

End of Core Strategy process is in sight

The Core Strategy has had a long period of preparation but the end of the process is now in sight.

Following the examination hearing sessions over the Christmas and New Year period, the Planning Inspector wrote to the Council on January 22, stating the Core Strategy could be made sound with modifications. These modifications – known as Proposed Main Modifications – were published for public consultation between April 13 and May 26.



Following the close of the consultation period the Inspector will consider submitted comments and will prepare a report on his findings, submitting his report to the Council for consideration. The Council will consider whether to adopt the Core Strategy later this summer.

The degree of weight each policy has now when reaching decisions is a matter of judgement based on whether representations were made when the plan was submitted, the discussions held at the hearing sessions and the nature of the modifications recommended by the Inspector. It is clear that policies which are not subject to the Inspector's proposed modifications may carry greater weight now.

As always, officers will provide advice in committee reports and at plans committee meetings to assist councillors when deciding planning applications.

For example, at Plans Committee meetings since February, greater weight has been given to relevant emerging policies when making balanced decisions on major residential proposals. These application assessments weigh very carefully in the planning balance the adopted planning policy, the housing supply situation, emerging core strategy policies and relevant material planning considerations. The planning balance will differ depending on the specific and individual merits and characteristics of each case.

Did you know. . .

It is a common misconception that Planning Enforcement officers will be able to resolve boundary disputes.

The truth is the Enforcement Team can confirm whether or not a development is in accordance with the approved plans but they cannot confirm the legal extent of a property boundary. The onus is on the developer to ensure the development is within their land. If it is not, a relevant notice should be served on the adjoining owner of the land by the applicant to inform them of the intention to develop their land.

It is often the case that a development is built in accordance with the approved plans but the neighbour believes it has been built on their land. In these circumstances the neighbouring owners will be informed that this is a private matter to be resolved between them.

For more information, visit www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/planning_enforcement or contact the enforcement team at development.control@charnwood.gov.uk or call 01509 634722

Big step towards five-year supply

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has confirmed that he does not want to call-in the North East of Leicester Sustainable Urban Extension planning application.

This is a significant step towards securing the five year supply of housing for the Borough. The latest reported estimates were that housing supply was between 4.8 and 5.3 years depending on the method of calculation used.

If the Core Strategy is adopted by the Council, it will be able to show how a five-year supply can be sustained up to 2028.



There are several live planning applications for major housing development currently awaiting determination. These include proposals adjacent to our larger settlements, including Loughborough and Shepshed, as well as the Service Centres that are defined in the Core Strategy.

The largest application is for the West of Loughborough Sustainable Urban Extension. This application includes up to 3,200 homes, 16ha of employment land and a mixed-use Community Hub of up to 4ha and will be brought forward to a plans committee in the near future.

Did you know?

The Building Control Service operates in a highly-competitive market within which Approved Inspectors also provide Building Control services. The Service recovers its costs from fees set based on the hourly rate of staff and it is one of the cheapest Building Control services in the East Midlands, reflecting its efficiency.

In pursuit of customer excellence

We are committed to putting the customer at the heart of everything we do, and Planning and Regeneration team is working towards achieving Customer Service Excellence (CSE) to demonstrate this.

CSE is the national standard which tests organisations on five key areas of customer service including the involvement of the customer, customer standards, and how the service can improve. It also has particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information provided, professionalism and staff attitude.

Assessment for the award involves providing evidence against 57 separate criteria to demonstrate our commitment to customer service. This was submitted in April and followed by a two-day inspection in May where an inspector checked the evidence and carried out a tough examination including interviews with staff and customers.

If successful, the service will hold the status for the next three years and will receive follow-up inspections to ensure any actions identified have been taken. However, achieving the standard is in many ways just a starting point, with continuous service improvement the real goal.



Development Management restructure

Following the agreement of the Council's Cabinet in September 2013 there have been significant changes in the structure of the Development Management Group seeking to secure improvements to the development management function of the Planning and Regeneration Service.

The restructure has provided a return to two development management teams - Major Development and Local Development to deal with growth and major applications and "minor" and "other" category applications respectively.

The Local Development team also deals with the validation and registration of planning applications as well as street naming and numbering.

The Major Development team is led by Graham Smith and the Local Team is led by Mick Morley. Both Graham and Mick are experienced officers within the group and if there are any issues that you want to raise regarding casework please liaise with them or the relevant case officer.

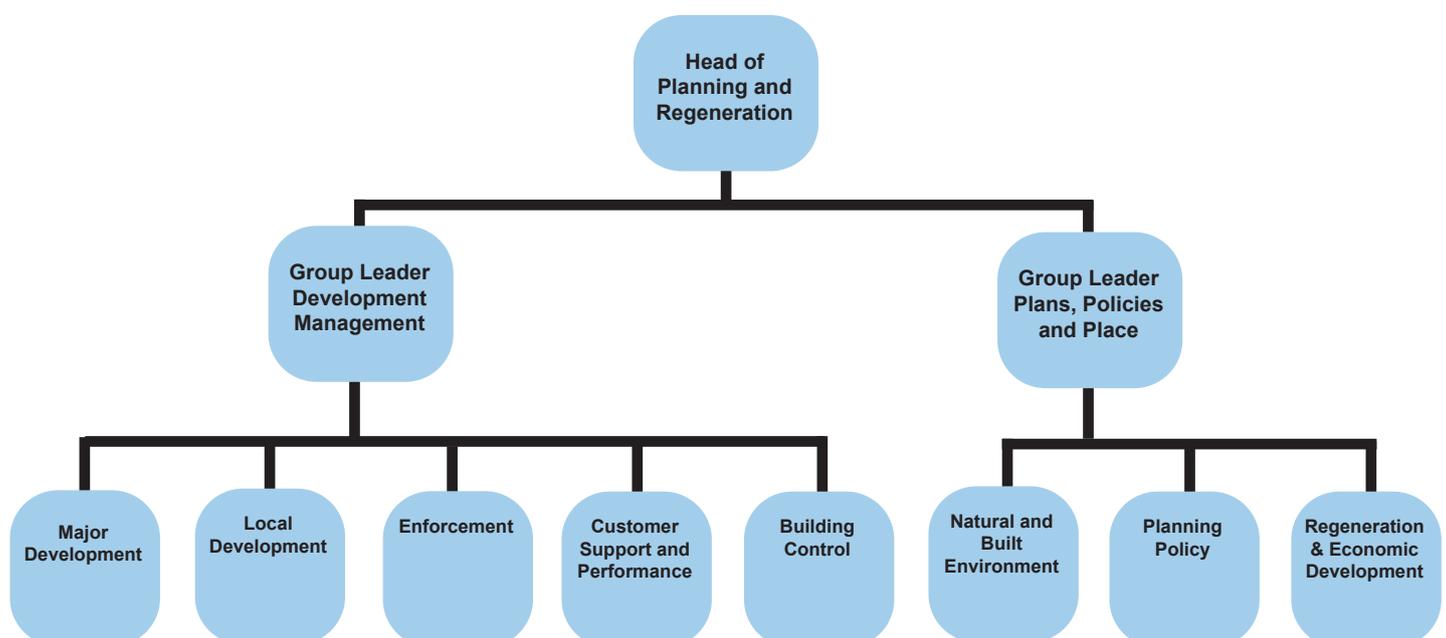
The restructure also recognised the Planning Enforcement area as a distinct team within the service led by Helen Robinson, and created a new team of Customer Support and Performance led by Adrian Le Cras.

Finally, the Building Control Team was brought within the Development Management Group so that together with our development management services, a one stop shop for customers development needs could be provided. Andrew Beard is the new Building Control Team Leader. Andrew commences in post this month and takes over from Steve Mann who has been acting as team leader since last Summer.

The contact details for Graham, Mick, Helen, Adrian and Steve are;

- graham.smith@charnwood.gov.uk or 01509 632521
- mick.morley@charnwood.gov.uk or 01509 634740
- helen.robinson@charnwood.gov.uk or 01509 634743
- adrian.le-cras@charnwood.gov.uk or 01509 634753
- andrew.beard@charnwood.gov.uk or 01509 634756

The Development Management Group sits within the Planning and Regeneration Service, together with the Plans, Policies and Place Group. The structure for the Service is set out below:



Planning: What, Why and How

Understanding the planning process is being made easier thanks to our new online guide.

We have introduced a new section called “A Guide to Planning: What, Why and How” to make our website even more user-friendly.

These pages make the process more accessible, reducing the amount of complex terms used with the aim of demystifying the Development Management process and answering some of our customers’ most frequently asked questions.

The guide covers six areas:

- 1) Before I Apply
- 2) The Planning Process Explained
- 3) Applying for Planning Permission
- 4) View or Comment on Planning Applications
- 5) Planning Decisions and Appeals
- 6) Planning Enforcement

Councillor Eric Vardy Cabinet member for Plans and Regulatory Services, said: “With a range of 'Top Tasks' within each section, web users are now able to dip in and out of the themes relevant to their particular enquiry”.

“This guide will sit alongside the existing Planning web pages, which are being reviewed and further rationalised in the coming months to make the web information as simple, concise and user-friendly as possible”.

So next time you’re thinking of making a planning application, or lying awake at night wanting to find out what your neighbour’s planning to build, check out our online guide and find out all you need to know www.charnwood.gov.uk/development_management.

Visit www.charnwood.gov.uk/planning_explorer to view planning files and monitor the progress of planning applications using Planning Explorer.

The Planning Portal - your one-stop-shop for planning services online. You may now submit your Planning applications online at www.planningportal.gov.uk, over 70 per cent of applications are currently being submitted to Charnwood this way

