

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
AGENTS FORUM – WEDNESDAY, 8TH JUNE, 2005

Chair:- Les Crump

Officers Present:- Mike Smith, Wayne Belle, Hayley Regan, Tony Garratt, Colin Edgecombe,
Matthew Hunt,

Attendees:- Chris Stacey, Darren Simner, Charles & Simon Blake,
Rodney & Stewart Howes, Mike Innes, Chris Chillcott, Ian Lindsay,
Graham Thursfield. M Richards. Kay Elliotts, Boyce Hatton

Action

1. **APOLOGIES**

Waycott, BBH

2. **MINUTES OF LAST MEETING & MATTERS ARISING**

Agreed, no matters arising.

3. **NEW BUSINESS UNIT**

Restructure of Council has lead to the creation of 13 Business Units of which we are Planning Development and Policy. This is lead by Business Unit assistant directors- Mike Fox and Les Crump.

Business Plan available and to be put on web

Improvement needed on Customer Care and is this yrs focus

The previous priority of processing applications has lead a reduction in Customer Care

WB/HR

4. **STAFFING CHANGES**

As on agenda

5. **WORKLOAD**

The whole department has experienced an increase in workload which can be highlighted through the current income received. 23 % off pre apps go to full applications.

Discussion on whether extra staff required to clear the backlog.

Suggestion that the same approach is taken on pre-apps i.e. checking for content then to an officer.

MS- Officers informed to not attend meetings if no 'mileage' in the application. Some other authorities charge hourly rate for pre- apps. (i.e. Purbeck)

Christopher Stacey quoted S. Hams & Teignbridge application stats and staff they have to process. Teignbridge offer a Duty Officer. Will talk to Teignbridge re set up

LC- Hayley presented initial idea of duty officer but now investigating a surgery facility where a team of people can deal with enquiries.

LC confirmed the previous approach was to gain the funding that we did to be in position to employ further staff so efficiency could be increased. Would like to get more resources to clear the backlogs such as pre- apps.

Question as to why we can't provide post application enquiries- where application had been previously refused.

WB- 42% increase in people getting involved in the process with neighbour notifications. These are considered as new pre-app enquiries as a new project.

Question asked why 'applicant' was removed from advertisement- cost as we lost discount from the Herald – not relevant to determination of application.

HR

6. **CURRENT INITIATIVES**

Publication of staff times- List attached to agenda re normal days of work for officer. Rota currently being trialed to commit staff to their availability and will then appear on the web for online customers to view.

New Telephone list produced to allow people to get through to direct extension in the core hours

Kiosk to be put in reception for self service of online applications and info

Another survey coming out and will be following up with Tel where no response is received.

MS- co-ordinating the idea to standardise future leaflets and forms within the South West, with

WB/HR

WB/HR

MS

the South West Development Control Best Practice Group.

7. **BUILDING CONTROL UPDATES**

Presentation and handout given.

Invitations to follow re further Breakfast mornings that have proven a success.

New Folder will have inspection regime card aimed at homeowners, will indicate the level of inspection and help to quantify the charges.

Workload also doubled

Will have 'submit a plan' working in the near future.

8. **INTERACTIVE ADOPTED TORBAY LOCAL PLAN/LOCAL FRAMEWORK (Steve Turner)**

Online demonstration given with background on the Local Plan creation.

Hard copy available to purchase at £50.

9) **CONSERVATION**

Currently there are no conservation accredited architects or surveyors in the Bay. It is an increasing requirement for work on historic buildings and our needs are being accommodated from practises from outside the Bay.

To encourage local practises to gain accreditation and in line with national policy it was initially proposed that work on the multi-million pound Torquay Harbour Townscape Heritage Initiative will be restricted to conservation accredited architects and surveyors. As a further encouragement the Council has agreed to open this up to Architects and Surveyors who are actively seeking accreditation and are enrolled in the relevant RIBA/RICS programme. Practices interested in pursuing accreditation should in the first instance, contact Tony Garratt on 01803 207789.

Tony Garratt rather Chris Pancheri will have primary responsibility for schemes requiring conservation or design input. This will provide a faster service, as both pre-application and the application itself will be dealt with by the same person giving greater consistency in advice. Chris will still be providing input into major schemes when required. Any requests for consultation should be channelled via the relevant planning team and not direct to the conservation team.