

<b>MAYOR AND CABINET</b>		
<b>Report Title</b>	Planning Service : Service Improvements in Development Management	
<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes	Item No.
<b>Ward</b>	All	
<b>Contributors</b>	Executive Director for Resources & Regeneration	
<b>Class</b>	Part 1	Date: 10 April 2013

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This report sets out the changing context in which the Planning Service is operating. It then details future changes to ensure that the service responds to these legislative and budgetary challenges.

## **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 This report advises the Mayor and Cabinet of proposed service improvements to the Planning Service in three main areas: first improving how major planning applications are considered and dealt with; second, improving the effectiveness of the Council's Planning Enforcement Service and third, to propose a series of changes to the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. These changes are in response to a need to improve the effectiveness of the service for our customers but also to meet budget pressures.

### **3. Recommendations**

#### 3.1 The Mayor is recommended:

- To note that a future report will be presented setting out the proposed changes to the Statement of Community Involvement outlined in section 6:
- To note the new approach to Major Applications, including the introduction of a Major Application Protocol, new Schedule of Charges and changes to the Design Review Panel;
- To note the Enforcement Charter; and
- To note the changes to the scheme of delegation for Enforcement.

### **4. Policy Context**

#### 4.1 The content of this report is consistent with the Council's policy framework, namely the Core Strategy and the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). The Core Strategy is closely related to the SCS, as it sets out the physical implementation of the SCS. This report supports the following SCS objectives:

- *Empowered and responsible*: where people can be actively involved in their local area and contribute to tolerant, caring and supportive local communities.
- *Clean, green and liveable*: where people live in affordable, high quality and adaptable housing, have access to green spaces and take responsibility for their impact on the environment.
- *Healthy, active and enjoyable*: where people can actively participate in maintaining and improving their health and well-being, supported by high quality health and care services, leisure, culture and recreational activities.
- *Safer*: where people feel safe throughout the borough and are able to live lives free from crime, anti-social behaviour and abuse.

- *Dynamic and prosperous*: where people are part of vibrant and creative localities and town centres, well-connected to London and beyond.

## **5. Background**

- 5.1 There have been significant changes in the context in which the Planning Service operates in recent years. Lewisham has seen an increase in development activity and the service has actively participated in a programme of regeneration of many of the borough's town centres and related social infrastructure, notably schools. Planning permission was granted in 2011/12 alone for a series of mixed use schemes which could deliver over 5,500 new homes, potentially generating over £50 million in New Homes Bonus and £39.7 million of S106 contributions. In 2011/12 Lewisham had the third highest amount of housing completions of all London Boroughs with 1,188 new completed dwellings.
- 5.2 The production of a Local Development Framework has changed the relationship between the role of the development plan and the handling of planning applications. Further significant changes have resulted from the Localism Act which sets out powers to allow local communities to influence the planning of their area by preparing Neighbourhood Plans. The government is also currently considering a further range of reforms, including the potential to remove decision making on major planning applications from local planning authorities where these have not been determined in a sufficiently timely fashion.
- 5.3 These increasing delivery pressures need to be set against the background of the significant and ongoing budget constraints on the Council. To date the Planning Service budget (which includes Land Charges and Economic Development) has been reduced by some 24% and, in 2011, the Development Management part of the service undertook a significant restructure in response to budget pressures and the need to update our approach in a range of areas. The restructure

involved replacing the traditional development control approach to development proposals which focused on processing planning applications and enforcing contraventions with a development management approach which is more proactive and delivery focused. The Council's vision for delivery is set out in the Local Development Framework (LDF). The Local Development Framework (LDF) moves away from strictly land use based plans towards plans which provide a strategic vision and objectives for the future of the borough. Delivery is not just about land use but about the economic, social and environmental well being of Lewisham.

5.4 Ongoing budget pressures over the coming years will mean that the Planning Service will need to continue to improve its fee income and cost recovery, by setting pre application charges across a wider range of application types and securing a greater level of staff and consultant costs through planning performance agreements with applicants. The service will also need to set clear service standards and find staff savings through more efficient approaches to delivery.

5.5 The focus on being proactive means that more time and resource needs to be allocated at the front end of the planning process, on pre application discussions with applicants and the local community. The result of this renewed focus on pre application means that the service needs to amend its approach to major applications but also to the way in which it consults through the process. Equally, there is a need to ensure that the service prioritises its approach to enforcement to ensure that the resources available address issues of significant harm and support the delivery of the regeneration taking place within the Borough.

## **6. Statement of Community Involvement – amendments to the approach for consultation on Planning Applications**

- 6.1 The Council's current approach to consultation on planning applications is set out in the Statement of Community Involvement. This sets out the level and approach to community consultation on planning applications according to the type and significance of the application. The approach in the current Statement of Community Involvement is based on a reactive view of development control rather than a positive and proactive development management approach. It focuses on consulting residents and stakeholders during the application process when the plans have normally been finalised.
- 6.2 The existing Statement of Community Involvement requires the following advertising and consultation once an application is submitted:
- Site notices/ letters – all applications have site notices and residents affected by the development are written to by letter.
  - Representations – these are acknowledged in writing.
  - Local Meetings – these take place where one or more objection(s) have been received from a residents' association, community/amenity group or ward Councillor and/or where a petition is received containing more than 25 signatures and/or where 10 or more individual written objections are received from different residents.
- 6.3 Planning applications in conservation areas, for listed building consent, certain tree works and highways schemes are referred to the Amenities Society Panel. This is made up of members of local amenity societies.
- 6.4 In addition, all major planning applications, applications which involve the substantial demolition of listed buildings and any significant new buildings in conservation areas are heard by the Councils Design Panel.
- 6.5 The change to a more pro-active approach to land use planning, together with increased functionality of the Councils website, means that a number of changes are now envisaged to the way the planning service engages with local residents and other stakeholders. The main

changes proposed make engagement more proactive and front-load the consultation to the pre-application stage, and to allow all stakeholders to self-serve.

- 6.6 It is proposed to consult on a number of changes to the Statement of Community Involvement and bring a further report back to this committee to consider these changes.
- a. Reduce Neighbour Consultation to notification by Site Notice;
  - b. No longer notify people who either support or object to planning proposals that we have received their letter;
  - c. No longer hold local meetings;
  - d. No longer notify people when application is to be considered at Committee;
  - e. No longer organise the Amenity Society Panel (ASP); and
  - f. Review which cases will be determined by committee.
- 6.7 Because of IT improvements, community groups and residents can now register on the Councils website to receive automatic notifications for new planning applications in a certain street / ward / postcode etc. Applications can also be tracked, whereby updates are emailed out on an applications' progress. These improvements have reduced the need for individual letters being sent out.
- 6.8 Local meetings currently are organised as part of the application process, when negotiations between the Council and are often well advanced and many aspects of schemes are fixed. This can reduce the usefulness of these meetings as residents and amenity societies are confronted with fully developed plans rather than emerging proposals on which real community benefits can be negotiated. Therefore, on larger developments with a significant impact on the community, the planning service will increase its focus on seeking to ensure that applicants organise a local meeting or engage in other forms of consultation through Planning Performance Agreements (see below).

6.9 Amenity societies regularly comment on applications in their specific area utilising their local knowledge of an area. The Amenity Societies Panel does not always have this geographical advantage and only comments on heritage assets. Specialist heritage input into applications concerning conservation areas / listed buildings is furthermore provided by conservations officers.

6.10 It is recognised that the changes to how consultation is undertaken could result in certain groups being excluded from the Planning Process. One possible solution is that Members are given a greater role as “community advocates” through the introduction of a new call-in process. This will be examined in due course.

6.11 The planning service currently investigating the thresholds for cases going to planning committees, to ensure it is in line with customer expectations and operational needs.

## **7. Pre- Application Advice - Major Applications, new Schedule of Charges and changes to the Design Review Panel.**

7.1 The Council's Planning Service has a commitment to improving the quality of applications, the quality of schemes and the speed in which it makes decisions on applications. A robust service prior to the submission of an application will be a means of achieving better quality planning applications, greater opportunity for involving the local community at an early stage, negotiating satisfactory outcomes and providing a greater level of certainty for applicants in terms of their programme. The development of such a service will require additional funding and it is intended that a degree of cost recovery will be required to help achieve this.

7.2 In order to achieve the following changes are being proposed:

- The introduction of a Major Application Protocol
- A schedule of charges to deal with pre-application advice
- Changes to the Design Review Panel

## **Major Application Protocol**

- 7.3 A Major Application Protocol has been produced which provides greater encouragement for applicants to engage in pre application discussions and to use Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs). The aim is to encourage collaborative working within agreed timescales where a meaningful pre application discussions take place to help produce a high quality schemes.
- 7.4 The PPA approach is preferred as it enables the Planning Service to have hands-on design workshops and to discuss schemes in more detail compared with a flat fee approach. This will allow Officers to continue the Planning Service's preferred way of working which seeks to achieve high standards through early engagement with applicant teams rather than considering worked up proposals with supporting information where there is limited opportunity to influence proposals, especially in respect of design..
- 7.5 The Protocol will enable Officers to work more efficiently, to provide more involvement of local communities and certainty to applicants.
- 7.6 PPAs are agreements between the applicant and the Council setting out how the planning process will be managed from pre-application stage to delivery of the scheme (if the application is successful). PPA's can be a useful tool to help front load applications as they set out clear timeframes for, pre application discussions involvement of the local community, and key milestones within the planning process itself, such as committee dates and finalising Section 106 agreements and conditions. They can also be used to set out the Council's approach to cost recovery including how the costs of any external specialist advice



as well as Officer costs over and above the planning application fee will be met.

7.7 Sitting behind these changes will be detailed Officer guidance and template letters which will ensure that there is consistency of delivery.

7.8 The proposals will update the current charging scheme for Major Applications that was introduced in 1 April 2011.

### **New Schedule of Charges**

7.9 The Local Government Act 2003 gives a discretionary power to charge for providing formal pre-application advice. This allows authorities to set their own individual charge rates, which are usually framed against the type and magnitude of the scheme involved. All charges should be on a cost recovery basis.

7.10 The Government has recently issued a consultation document on the criteria for which Local Authorities would come under its proposed 'special measures' – where such Authorities would be considered poorly performing. While this, broadly, would be based on the time taken to determine applications under the current National Performance Indicator (N157), applications considered through a PPA would be excluded from applications used to determine whether an Authority should fall within 'special measures'. Introducing charges will improve performance and outcomes.

7.11 The Service currently charges £1,200 inclusive of VAT for pre-application discussions on major and complex schemes and for £750 inclusive of VAT for each meeting after that. The pre-application fee currently involves one meeting with a Senior Planning Officer and an Urban Design Officer. PPAs are also used as a project management tool in relation to major developments, this use can be rolled out more widely.. While some PPAs include a mechanism for cost recovery,

including consultants' fees and Officer time, this is a new approach within the service and there is no legislation that requires applicants to enter into a PPA. Currently there is no charge for the Design Review Panel.

- 7.12 In reviewing the level of charging other Councils were benchmarked. All those benchmarked (all Inner London and Lewisham's neighbours) charge for Pre Application discussions on Major Applications. All bar one charge more than Lewisham and the proposed increase in our charges would still leave them between 28%-54% below the mean compared with the other Councils benchmarked. Existing charging rates need to increase as the Planning Service does not cover its costs and new charges need to be introduced. It is considered reasonable to charge for pre application advice, especially given the improvements that will be made to the service and in doing this, abortive work can be avoided. Lewisham's charging rates are considered to be at a level which would not discourage discussion.
- 7.13 The fee for initial pre application discussion will increase to £1500 inclusive of VAT for the initial meeting with a further charge for additional meetings. Initial discussions should be based on an outline of a Design and Access Statement and tentative solutions not on detailed schemes . The initial meeting will involve the appropriate officers from within the Council and if necessary Statutory consultees depending on the specifics of the scheme.
- 7.14 In addition to the new charging schedule PPAs will be promoted by Officers in all cases, templates and advice will be placed on Lewisham's website which will be continually updated with advice. Applicants will also be offered the opportunity to meet free of charge with Officers once a PPA template has been completed in draft. PPA's are intended to be flexible documents tailored to specific schemes to focus on delivery of a decision. They should also be used post decision to ensure that appropriate discussions take place prior to works commencing on site.

- 7.15 The impact of the Protocol and new charges will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. It will focus on the uptake of the service, its use and their merit of PPAs. When schemes have used the service, feedback will be sought on benefit of the Protocol.
- 7.16 The Planning Service will continue to offer a level of free advice by phone and through the Duty Planner service. Pre application charging is being investigated for minor and householder applications. The format of those changes is not yet decided and it is proposed that any changes to that service will be brought forward later this year to ensure that there is sufficient time to embed the necessary procedures.

### **Design Review Panel**

- 7.17 In 2001, Lewisham was one of the first boroughs in London to establish a local design review panel. The Design Panel is a group of independent design experts, mostly architects, who meet regularly to assess and review development schemes at either pre application or application stage of planning process. The panel does not make decisions on planning applications, but its terms of reference are advise those that do, namely the Planning Committees and planning officers. Since its creation, Lewisham's Design Review Panel has been successful in improving the design quality of many schemes throughout the borough. Throughout its years of operation, the panel has also been informally updated on several occasions to improve panel efficiency.
- 7.18 As part of the improved Major Application protocol, it is felt that the Design Panel needs to be more formally updated. The NPPF attaches great importance to good design in the built environment and advises that local planning authorities should have local design review arrangement in place to provide assessment and support to ensure high standards of design. The changes should also take into account recent guidance on design review panels from the Bishop Review and Design

Council CABE. Further, the changes will include operational improvements that have been highlighted through consultation with existing panel members and council Officers.

7.19 The Bishop Review, published in October 2011 is meant to 'clarify and recommend a nationwide system of support to deliver design quality in the built environment'. It recommended that there should no longer be a centralised system of design review but that design should be reviewed through a series of local and regional panels. The localisation of reviews is also covered in the National Planning Policy Framework, where in paragraph 62, it states:

*"In general, early engagement on design produces the greatest benefits. In assessing applications, local planning authorities should have regard to the recommendations from the design review panel."*

7.20 In addition, the Bishop Review looked at the issue of charging for design review panel services and stated that pre application fees are the best option for funding, since this is the time when both developers and local authorities find Design Review advice most helpful.

7.21 Since the creation of its Design Review Panel network, Design Council CABE has been the recognised authority on best practice for design review panels. As part of guidance produced in 2009, the organisation outlined their 10 principles of Design Review and the changes proposed for the Lewisham Design Panel will be in accordance with these principles.

7.22 Finally, recent internal reviews of the panel by existing panel members and planning officers have highlighted that the following improvements are needed:

- Panel members need to be refreshed – a more varied mix of experts is needed, and the role of the chair should be an independent one

- Focus on larger scale and priority proposals
- More formalised meeting operations: briefing of panel members, site visits, involvement of case officers, consistency in the role of the chair
- Review more at pre-application stage
- Developers should pay for Design Review service
- Design Panel should be part of other processes to ensure design quality within the planning service through the design workshop and design training

### **Proposed Changes to the Design Review Panel**

- 7.23 The Panel will continue to review the general design quality of a wide range of schemes across the borough apart from Convoys Wharf, Lewisham Gateway and Surrey Canal Triangle – each of which has its own specific design panel.
- 7.24 The Panel would be chaired by a nominated independent chairperson (rather than a councillor who nominally chairs the Panel presently) – a high-profile professional with a track record of achievement who will command the respect of the other Panel members. A representative of a developer project team, ideally the architect, would normally present schemes to the Design Review Panel. Planning, Design and Regeneration officer(s) involved in pre application discussions would also be present in the meeting.
- 7.25 The Design Review Panel members would be made up of professional external advisors and would include high profile architects, urban designers, landscape architects, planners, artists, sustainability specialists and other relevant built environment professionals.
- 7.26 Ultimately, the quality of the advice offered by any Panel is directly related to the quality of its members. Thus, the aspiration is to attract members of highest calibre and credibility in their respective fields.

Lewisham Design Review Panel needs professionals with vision, creativity, first-class skills and the desire to achieve excellent design to make a real difference to the future of Lewisham. This aspiration is reflected in the financial commitment to the panel – while some London boroughs operate their Design Panels on a purely voluntary basis, it is considered that Panel members of the right calibre should receive a monetary allowance to compensate their time and expertise commitment to a certain degree . This allowance would be a way of recognising the time and effort involved but would fall short of full cost of the time given. The payment is essentially about recognition.

- 7.27 Invitations for Panel membership will be advertised through Lewisham’s website and trade magazines (Planning Magazine, Architects Journal, Building Design, etc). Applications from both inside and outside the borough will be encouraged from all sections of the professional community.
- 7.28 Panel members would be appointed for a term of two years, which is subject to renewal. Panel members would be expected to abide by strict confidentiality and conflict of interest standards.
- 7.29 The refreshed Panel will meet on a four-weekly. At its start Panel members will be invited to attend an Induction Day to familiarise themselves with structure of governance in Lewisham and the key issues and agendas of the planning service. The Induction Day would also include a tour of the Borough focusing on main regeneration areas.
- 7.30 The annual costs of the panel are estimated at approximately £18,700 all of which is expected to be funded through pre-application charging. This cost has to be viewed in the light of value added by an external design expertise. Such panels have been known to streamline the pre-application process by setting concrete dates for review and providing expert advice. In addition, the Design Panel will provide an opportunity

for Planning officers to develop a furtherance of their knowledge and appreciation of design.

- 7.31 The Panel's work will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. The evaluation will focus on whether or not the advice of the Panel has been taken and if the scheme was better as a result. Lewisham Design officers will consider methods for capturing and disseminating lessons learnt from the Design Review Panel.

## **8 Planning Enforcement – adoption of an enforcement charter and proposed changes to the scheme of delegation**

### **Background**

- 8.1 The Planning Enforcement Service has traditionally been reactive and based on controlling development rather than being about developing places.. Therefore, the service has been complaint led and priorities have tended to be set by those who can complain most effectively. Also, there has been an under use of the Council's information system. This has resulted in a service that has been inconsistent in how it has dealt with complainants but also those who have undertaken unauthorised works.
- 8.2 In advance of the planning restructure in September 2011, working practices changed with a greater use of the Council's information system. The restructure of the planning service also involved the deletion of the enforcement team manager role with enforcement being part of the two generic area teams. This approach was also taken for the validation part of the planning process.
- 8.3 In order to make the Council's Planning Enforcement more focussed on dealing with significant harm and supporting the delivery of the

significant regeneration that is taking place within the Borough, the following changes are being proposed:

- The introduction of an Enforcement Charter; and
- Suggested changes to the scheme of delegation to allow resources to be focussed on those matters that result in significant harm.

### **Enforcement Charter**

8.4 Given that the Planning Enforcement function is now within each of the two area teams, there is a need to set priorities for enforcement to manage expectations of customers. An enforcement charter is seen as a proactive way of managing resources and is recommended in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 207).

8.5 A copy of the Planning Enforcement Charter is attached in **Appendix A**. The key feature of this is the formalisation of priorities for enforcement as follows:

- **1<sup>st</sup> Priority Cases** - where works are being carried out which will cause irremediable harm, for example, works to a listed building, demolition of a listed building and works to trees with protection orders
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Priority Cases** - where works or uses are causing a significant and continued harm to amenity, for example, the unauthorised use of a residential property as a business premises, and unauthorised conversions of properties to flats.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Priority Cases** - where works or uses cause harm to the amenity of an area but do not fall into the categories above, for example, installation of shop fronts, unauthorised detached structure and non-



compliance with the approved consent and the unauthorised construction of an extension

- **4th Priority Cases** - where there is a breach of planning control but there is little or no immediate harm to amenity or where the harm can be easily remedied for example, the unauthorised installation of satellite dishes and adverts.

8.6 It should be recognised that the priorities above will be used to allocate resources to dealing with enforcement. For 4<sup>th</sup> priority cases, resources are such that cases will be logged on our system and complainants will be informed that no action will be taken at the present. It is anticipated that the priorities above will be kept under review and it may be the case that additional resources could be allocated to deal with a particular issue on an area based approach. For example, if in support of the Council's regeneration of a certain area, breaches in a lower category may be given a greater priority. However, this will be entirely dependent on the availability of resources and there is a strong possibility that 4<sup>th</sup> priority cases and area based approaches will not be actioned for the foreseeable future.

### **Scheme of Delegation**

8.7 The current scheme of delegation only gives very limited delegation to Officers regarding the control over the following breaches of planning control: unauthorised windows, doors, satellite dishes, walls, fences, gates, railings, shop fronts, roller shutters, canopies/blinds, ventilation flues/ducting; and air conditioning/refrigeration units whether or not a property is in a conservation area.

8.8 Given that resources are limited, it is recommended that the Mayor notes that scheme of delegation is to be extended so that the agreement to instigate enforcement action is delegated to officers. Committee approval will be still required where the Council needs to take direct

action following the non compliance with continued prosecution or where a particular site needs to be considered at committee at the discretion of the Head of Planning Services.

## **9 Financial Implications**

- 9.1 The Planning Service controllable budget (including economic development) currently stands at £2.3m. The package of measures in this report aim to put in place changes to service delivery to deliver the savings agreed by Mayor and Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2013 for the financial year 2014/15 as well as to ensure that the Planning Service achieves its existing income targets. The costs associated with the design review panel will be met from Planning Performance Agreements..

## **Legal Implications**

- 10.1 This report requests the Mayor to note certain changes and approaches by the introduction of a major application protocol, schedule of charges, and changes to the design panel. The report also requests the Mayor to note the introduction of an enforcement charter and changes to the scheme of delegation.
- 10.2 With reference to the charging schedule. Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 provides power for the Council to charge for discretionary services. Discretionary services are those services that an authority has the power but not a duty to provide. An authority may charge where the person who receives the service has agreed to its provision. The power to charge under this provision does not apply where the power to provide the service in question already benefits from a charging power (93(2)(a)) or is subject to an express prohibition from charging (93(2)(b)).

- 10.3 Section 93(3) and (4) place a duty on the Council to ensure that, taking one year with another, the income from charges for each kind of discretionary service does not exceed the costs of provision.
- 10.4 Section 93(5) provides that the Council may set the charges as it thinks fit, and may in particular charge only certain people for a service or charge different people different amounts.
- 10.5 With reference to the Enforcement Charter. The Charter will not be a Local Plan for the purposes of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and associated Regulations. If a determination is to be made under the planning Acts the charter will carry no to little weight in such determination as the document does not form part of the Development Plan but is a material consideration. (Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
- 10.6 With reference to the Scheme of delegation. The Planning functions set out in the scheme are functions which are not to be the responsibility of an authority's executive by virtue of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities ) (England) Regulations 2000. Under the Constitution it falls to the Executive Director for Resources to nominate officers to take those decisions.
- 10.7 The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a new public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 10.8 In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

10.9 The duty continues to be a “have regard duty”, and the weight to be attached to it is a matter for the Mayor, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations.

10.10 The Equality and Human Rights Commission has recently issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-act-codes-of-practice-and-technical-guidance/>

10.11 The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:

1. The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
2. Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
3. Engagement and the equality duty

4. Equality objectives and the equality duty
5. Equality information and the equality duty

10.12 The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty/>

## **10 Crime and Disorder Implications**

10.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report..

## **11. Equalities Implications**

11.1 The Council's Comprehensive Equality Scheme for 2012-16 provides an overarching framework and focus for the Council's work on equalities and helps ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

11.2 The changes to the ways in which the Council consults on planning applications could have a significant impact on people who do not have English as their first language and also those who are unable to use information technology. Measures will need to be put in place to specifically address these issues through an Equalities Analysis Assessment when the detailed proposals are brought forward.

## **12. Environmental Implications**

12.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

### **13. Children and Young People’s Implications**

13.1 There are no Children and Young People’s implications arising from this report..

### **14. Sustainable Community Implications**

14.1 The impact of the Sustainable Community Strategy are addressed in the report above.

### **15. Conclusion**

15.1 The measures set out in this report aim to improve the effectiveness of the service with regard to how applications are considered but also how enforcement can be more targeted. This will have benefits for customers but will also achieve budget savings.

### **15. Background documents and originator**

Appendix A – Enforcement Charter

Short Title Document	Date	File Location	File Reference	Contact Officer	Exempt

If you have any queries on this report, please contact Gavin Cooper, Senior Group Manager, Development Management, 3rd floor Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, Catford SE6 4RU – telephone 020 8314 8774.