

TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes and report to Council of the meeting of the Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted on the 21 November 2024 at 7:30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Sayer (Chair), Chris Farr (Vice-Chair), Blackwell, Sue Farr, Jones, Prew, Spencer, Steeds and Gray (Substitute) (In place of Fowler)

PRESENT (Virtually): Councillor Lockwood

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Nicholas White

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Duggan and Fowler

170. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2024

The minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

171. QUARTER 2 2024/25 BUDGET MONITORING - PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

An analysis of expenditure against the Committee's revenue budget for 2024/25, as at the end of September 2024 (Quarter 2/Month 6) was presented. The approved budget had been set at £1,817k and had been increased by £83k to distribute an amount held corporately for the 2024/25 pay award. The total budget was therefore £1,900k.

A full year overspend of £158k was forecast. This was a movement of £192k from Quarter 1 and predominantly related to a drop in expected planning application fees. This would be subject to continued monitoring throughout the rest of the year.

Several risk and opportunities were being managed within the budget including spending on planning appeals. It was expected there was sufficient contingency to manage these risks.

Across the whole Council, there was a full year forecast surplus of £165k.

Regarding the Committee's capital programme (entirely funded by Community Infrastructure Levy income), the total budget was set for £1,801k. Slippage of £282k was expected due to delays experienced by projects linked with match funding.

In response to Member questions, Officers explained:

- successful recruitment in Development Management meant there was less reliance on interim staff. Two new Officers had been appointed in Planning Enforcement, and they'd be supported by more senior Officers. Permanent recruitment to Planning Policy was challenging. This work continued to be covered by interim staff.
- in terms of planning incursions, the Council's planning enforcement contractor was dealing with 16 cases. It was expected that several of the most complex cases would be handled by another contractor. Members expressed the view that an interim policy on

Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Sites would assist with planning appeals.

RESOLVED – that the Committee’s Revenue and Capital budget forecast positions as at Quarter 2 / Month 6 (September) 2024/25 be noted.

172. QUARTER 2 2024/25 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND RISK REGISTER - PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

The Committee considered a report with key planning performance indicators for the second quarter of 2024/25, as collected by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), planning service performance and the Planning Departmental Risk Register.

The KPI outturns were in line with MHCLG’s required performance levels for planning applications and continued to demonstrate an upward trend in improvement in the delivery of the planning service.

Work on reducing the backlog continued in Quarter 2, with a reduction from 49% of overdue cases in January to 17% as of 29 October 2024. The KPIs for all kinds of application were well above the required national targets. It was also noted that the validation timescales had substantially reduced since 2023.

Members paid tribute to the work of the Planning department in delivering improvements to the Planning service.

In response to a Member question, Officers confirmed there had been a reduction in the number of planning applications being submitted. The Development Management team were using this period to focus on continuing the backlog reduction and improving internal processes. These improvements and the new staff structure should enable the team to handle any increase in applications later on in the year.

RESOLVED – that the Quarter 2 2024/2025 performance indicators and risks for the Planning Policy Committee be noted.

Rising 7.50 pm