

**Report for: Planning, Environment and
Sustainability PDG**

Date of Meeting:	26 th November 2024
Subject:	Summary report on Planning matters
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Steve Keable, Planning & Economic Regeneration
Responsible Officer:	Richard Marsh, Director of Place and Economy
Exempt:	N/A
Wards Affected:	All wards
Enclosures:	N/A

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This report provides a summary of activity undertaken in relation to planning matters.

Recommendation(s):

1. That Members note the contents of the report.

Section 2 – Report

1.0 Introduction

This report seeks to provide Members with updates across a range of matters relating to Planning and Building Control. The updates are in line with those previously agreed at the June 2024 meeting of the PDG.

2.0 Updates

2.1 New National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.1.1 The Council's response on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the planning system was submitted on 23rd September 2024. The response was discussed at PPAG during August and at Cabinet on the 17th September 2024.
- 2.1.2 The Government is understood to be considering the responses received and has promised to respond to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation before the end of the year.
- 2.1.3 The Planning and Infrastructure Bill is to be introduced into Parliament in early 2025 with a focus on streamlining and simplifying the planning system to ensure, "the planning system supports public and private investment."

2.2 New Local Plan: Plan Mid-Devon

- 2.2.1 Work on Plan Mid Devon continues, but it will be necessary to re-visit the workplan once Government publishes the updated NPPF, as set out above. Once this is published and can be reviewed, it is expected that a new Local Development Scheme will be brought before this PDG for discussion and review before presentation to Cabinet in early 2025.

2.3 Development Management Policies

- 2.3.1 A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment was presented to Cabinet (12 November), with interim targets approved for use in determining planning applications.
- 2.3.2 Following the last report, the Willand Neighbourhood plan has now progressed with Willand Parish Council having agreed the Examiners recommended modifications and having produced a referendum version of the Neighbourhood Plan. This item is also before this meeting of the PDG seeking onward recommendation to Cabinet (January 2025) to support referendum (February 2025).
- 2.3.3 The Blackdown Hills National Landscape Management Plan consultation was approved by Cabinet in October with the Partnership expected to undertake the public consultation through late 2024/early 2025.
- 2.3.4 Finally, a Stage 1 Public Consultation regarding future development of Tiverton EUE (Area B) was approved by Cabinet at its November meeting and is scheduled to run from 20th November 2024 until 10th January 2025.

2.4 Development Management

- 2.4.1 Performance within Development Management remains strong with 99% of householder applications determined within 8 weeks and 98% of Majors within 26 weeks (Q1 data).
- 2.4.2 However, Q1 statutory income was depressed versus target (£142k income vs. £908k target) which is reflective of the depressed and sluggish housing market. Positively however, discretionary income fared better and was only marginally below target.

2.5 S106

- 2.5.1 Work regarding revised S106 governance has progressed and a revised governance framework is also set before this meeting of the PDG for review, comment and onwards recommendation to Cabinet. This review has been undertaken to support more proactive utilisation of S106 funds, increase member involvement and support effective decision making.
- 2.5.2 Also progressed is the Infrastructure Funding List (2024) which is again set before this PDG for review and onward recommendation to Cabinet targeting publication in December to meet statutory requirements.

2.6 Conservation

- 2.6.1 The Grand Western Canal Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was put before Cabinet on the 12th November and adoption was recommended to Full Council in December.
- 2.6.2 A 'forward plan' of conservation areas to be reviewed has been requested by Members and this will be provided in due course.

2.7 Building Control

- 2.7.1 Building Control (a shared function with North Devon Council) continues to perform well, albeit with continuing resourcing challenges and pressures accruing through changes introduced through the Building Safety Act (2024) – including around the mandatory reporting of multiple data sets without clear guidance from the regulator regarding the format of such returns.
- 2.7.2 Q2 data showed 100% approval of full applications within 2 months (versus 95% target) and continuity of a strong market share (80% versus 75% target). However, market share of new housing completions remains low (12% vs. 40% target) and applications numbers, and therefore income, remain

low/below target. Again – this is reflective of a depressed housing market and low confidence within the construction/development sector as a whole.

2.8 Planning Enforcement

- 2.8.1 Advertisement continues for a Senior Enforcement Officer with an application deadline of 15th November 2024. A 15% market supplement is included with the role in order to seek to make the role attractive to applicants. This is the fourth time advertising this hard-to-fill role.
- 2.8.2 The Enforcement services continues with a high/active case load. Currently, the service has around 300 cases and this number is broadly stable, albeit there is churn/change in the live cases as new cases are presented as the officers close older cases.
- 2.8.3 The update to the Enforcement Policy is progressing with presentation of the revised draft policy to Scrutiny on the 25th November. This is following discussion with PPAG and precedes presentation to Cabinet in December for approval.

Financial Implications

Financial implications associated with this report are limited – but members are asked to note points relating to financial performance and other implications of matters.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this information report.

Risk Assessment

There are no major risks associated with this report.

Impact on Climate Change

The scope of this PDG means it has a significant opportunity to progress positive work around climate, biodiversity and other environmental/sustainability matters. Officers will work to seek to support the PDG in maximising these opportunities.

Equalities Impact Assessment

No negative equalities impacts are expected.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The work of this PDG will supports a wide range of corporate objectives and the corporate plan as a whole.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett
Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151
Date: 15th November 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria DeLeiburne
Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 15th November 2024

Chief Officer: Stephen Walford
Agreed by Chief Executive
Date: 15th November 2024

Performance and risk: Steve Carr
Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager
Date: 14 November 2024

Cabinet member notified: yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Richard Marsh, Director of Place and Economy
Email: rmarsh@middevon.gov.uk
Telephone:

Background papers: