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| <u>Committee and Date</u> |
| Council |
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PORTFOLIO HOLDER ANNUAL REPORT PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES

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SUMMARY

This report provides information on the key outcomes and achievements of the past year including some performance statistics, and sets a number of strategic priorities for the forthcoming year.

Planning Services, Strategic Planning and Housing Enabling and Development are all part of the Economic Growth Service and are key services in the Council's role as agents for delivery of economic growth to ensure housing and employment opportunities are realised. Located with the Public Health Service. Trading Standards & Licencing and Regulatory Services continue their vital contribution to protecting and maintaining the health of those who live or work in our area or who visit to enjoy Shropshire.

PLANNING SERVICES

Working with colleagues across the Economic Growth service, and other stakeholders, the Planning Service delivers time sensitive processes to a large number of customer groups who sometimes have different interests and objectives.

The service provides an integrated approach to planning and development-related services, bringing together Regulatory Planning & Enforcement, Historic & Natural Environment Teams, Obligations Monitoring, Building Control and Systems Support, including Land Charges, Street Naming and Numbering and the Corporate Land and Property Gazetteer.

We have sought to commercialise activities where this is practical and the service as a whole is responsible for significant levels of paid for customer transactions through planning, building control, land charges, street naming & numbering as well as internal recharges to other teams to provide specialist technical services such as tree safety inspections. Key facts;

- 95% of planning applications approved
- Over 11,000 outstanding planning permissions for residential development

- 88% of applications (overall) approved in timeframe agreed with applicant and 70% of all applications received in Q1 2017/18 determined within 8 weeks.
- Strong community alignment - 87% of decisions align with view of parish or town council
- Shropshire facing third highest number of planning appeals nationally and yet has one of the highest success rates with 82% of appeals dismissed (2016/17)
- Extensive Rich and Diverse Historic & Natural Environment 441 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 6904 Listed Buildings, 127 Conservation Areas, 34 Registered Parks, 1 Registered Battlefield, 2 World Heritage Sites, 35,000 non-designated heritage assets, 972 confirmed tree preservation orders
- Over 5,500 land charges searches dispatched annually on average
- On average 60 streets, 200 residential properties and 500 commercial properties added to the gazetteer annually
- 99.1% of Building Regulations Full Plans submissions checked within 21 days, 86.%% of Initial Notices dealt with within 3 days

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- **Local Plan:** The partial review of the Local Plan started in January 2017 and will provide an up to date Plan which will help to support growth and maintain local control over planning decisions during the period to 2036.
- **Housing Completions:** An upturn in development activity has significantly boosted housing completions, with over 1900 new houses completed during the last 12 months. An updated Five Year Housing Land Supply statement has been prepared showing that the current supply has increased to 6.04 years and has recently been published on the Council's web pages. Shropshire's performance is rewarded by Government via the New Homes Bonus (NHB) and in 2016/17 Shropshire was again in the top 28 of all English Councils.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy:** During the last 12 months, revenue from the Community Infrastructure Levy has increased to £6.5 million, reflecting higher levels of house building, with a total of £14.75 million CIL paid to date and a further £1.5 million due.

HOUSING ENABLING AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Affordable Housing Contributions:** The Council's policy requirement to secure affordable housing contributions (AHC) has accumulated a capital pot of £6.23m and a further potential of £9.1m. These funds are used to help develop additional local affordable housing projects. A change in national policy significantly restricts the Council's ability to deliver affordable housing.

- **Housing Delivery:** The Council continues to fund the development of additional affordable housing. During 2016/17, the Council spent £1.0m on 93 new dwellings. The total construction value of these schemes amounts to more than £32m. Shropshire Council was successful in being one of 12 Local Authorities nationally to be chosen as Custom and Self Build “Vanguard” authorities by DCLG to pilot self-build housing.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR FORTHCOMING YEAR

- Supporting the implementation of strategic project priorities identified in the Economic Growth Strategy 2017 – 21 for example Ironbridge Power Station and including strategic corridor growth
- Ensuring all departments within Planning Services deal with applications in a timely and effective way, this includes resource planning and development.
- Work with developers and project promoters through pre application stages, particularly for the major planning applications.
- Preferred options for the future scale and distribution of growth will be published in October. Preferred sites and updated policies will follow during 2018.
- Ensuring that the future distribution of growth reflects the outcome of a Green Belt review, the Council’s Economic Growth Strategy and other updated evidence as part of the Local Plan Review.
- Delivery of affordable homes in areas of the County where there is greatest need and continuing to work collaboratively and effectively with Registered Providers.
- Implement the recommendations from the recently formed developer contributions member Task and Finish group and utilise developer contributions to support growth.
- Complete the audit of the Building Control team and implement recommendations.

TRADING STANDARDS AND LICENSING SERVICE

This Service provides licensing functions, parking enforcement, (including the first stage of the associated penalty charge notice processing), and delivers trading standards functions that relate to safety and ‘fair trading’ and administers the Blue Badge Scheme on behalf of the Department for Transport. The Service is committed to an intelligence led and risk based approach and works with a range of partners in order to ensure the Council complies with its consumer protection and business related statutory duties and to contribute to the delivery of the outcomes set out below:

- protect and improve health, wellbeing and safety and enable communities to be resilient
- create cleaner, safer, healthier and sustainable environments, and
- support economic growth.

Over 5,000 Blue Badge applications were processed in 2016/17 with 99.9% granted to those who met the qualifying criteria.

The Service dealt with over 6,000 licence applications in 2016/17 and undertook a range of compliance activities in relation to hackney carriage/private hire, scrap metal and premises licensed for the sale of alcohol; this included the Council's first prosecution under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013. A new Street Trading Policy will be implemented with effect from April 2018. This will be followed by a revision of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy. This Policy has the potential to reduce the misuse of alcohol and those who are affected by crime and environmental impacts such as noise and odour from licensed premises. The revised policy will assist in the shaping around the evening and night-time economy. A revision of the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy will focus on improvements in relation to disability/equalities requirements and strengthening of safeguarding criteria.

In 2016/17, over 7,000 hours of parking enforcement have been undertaken, which resulted in 15,404 parking contravention notices issued.

A total of 44 tobacco and alcohol test purchasing operations were undertaken in 2016/17, with 25% resulting in sales to children. Appropriate action has been taken in all cases, including licence review. We continue to undertake market surveillance and respond to intelligence concerning unsafe consumer products, including vehicles, in order to remove them from the market place and take enforcement action against those who import, supply and sell such products. An importer of electrically unsafe hover boards was prosecuted and has ceased trading in Shropshire. In partnership with Highways & Transport we also took formal action against a large utility company over unsafe road works and permit breaches. The impact of unfair and fraudulent business practices is not only financial; it has a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of victims, particularly as those individuals who are targeted are often socially isolated and in declining mental health, or are businesses where resources are limited and resilience to the impact of any crime is lower. A key development will be to build a stronger partnerships to tackle doorstep crime and scams, linked to the Council duties to take steps to prevent individuals being subject to financial abuse and to prevent or delay adults needing care and support; preventing people becoming victims of doorstep crime and scams is a key element of maintaining health and wellbeing in later life.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Food Safety: In Shropshire there are over 4000 food premises registered with the authority which are subject to a range of interventions. Our Officers work hard to ensure safe food is available from food businesses and our businesses are also working hard - with over 94% found to be broadly compliant with the legalisation.

Looking to the future, the Food Standards Agency has recently published a set of draft plans into how food hygiene and standards legislation is enforced in the future. They are seeking to create a modern, risk-based, proportionate, robust and resilient system will focus on businesses being responsible for producing food that is safe and what it says it is, and being able to demonstrate that they do so. Consumers have a right to information to help them make informed choices about the food they buy – businesses have a responsibility to be transparent and honest in their provision of that

information. There will be a phased approach to the introduction of these changes around the time of the UK leaving the EU. Procedural changes will be brought forward for UK exit and more practical issues Post UK exit. One of the most fundamental changes proposed (Post UK exit) will be a focus on enhanced registration of business where new businesses may start under regulation by local authorities and then once compliance has been achieved businesses will have the choice to separate their regulation into private regulated assurance schemes or remain under LA control. Members will be briefed further as details are published.

Air Quality: Air pollution is generally reducing across Shropshire allowing the revocation of the Oswestry Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) earlier in 2017 and our monitoring at two further Air Quality Management Areas, covering Heathgates and Bayston Hill, has indicated that the measured pollutants are now below legal limits. Recently Government has brought this topic into more public focus. Air pollution from traffic is nationally significant and legislative levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) are still exceeded in two locations within our area and modelling to identify pollution sources and solutions is active.

Other significant pollution sources within Shropshire include agriculture and particularly poultry enterprises. These activities can give rise to odour complaints and may give rise to particulates emissions (PM₁₀s). In line with national guidance monitoring work is being undertaken and this work is co-ordinated with the Environment Agency.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Robert Macey

Local Member

All Members