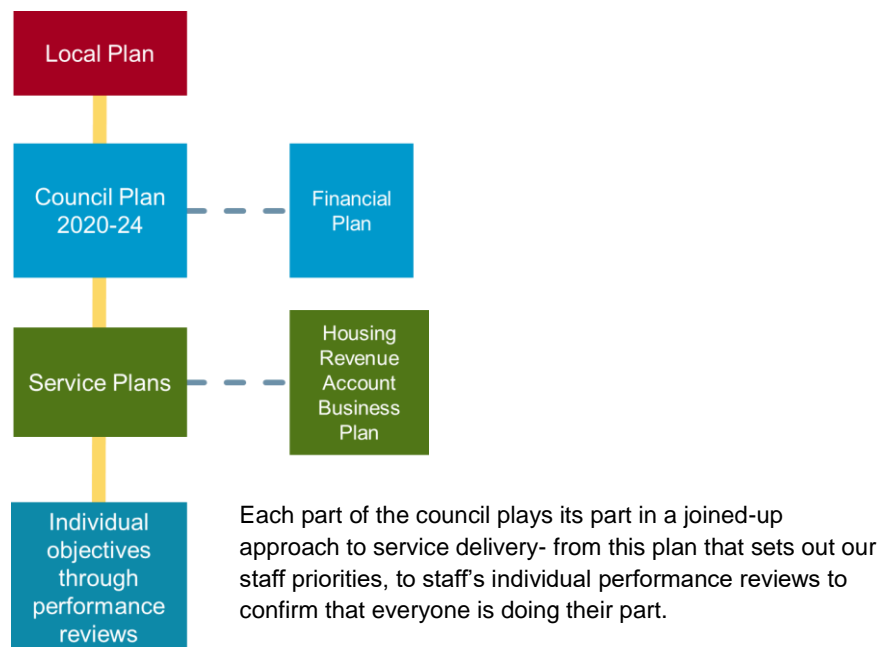


# Planning Service Plan 2023-24

Version 0.7

April 2023 – March 2024



**Director:**

**Portfolio holders:**

## **Service Plan Template 2023-24: Contents Page**

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### **Notes for Director and Assistant Director/Service Leads:**

\*Certain parts of this form will be pre-populated. This will include your turnover, full time equivalent/headcount and absence rates.

Shaded areas are for guidance.

### **When you have completed your Service Plan:**

- ✓ Save to O:\Service Plans. Final versions will be placed on the intranet/internet
- ✓ Communicate it to your staff
- ✓ Keep it under review – make it a live document which adds value!
- ✓ Use it to formulate individual objectives

## Section 1 – Brief description of service and purpose(s)

### What we do and who we deliver to

Planning is a means to deliver good clean growth, thriving communities and environmental care. Recognising that change is a constant that requires active intervention and stewardship.

Planning in East Devon has a broader role than just a narrow regulatory function. It delivers outcomes and can stimulate growth in a cared for environment. It helps to create the places where people want to live, work, invest and visit. It can shape places and stimulate markets. It can have significant positive impacts on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the community. It can lead the transition to zero carbon development.

The combined service purposes include:

- Say yes to good development
- Achieve a good mix of skills and jobs in East Devon
- Achieve zero carbon growth
- Enable regeneration, economic success and new homes within the District
- Safe buildings safe people

The Service deals with planning applications and Building Regulations submissions, and is also charged with the Statutory responsibility for preparing the Council's Local Plan which contains the strategic policies as well as the more detailed development management policies for the future and local land charges. These all help to shape the scale and quality of development of the District over the years ahead.

The Service also works for and with our communities including to deliver Neighbourhood Plans and seeks to fully engage the community in planning decisions. Overall the service looks to deliver well-designed and safe buildings that together create successful places that help to promote strong and vibrant communities.

	<p>Our customers are our planning applicants, our resident and business communities, property owners and the breadth of partners, consultees and others interested in planning and development in East Devon.</p> <p>The building control service enforces the Building Act ensuring that all buildings are constructed to appropriate standards in terms of health and safety, structural stability, fire safety, energy useage, drainage, ventilation, etc. They deliver their services to the building industry and householders.</p> <p>The Local Land Charges team help customer’s access information about property in the district to inform land and property purchases.</p>
<p><b>How we deliver and ensure equal access</b></p>	<p>All services are delivered in-house. Equality Assessments have been undertaken for all team services.</p>
<p><b>How we compare</b></p>	<p>Development Management is one of the busiest teams processing planning applications in the south west with a total of 2467 applications received in the 12 months up to the end of October 2022 and a planning application fee income of around £1.1 million for the same period. This is nearly twice as many applications in total than any other Devon District Authority.</p> <p>Our Planning On-line service for viewing applications is at the leading edge of on-line planning services enabling direct access via smart phones to planning application details direct from site notices posted on proposed development sites around the district. The site received nearly 1million hits over the last year – substantially more than any other council service. We also have over 24k registered users.</p> <p>Our Local Plan is now over 5 years old and a review has been commenced with draft plan consultation having taken place through November 2022 – January 2023. We have also been working with our partners at Exeter, Teignbridge, Mid-Devon and Devon County on a strategic plan for the Greater Exeter area and a non-statutory plan is being developed. We also have a higher number of neighbourhood plans made or in production than any other non-unitary planning authority in England; this reflects our pro-active approach to neighbourhood planning.</p>

	<p>Our Building Control service is one of the best value in the region with our hourly rate below the average despite offering a first rate service. We are competitive with approved inspectors and recovered all of our costs in the last financial year and retained a surplus of over £100k accrued over the last 5 years which will be reinvested in the service. The team retains a 76.12% of market share based on numbers of applications. In the last year they have processed 1320 building regulations applications, 35 demolition notices, 43 pre application visits, 313 quotes, 55 enforcement cases and 54 dangerous structures.</p> <p>The land charges team is the authority for property searches for the District, enabling solicitors, via official searches and personal searches companies to access Planning, Highways, Building Control and Environmental Health details on properties for potential purchasers. Over the last year the team dealt with 2571 Searches alongside other Information requests. Despite this we have still managed to turn around searches in 2.5 days which is much better than the average of other authorities in Devon.</p>
<p><b>Statutory elements of the service</b></p>	<p>Development Management – including planning applications and appeals, listed building and conservation area consents, advert control, Prior Notifications, Certificates of Lawfulness and enforcement. They also administer the collection of the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations and the spend of receipts to deliver new infrastructure to support growth in the district.</p> <p>Delivery of the Local Plan for the District and Development Plan Documents, plus any Supplementary Planning Documents and other policy documents, guidance, monitoring reports, neighbourhood planning and contributing to wider service delivery.</p> <p>Building Regulations have statutory responsibility for enforcing the building regulations and building safety.</p> <p>Local Land Charges have a statutory obligation to hold the LLC register for the authority and to allow access to property records.</p>

<b>Current net budget (excludes Internal support charges and capital budget)</b>	
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<b>Section 2 – Key achievements in 2022-23</b>		
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	<i>Briefly describe key achievements and what outcomes were created. This will contribute to annual reviews of our Poverty Action Plan, Health &amp; Wellbeing and carbon reduction work.</i>	<i>Link to Council Plan priorities and other strategic objectives: -</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greener East Devon</li> <li>• Better Homes and communities</li> <li>• A resilient economy</li> <li>• Poverty action plan</li> <li>• Health &amp; wellbeing</li> <li>• Carbon reduction</li> </ul>
1.	The Cranbrook Plan has been found sound at examination and has now been adopted as a Development Plan Document to guide the future growth and development of Cranbrook.	Better homes and communities for all A greener East Devon A resilient economy
2.	A draft Local Plan has been produced alongside much of the required evidence with various topic papers and reports taken to Strategic Planning Committee to enable their input into the plan and discussion of the key issues.	Greener East Devon Better Homes and communities A resilient economy Poverty action plan Health & wellbeing Carbon reduction
3.	We have worked with the Council’s Communications team and STRATA to procure Common Place consultation software for use for the Local plan consultation.	Better Homes and communities

<b>Section 2 – Key achievements in 2022-23</b>		
4.	We have undertaken consultation on the draft Local Plan using the Common Place software and a range of face to face events and other tools to publicise and engage with the community on production of the plan.	Better Homes and communities
5.	Working in partnership with Exeter City Council, Mid-Devon District Council and Teignbridge District Council we have procured consultants to produce a joint non-statutory plan to set out a vision for the wider area and infrastructure requirements using the emerging and existing local plans to inform this work.	Greener East Devon Better Homes and communities A resilient economy Poverty action plan Health & wellbeing Carbon reduction
6.	Local Land Charges have managed to respond to search requests within 2.5 days.	A resilient economy
7.	We have undertaken a further call for sites to support local plan work and held a number of HELAA panel meetings as well as produced a final draft HELAA report covering the various call for sites carried out in recent years.	Better Homes and communities
8.	We have held a series of successful and popular webinars with our neighbourhood planning groups and town and parish councils to engage them with work on the new Local Plan and keep them appraised of neighbourhood planning issues.	Better Homes and communities A resilient economy
9.	We have continued to support neighbourhood planning groups in the district with neighbourhood plans made in Farringdon, Otterton and Newton Poppleford and Harpford over the last year. A neighbourhood plan for Dalwood has been through examination and is awaiting a referendum. Colyton Parish Neighbourhood Plan has been supported at referendum and is due to be made.	Greener East Devon Better Homes and communities A resilient economy

**Section 2 – Key achievements in 2022-23**

10.	We have commented on a submission draft of the Luppitt neighbourhood plan which is now moving to a referendum. We have also commented on a submission draft of the Broadclyst neighbourhood plan. The Kilmington neighbourhood plan has also been through referendum and been made.	Greener East Devon Better Homes and communities A resilient economy
11.	Consultants have been appointed and have been working to develop an updated mitigation strategy to address the impacts of development on the Exe Estuary and Pebblebed Heaths arising from the new developments proposed in the new Local Plan	Better homes and communities for all A greener East Devon
12.	We have been working with the land owners and our Property and Estates team to develop a masterplan for the Hayne Lane, Honiton employment land allocation in the Local Plan and a plan for its delivery.	A resilient economy
13.	We have been working closely with the Land Registry on the transfer of data to implement changes to the local land charges system. This has included improving the quality and accuracy of some of the data held ready for transfer to Land Registry in April 2023.	A resilient economy

**Section 3 – Looking forward: what we will do in 2023-24 (service objectives)**

This service agrees that it will undertake the work required under the Financial Sustainability Model adopted by Council in its Financial Plan in reviewing the service under the following 6 areas:

- **System Thinking**
- **Digital Transformation**



- Customer Access
- Performance Management Data
- Asset Management
- Income Maximisation

3.1 Service priorities we will deliver in 2023/24 which support the Council Plan Priorities; the Poverty Action Plan and Health & Wellbeing. (Carbon reduction activities see section 5 below)	Financial/ corporate resource	Lead Officers
To progress the Local Plan through to a publication draft in accordance with the timetable set out within the local development scheme and in accordance with members aspirations outlined in the Council Plan including zero carbon development, promoting walking and cycling, bio-diversity net gain, affordable housing, promoting a green and resilient economy and the diversification of town centres.	Within budget	Service Lead/Planning Policy Manager
Ensure that site allocations within the new local plan are robust and clear about the infrastructure that must be delivered to support them and secure its timely delivery.	Within budget	Service Lead/Planning Policy Manager
Complete production of the evidence base to support the new Local Plan including a viability assessment, sustainability appraisal, habitat regulations assessment etc.	Within budget	Planning Policy Manager
Continue to collect and spend Community Infrastructure Levy monies to deliver the infrastructure needed to support new development.	Within budget	Development Manager
Continue to work with Neighbourhood Planning Groups and support them delivering Neighbourhood Plans that reflect the aspirations of their	Within budget	Planning Policy Manager

community and where appropriate support them in delivering the growth allocated in the plan.		
To continue to enforce against unauthorised and harmful developments quickly and effectively.	Within budget	Development Manager
To determine planning applications for the expansion at Cranbrook and secure the range of uses needed to create the vibrant town envisaged by policy.	Within budget	Development Manager
To determine applications for the expansion areas at Cranbrook to maintain a supply of housing plots and meet the aspirations for growing the town to approx 7800 homes.	Within budget	Development Manager
Ensure that all new homes inspected by our building control service are built to appropriate standards ensuring that high quality homes are provided.	Within budget	Building Control Manager
Ensure that new developments are required to deliver appropriate levels of open space and promote walking and cycling to deliver better health and wellbeing outcomes.	Within budget	Development Manager
Investigate the potential for the wider use of development orders and other tools such as design codes and masterplans to provide clarity to the development industry and secure higher quality developments.	Within budget	Development Manager
Support and enable the delivery of self and custom build plots in the district.	Within budget	Service Lead/Planning Policy Manager
Complete work on and adopt a new Playing Pitch Strategy for the district that clearly identifies the needs for enhanced provision and plots a course towards their delivery.	Within budget	Planning Policy Manager

To provide a responsive and pro-active dangerous structures service to ensure that action is taken against any dangerous structures in a timely manner for 24/7, 365 days a year.	Within budget	Building Control Manager
To engage fully with communities on planning applications and policies through neighbourhood planning including through the implementation of the Neighbourhood Planning communications strategy.	Within budget and neighbourhood planning government grants	Development Manager/Planning Policy Manager
To report on our delivery of high quality new and improved play areas, open spaces and sports pitches funded from development proposals.	Within budget	Development Manager
To continue to work to reduce the carbon emissions involved in the operation of the service by seeking to minimise the need to travel both to and from the offices but also to site visits and explore opportunities to travel more sustainably where such travel cannot be avoided.	Within budget	All
Ensure all protected trees in the district are appropriately protected and where appropriate action is taken against those undertaking unauthorised and harmful works to protected trees.	Within budget	Development Manager
Develop an updated mitigation strategy to address the impacts of development on the Exe Estuary and Pebblebed Heaths arising from the new developments proposed in the new Local Plan	Within budget	Planning Policy Manager
Develop a mitigation strategy for phosphate levels arising from development affecting the River Axe.	Government grant funding	Service Lead/Planning Policy Manager
To secure all necessary habitats and flood mitigation measures to mitigate the impacts of developments. To refuse all of the development that don't deliver necessary habitat and flood mitigation measures	Within budget	Development Manager

To continue to apply existing Local Plan and neighbourhood plan policies and government policy to secure the most low carbon, energy efficient new developments we can to minimise additions to the carbon footprint of the district.	Within budget	Development Manager
Where appropriate to enable the early delivery of preferred allocations within the new Local Plan to help to bolster the housing land supply and address the 5 year housing land supply shortfall.	Within budget	Development Manager
Working with our neighbouring authorities within the Greater Exeter area to agree and adopt a joint infrastructure list to accompany the non-statutory strategic plan.	Within budget	Service Lead
To manage the efficient and orderly transfer of data in the local land charges system to the Land Registry.	Within budget	Economy Practice manager
To investigate measures to give members better insight into the work of the Planning Enforcement Officers in their wards.	Within budget	Development Manager
To progress the actions in the Heritage Strategy including production of a local list.	Within budget	Planning Policy Manager

<b>3.2 Service development / project *</b> (this will be monitored in SPAR)	<b>Expected outcome</b>	<b>Resources required</b>
To produce and consult on a publication draft of the new Local Plan.	To have completed consultation on the final draft of the Local Plan and have submitted it for examination.	Planning Policy Team Service Lead
<b>Link to Council Plan priorities</b>	Greener East Devon Better Homes and communities	

		A resilient economy
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer
1. Review responses to the draft plan consultation and report detailed comments and proposed plan changes to Strategic Planning Committee	July 2023	Planning Policy Manager
2. Review implications of the Levelling up and Regeneration Act and make recommendations on main changes to the Local Plan arising from them.	July 2023	Planning Policy Manager
3. Produce a revised draft of the Local Plan for review by Strategic Planning Committee.	October 2023	Planning Policy Manager
4. Consult on publication draft of the new Local Plan	November – December 2023	Planning Policy Manager
5. Collate responses to publication draft consultation	February 2024	Planning Policy Manager
6. Submit Local Plan for examination in public	March 2024	Planning Policy Manager

3.2 Service development / project * (this will be monitored in SPAR)	Expected outcome	Resources required
To review and adopt a new Statement of Community Involvement	A revised SCI that meets Members expectations and learns from recent experience.	Planning Policy Team Development Manager
Link to Council Plan priorities	Better Homes and communities	
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer
1. To review recent experience with the Local Plan consultation and issues raised previously with consultation on planning applications.	June 2023	Planning Policy Manager

2. Produce a revised draft of the Statement of community involvement and report this to Strategic Planning Committee for review.	July 2023	Planning Policy Manager
3. Consult on the proposed changes to the Statement of Community Involvement.	September 2023	Planning Policy Manager
4. Make any amendments further to the consultation responses and report back to Strategic Planning Committee for adoption.	October 2023	Planning Policy Manager

<b>3.3 Service measure/indicator</b>	<b>How often – monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, annually</b>	<b>For whom? Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny</b>	<b>Responsible Officer for production of management information</b>	<b>Retain this measure (yes/no) or new</b>
Reporting of appeal decisions and appeals received.	Monthly	Planning Committee	Development Manager	Yes
Annual Planning Appeals Monitoring Report	Annually	Planning Committee	Development Manager	Yes
Planning appeals performance	Quarterly	Scrutiny	Development Manager	Yes
S106 and CIL Monitoring Report	Annually	Strategic Planning Committee	Development Manager	Yes
Infrastructure Funding Statement	Annually	Strategic Planning Committee	Development Manager	Yes
Housing Monitoring Report	Annually	Strategic Planning Committee	Planning Policy Manager	Yes
Employment Land Monitoring Report	Annually	Strategic Planning Committee	Planning Policy Manager	Yes

Annual report on self and custom build demand and provision	Annually	Strategic Planning Committee	Planning Policy Manager	Yes
Report on performance on planning applications classified as minor and others.	Quarterly	Scrutiny Committee	Economy Practice Manager	Yes

<b>Section 4 – Workforce Planning key findings and actions (see appendix for detailed Workforce Plan)</b>	
<b>Major demands impacting on the workforce have been identified as:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing demands on officers time due to changing legislation and the uncertainty that this brings and time taken to stay up to date.</li> <li>The declining role of consultees who increasingly do not have the resources to respond and issue standing advice that requires our officers to do the assessment when previously consultees would have done this themselves.</li> <li>Customers increasingly having unrealistic expectations of the service and our role.</li> </ul>
<b>Major issues impacting on workforce supply have been identified as:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems recruiting staff due to a massive shortage of planners and surveyors and the draw of the private sector.</li> <li>Retention of staff as we have seen a higher than usual staff turnover in the last year leading to vacancies that we cannot fill and having to use agency staff in the interim.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority workforce actions that have been agreed by the Service Management Team in liaison with their HR Business Partner are:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek to grow our own planners and surveyors through apprenticeships and promoting careers in these professions through local schools and colleges where possible.</li> </ul>

<p><b>The service Workforce Plan will be reviewed by the Management Team, in liaison with the HR Business Partner, on the following basis:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly review through Management Team meetings with review of success of recruitments after each recruitment process to note successes and where improvements can be made to better find suitable candidates.</li> </ul>
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**Section 5 – Carbon and resource use**

5.1 Short term objective	Expected outcome	Resources required
Develop Local Plan policies to ensure new development is net zero carbon	Only net zero carbon developments built in the district	Planning Policy Team
<b>Link to climate plan action plan</b>		
Milestones	Due date	Lead officer
1. Produce a revised draft of the Local Plan for review by Strategic Planning Committee.	October 2023	Planning Policy Manager
2. Consult on publication draft of the new Local Plan	November – December 2023	Planning Policy Manager
3. Collate responses to publication draft consultation	February 2024	Planning Policy Manager
4. Submit Local Plan for examination in public	March 2024	Planning Policy Manager
5.2 Long term objective	Expected outcome	Resources required
Investigate options for officers to travel by more sustainable means when undertaking site inspections such as electric pool cars.	Reduced carbon footprint from travelling officers	Development Manager Building Control Manager



<b>Link to climate plan action plan</b>		
<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Lead officer</b>
1. Collate data on travel needs of officers and numbers of vehicles required.	July 2023	Development Manager Building Control Manager
2. Investigate options for providing vehicles and cost implications.	October 2023	Development Manager Building Control Manager
3. Consider costings for each option and how the cost could be met.	December 2023	Development Manager Building Control Manager
4. Make recommendations about the best option for meeting travelling officers requirements in the most sustainable way.	March 2024	Development Manager Building Control Manager

## **Section 6 – Risks**

**New/emerging risks consider with your team any new and emerging risks to be reported to the Management Information Officer.**

**Any current risks that are emerging as high risk should also be reported to the Management Information Officer.**

## **Section 7 – Digital / Data Transformation**

Digital and data are essential building blocks of a successful organisation. Digital transformation will enable teams to work in a more streamlined and efficient way, reducing duplicated work and automating manual processes, in support of our service plans.

Digital refers to a technology-enabled way of working that uses modern tools, technology and capability.

Data refers to digital information about people, things and systems.

**Aims:** Digital transformation will make accessing and delivering our services to the customer far quicker and simpler. To deliver a better service for our customers we require fast and efficient digital services, high quality data and skilled staff.

### 7.1 Current and ongoing digital/data projects

*Use this section to record current and ongoing digital/data projects within your service relating to systems, software, processes or anything that requires a digital or data solution. Please provide details of the project objective, progress, difficulties and showstoppers currently affecting the project, a record of these will be kept across iterations of the service plan to track their progress. The Digital and Data team will analyse these projects and contact you to discuss potential solutions to the issues you identify.  
(Please use one table per project, copy and paste table as needed)*

Name of project
Power BI dashboards
Impact on service (low/med/high)
The potential to have real time data on what is happening in key service areas such as Development Management, Building Control and CIL/Section 106 is very important as a management tool and to enable improved performance management and reporting in these areas.
Names of key members of staff/project leaders involved in the project (including Strata and third parties – include organisation name)
Nick Wright
Project objective/desired outcome/goals - how does this project support the council's digital/financial sustainability strategy?

To have a clear dashboard to show real-time data of key service areas in order to have better performance management and improved service delivery.

**Description of project, system/software used, current progress, difficulties and showstoppers currently affecting the project**

Current reporting data in development management is fortnightly and involves sourcing data from various systems and so can be time consuming. In other areas data is produced as and when required. Having real-time data through a dashboard would reduce resources in producing stats and enable real time monitoring of performance. The main barrier to achieving this has been resources within Planning to set out what is needed and get this set up with other officers.

**Project start date (if applicable)**

May 2023

**Project end date (if applicable)**

Unknown