road Planning application fee	560	(560)		
17NI1106	NEW - Planning Enforcement-Unauthorised Dwellings	34			
Total Savings & Pressure		399	(615)	(50)	(10)

2. Performance and Value for Money

2.1 Evidence of Current Value for Money

P&R undertakes a variety of benchmarking and customer feedback although it is not clear that all the information obtained has, in the past, always been used to review and improve service performance, efficiency, effectiveness and customer satisfaction. This year the new service improvement plan (attached at Appendix C) will capture feedback and actions drawn up in response. Focus groups are being planned for June and July with planning service users and customers to seek detailed feedback on the service. All service areas will seek benchmark data to identify best in class performance for P&R service areas, as part of the service ambition to move to best in class service delivery. These action and improvement plans will be monitored so the achievement of the agreed direction of travel for the service can be measured.

2.2 Plan for delivering and improving Service Standards

A number of actions are proposed to maintain and improve the service. The P&R restructure will provide enhanced leadership and delivery of the key objectives set out in the Service Plan and Service Improvement Plan will be supported by individual team plans that provide more detail. Actions will include:

- A restructure of P&R
- Filling vacant posts with permanent staff
- Measures to improve staff recruitment and retention
- Creation of two apprentice posts in planning and building control
- Training of staff and creation of career graded posts
- Review of processes and procedures to identify efficiencies/opportunities for improvement
- Improved use of performance information
- Learning from customer/stakeholder feedback to inform and improve service delivery.

- Proactive action – e.g. tracking down and securing the licensing of unlicensed HMOs
- Greater use of internal capacity and skills to thereby reducing use of external consultants to where it is essential
- Careful scoping of work and negotiation of fees to minimise costs of externally provided services
- Bidding for external funding where available, systematic development of use of planning performance agreements and charges for enhanced planning services.
- Refreshing ISO9001

3. Workforce Planning

3.1 Workforce planning themes

There are a number of common challenges that are affecting the capacity and effectiveness of the services with P&R

- Increasing demand for services;
- Difficulties in attracting and recruiting staff
- A considerable number of posts are filled by agency staff;
- Some posts grading/salary non-competitive with other councils;

A number of actions have, or are being implemented to address the above issues as part of the ambition to deliver a top performing, high quality national exemplar planning and regulatory services.

Communications and Consultation Plan

3.2 Anticipated Community, Stakeholder and customer consultation and engagement in 2016/17

P&R undertakes a wide range of stakeholder and consultations. Some are dictated by legislation whilst others are in relation to specific services, projects or preparation of policy and strategies. The list below includes anticipated one off and regular consultation and engagement activity to be undertaken in 16/17.

	Contact team	Brief description of consultation	Purpose of consultation	Consultation method	Target audience	Date of consultation
External						
Business Regulation Team	Street Trading Strategy	Consultation on new strategy for street trading in the city	Identify opportunities, options and potential impact	Web based survey	Public and Stakeholders	Jan 2017
Occupational Therapy	Various	Determine client's needs	Meet client's needs	Verbal, written, email	Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) Applicants	
Housing Associations	Various	Following application for grant assistance	Permission to carry out works	Written, email	DFG Applicants	
Loan providers	Various	To determine monies owed on properties and permission to register mortgages	Ensure sufficient equity in properties before loans are offered	Written	FHIL applicants	
Clients of Home Improvement Agency	Various	Determine satisfaction with service	Agreed method in contract	Written survey forms	Customers	Following use of HIA service
Private Sector Safety Team	Private Sector Safety Team	Public and stakeholders views on Private Rented Property Policy	Policy Development	Web based questionnaire Landlords Forum Landlords Newsletter	Landlords/tenants/residents	February-March 2016
Local Plan	Planning Policy	Call for Sites	To feed into the Local Plan evidence base not strictly	Mail out to interested parties, use of website	Landowners and developers	March 2016

			consultation			
	Planning Policy	Local Plan Issues	To gain views of the community to feedback and shape the LP	Exhibitions; events; mailouts; website; social media; press etc.	Stakeholders and general public	June/July 2016
	Planning Policy	Design SPD draft document	To gain views of the community to on the draft SPD	mailouts; website; social media; press etc.	Stakeholders and general public	Summer 2016?
	Planning Policy	Headington Neighbourhood Plan draft document	not strictly our consultation but we're hosting it	mailouts; website; social media; press etc.	Stakeholders and general public	Anticipated Autumn 2016
	Planning Policy	Local Plan Preferred Options	To gain views of the community to feedback and shape the Local Plan (LP)	Exhibitions; events; mailouts; website; social media; press etc.	Stakeholders and general public	June/July 2017
	Planning Policy	Local Plan Proposed Submission	To gain views of the community to feedback and shape the LP	Exhibitions; events; mailouts; website; social media; press etc.	Stakeholders and general public	June/July 2018
Design, Heritage and Trees	Various	Local residents, statutory consultees	To gain views regarding proposed works to listed buildings, protected trees, as well as proposed TPOs	Email, mailouts, website, press, site notices	Property owners, stakeholders and general public	Ongoing
	Various	Conservation area appraisals	To gain views of the community to feedback and shape the appraisal	Exhibitions, events, mailouts, website, social media, press	Stakeholders and general public	When needed
Development Management		Local residents, statutory consultees	To gain views regarding development proposals	Email, mailouts, website, press, site notices	Property owners, stakeholders and general public	Ongoing

4. Infrastructure Requirements

4.1 ICT

P&R currently uses a range of software applications including:

- UNIFORM - for efficient processes and data capture in the development management service area
- IDOX- for document management
- Enterprise - for case management
- Microsoft Access - for data analysis and report
- LAGAN - for quality management system
- EXEGISIS – for the management of historic environment data

Future service working would be enhanced by:

- Improved management reporting tools
- Urban design package allowing 3D modelling of the city, sites and areas
- Stakeholder consultation and response management software (Local Plan consultations)
- Development/procurement of mobile working solutions
- Increasing customer self-service

4.2 Office Accommodation

Offices for the future 3 project (OFTF3). This project may result in reduction in number of hot desks in St Aldate's chambers leading to staff working from home more often. Reliable remote access to corporate systems therefore will become more important. Reduction in number of meeting rooms may limit the ability to host meetings with external customers.