

Report of Chief Planning Officer

Report to Joint Plans Panel

Date: 26 July 2018

Subject: Planning Charter

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	☐ Yes	☒ No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	☐ Yes	☒ No

Summary of main issues

1. In June 2017, planning services facilitated a meeting between members of the Plans Panels and the Leeds Chamber of Commerce to discuss the planning process and explore ways to make planning work more efficiently in Leeds.
2. Arising from this meeting was an agreement that a planning charter would be developed; this would be a joint piece of work between the Council and the Chamber of Commerce, with all parties agreeing to a number of promises and ambitions.
3. A draft protocol has now been produced in collaboration with representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and has been shared with the Joint Member Officers Working Group and the Chamber of Commerce and some of its sub groups. This draft protocol is now presented to the Joint Plans Panel for consultation and comment.
4. Whilst the document does not have any legal status, it is not an adopted document within the Local Plan, it seeks to provide a positive context for delivering planning and good growth in Leeds, to which all parties have made a commitment.

Recommendations

5. Members are recommended to note the report and provide comments on the protocol as appropriate.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. This report is to update members on the progress of the draft planning protocol which was agreed to be developed between the Council and the Leeds Chamber of Commerce. The draft protocol is attached for member consultation and comments.

2. Background information

- 2.1. As part of the ongoing commitment to service improvement to support the Council's ambitions, planning services has been developing a relationship with the Leeds Chamber of Commerce over the last few years.
- 2.2. In June 2017, the service facilitated a meeting between elected members and representatives of the Chamber of Commerce to discuss ways to make planning work more efficiently in the city. Whilst the Chamber fielded developers from all sectors, discussion inevitably focussed on housing and the challenges that brings but also the opportunities for moving forward. Feedback from members and the Chamber of Commerce was that the session was a positive first step in an evolving partnership.
- 2.3. An action from the session was to produce a "planning charter", a series of promises/ ambitions adhered to by both the development industry and the local authority, which all parties make a commitment to abide by.
- 2.4. Work has been ongoing over the last few months to produce a draft version working with two representatives from the Chamber, one representing the volume house building sector the other from a commercial planning agent. A draft was shared for consultation at the Chamber Housing Forum meeting in mid May 2018, and more widely with the Chamber Planning Group, House Builders Federation and Developers Forum later that month. The draft was received positively, with some comments for the service to consider.
- 2.5. The draft was also shared with the Joint Member Officer Working Group for member comment and consultation, where again it was received positively, subject to some small amendments.
- 2.6. The draft protocol is attached to this report for wider member comment.

3. Main issues

- 3.1. The protocol is a series of ambitions for both the local planning authority and the development industry to sign up to and work towards. For the LPA the "asks of us" centre around communication, consistency of approach and timeliness, the asks of the development industry are mainly around quality of submissions and adherence to policy and where this cannot be achieved being up front about where the short falls lie and engagement with local members and communities.
- 3.2. There is some work to be done to ensure that the pledges the service has signed up to can be met, but in part this will be achieved when the service is up to establishment following the next round of recruitment, but there is also some work to be done with consultees to ensure quality and timely responses and reviewing

the officer member communication protocol (agreed by Joint Plans Panel in 2013, and updated in 2016) ensuring that the provisions in that document dovetail with the proposed planning charter.

3.3. Following this engagement with the Joint Plans Panels, a final draft will be produced and shared with the Chamber of Commerce and thereafter, the protocol will be implemented.

3.4. Whilst the documents does not have any legal status, it has been encouraging that there has been developer buy into the process and to the protocol.

3.5. The success of the protocol will be monitored and a review of it will be carried out after 12 months operation.

4. Corporate Considerations

4.1. Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1. This report is presented for information and comment

4.2. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1. There are no Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration issues.

4.3. Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1. The effective and expedient determination of planning applications contributes to the overall prosperity of the City and plays a key part in the regeneration and growth agenda.

4.4. Resources and value for money

4.4.1. The promises made in the document will require some work by the service to ensure they can be fully achieved, and this will require amendments to internal processes and revisiting of current protocols; this will be met from within existing resources. If the document is successful in all it sets out to achieve, it will aid transparency, involvement and expeditious decision making.

4.5. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1. No identified issues.

4.6. Risk Management

4.6.1. There are no risks identified in this report.

5. Conclusions

5.1. The work carried out so far on the protocol has been done in a positive spirit, with the development industry being engaged and having considerable input. The promises being made by both the Council and the development industry means it has the potential to aid transparency, involvement, increase certainty and facilitate

expeditious decision making, at the same time allowing the Council to meet its aspirations and ambitions through the promotion of good economic growth and place making.

5.2. The comments received from members today will be feed into the process and a final draft will be produced. The protocol will be monitored and reviewed after 12 months operation, to ensure that it is working in the way it was intended to.

6. Recommendations

6.1. Members are recommended to note the report and provide comments on the protocol as appropriate.

7. Background documents¹

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.