

SERVICE PLAN 2009/10 – PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - MASTER SERVICE PLAN

NOW ANALYSIS

THE SERVICE

The Unit provides a comprehensive development service that works to enable development whilst improving the quality of the Borough's environment, community life and its economy now and into the future. To do this it works to find the best balance between the interests of residents, employers, landowners, homeowners, communities, developers and investors.

Budget: Gross Expenditure: £3,552,560
Net Expenditure: £1,600,430

Staffing: 67.25 Total number (Number of FTEs)

The Service Teams:

- Support services – administration, IT and process management support to the Unit as a whole
- Land Charges – dealing with searches from homebuyers
- Planning Policy and Economic Development – working with partners and the community to make plans for the Borough's future
- Development Management and Strategic Sites – proactive work on major projects, considering applications for planning, listed buildings, trees and carrying out enforcement and appeals
- Building Control – operating the building regulations to provide safe and sustainable buildings and environment.

Key Partners: These include parish councils and community groups; Homes and Communities Agency; SEEDA; Highways Agency; Kent County Council; Environment Agency; Natural England; public and private sector landowners and developers.

PERFORMANCE

See information by each main function of the Unit attached

WHERE ANALYSIS

GOALS

Short Term (2009/10)

- Full use of a targeted approach to the biggest schemes through the Strategic Sites Team (LL4)
- Introduce Electronic Document Management system (GQS5)
- Deferred payments approach for s106 contributions to respond to weak market
- Prepare for market upturn by making rapid progress on the Borough's planning framework (AF1)
- Move to 'cost recovery' basis for searches
- To undertake EIA on the units policies and procedures. (GQS)

Medium Term (2009/11)

- Comprehensive customer service review and improvement programme (GQS3)
- Help stimulate market by working with partners to turn key site policies into deliverable projects (AF3-6)
- Continue economic development drive on back of introduction of domestic high speed rail services (P2)
- Introduce shared service opportunities

Long Term (2009/12)

- Review strategic sites delivery with partners
- Tackle key delivery issues for the major urban extensions with landowner support
- Continued focus on major sites delivery to help secure key objectives for town centre and elsewhere
- Complete full, 3 year review of service including performance standards, unit cost

IMPROVEMENT PLAN/STRATEGIES

People & Finance

- Work with partners to create a more joined up approach to delivering strategic sites
- Create a more fluid approach to distribution of applications workload between the DC teams
- Maximise external income to provide resources needed to deliver growth
- Review 'front' and 'back' office roles in better customer care

Technology

- Introduce Electronic Document Management to improve working practice and generate cost savings
- Provide a web based directory of information on GIS map base
- Keep under review the effectiveness of our public facing IT – for all users of the Development service
- Ensure adequate training for all staff

Strategies

- Establish best ways of working with the Ashford's Future Company and partners to deliver growth agenda
- Use a systematic approach to analyse our service strengths and weaknesses and target improvements
- Fully capitalise on potential for 'shared services/ costs'

