

Statement by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning

14 December 2021

Planning Policy

Local Plan

The public consultation period on the Main Modifications to the Local Plan closed on Tuesday 9th November 2021. 258 responses have been received, many of them relating to the allocation of industrial land at Leeming Bar (Allocation LEB3). The Planning Inspectors will consider the representations as they prepare their report on the Local Plan. Whilst there is some uncertainty on the period required for the Inspectors to complete their report officers are preparing for the Local Plan to be reported for adoption to Cabinet and Council on 22 February 2022.

Ingleby Arncliffe Neighbourhood Plan

The “94% in favour” result of the referendum held on 4 November 2021 means that this will be the first Neighbourhood Plan to be made in Hambleton. The Neighbourhood Plan will now be part of the Development Plan that must be considered in the determination of planning applications in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Annual CIL Rate Summary

The charges currently levied under CIL need to be reviewed against an index calculated by the RICS under the requirements for setting the annual rate. Further details will be reported to the Management Team and Members in due course.

Land Charges

The Council has successfully enabled the migration of local land charges data to HM Land Registry’s Local Land Charges Register. HM Land Registry became the registering authority for the district on 28th October 2021.

Development Management

The completion of the land charges project has enabled staff to put more focus into the validation of planning applications and that area of the service has also been boosted by the appointment of a new validation officer so the team is operating at full strength. An additional officer has joined the planning enforcement team which now has four members of staff. In October and November a significantly higher number of complaints were resolved than received. Initial site visits are being carried out within the target periods and officers can allocate more time to complex and controversial issues. The team has been issuing planning contravention notices, which are proving helpful in gathering the evidence needed to pursue formal action, and several enforcement and breach of condition notices are now due to be served. The council has recently been successful in prosecuting landowners due to failures to comply with enforcement notices appertaining to two sites in the district.

The Development Manager for Enforcement therefore has capacity to also manage planning applications. As such the district has now been split into three areas in terms of allocations to the three Development Managers. There is now a north, a south and a west team. The west team will cover the wards of Sowerby and Topcliffe, Tanfield and Thirsk and is made up of a Development Manager, a Senior Planning Officer and a Planning Officer. The north and the south teams are otherwise unchanged.

This will enhance the performance of the team handling planning applications. For the Quarter 2 period 83.3 % of major applications were determined on time against a target of 80% whilst 85.1% of minor applications were determined on time against a target of 85%. The only outstanding vacancy in the staff structure is at the Planning Technician level handling other applications. The performance for that category in Quarter 2 was 83% of applications were determined on time. This could be improved upon if the post is filled. A previous recruitment exercise resulted in interviews being held but unsuccessfully. The opportunity is now being readvertised.

Meanwhile 86.9% of householder applications were determined on time and out of the 153 of the applications received in this category 150 were approved at a rate of 98%. This gives a clear indication of the team's commitment to enabling growth and development in the district.

Councillor David Webster
Portfolio Holder for Planning