

Planning Committee

10.00am Thursday 12 June 2014

Planning and Building Standards Management Review

Item number 6.1
Report number
Executive/routine
Wards

Executive summary

This report presents a proposed new management structure for the Planning and Building Standards service. It sets out the process which has been followed along with the aims and expected outcomes, as well as the consultations carried out. A revised allocation of team activities has been developed which aligns with aspirations for service delivery within Services for Communities and addresses the issues identified at the outset.

Links

Coalition pledges
Council outcomes
Single Outcome Agreement

Planning and Building Standards Management Review

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- 1) approves the new management structure for the Planning and Building Standards service area;
 - 2) Notes that it is intended to implement these arrangements by the end of September 2014;
 - 3) Notes the intention to engage with staff in the formulation of a protocol for the matching and allocation of posts and new and/or revised job descriptions; and
 - 4) Notes the intention to carry out a “lean” exercise of support services to assess the full application support process required at intake and registration and at decision issuing stages.

Background

- 2.1 This review of the management structure within the Planning and Building Standards Service is set within the context of:
- a service which is currently performing well, relative to new nationally-devised performance frameworks and high customer expectations;
 - outcomes from the Modernising Pay exercise which created same grade and deployment issues in tiers of management posts as a result of retaining existing management levels which are inconsistent with the aims of a flatter structure;
 - an awareness that all services are under financial pressures and that workforce planning objectives must seek to deliver best value by ensuring that skills are appropriately deployed, that there is clarity in management responsibilities and that savings are achieved by minimising impact on frontline delivery;
 - the change programme for Services for Communities which seeks to maximise the benefits for customer-facing outcomes from joined-up working

across services and to develop a strategic neighbourhood management approach, including area specific regeneration initiatives;

- statutory requirements to deliver decision-making through a robust, accountable and transparent process which minimises the opportunity for challenge; and
- the need to take account of outcomes from other organisational reviews underway in Services for Communities.

2.2 During the last 10 years or so, significant changes have been made to both Planning and Building Standards functions as a result of legislative change, associated culture change and growing expectations from a wide range of stakeholders. These changes have been reflected in new procedures, electronic application submission and processing, team structures and ways of working with developers, consultees and community groups. New performance frameworks have been adopted nationally to give a more balanced approach to the assessment of progress and the opportunity to benchmark with similar authorities.

2.3 In 2011, Planning and Building Standards were merged under one Head of Service and began to explore opportunities for synergies in ways of working, including staff development, joint protocols and shared support arrangements.

2.4 In early 2012, a Council restructuring moved the Service from City Development into Services for Communities and further consideration was given to opportunities for cross-service working to improve customer service, relationships with neighbourhood teams and the place making agenda. Building Standards teams have been realigned to geographical areas which better relate to those in Development Management and in the Neighbourhoods. Planning and Building Standards teams have played a lead role in the delivery of the One Door Approach to Development Consents project.

2.5 The review built on these recent changes and developments and sought in its key aims to:

- review processes and procedures, particularly in the **interfaces with other Council services**, to ensure they are lean and fit for purpose;
- provide an **improved customer journey** for a diverse range of stakeholders with varying and often conflicting needs;
- redesign management responsibilities to **improve efficiency, performance and productivity** (organisational development and cultural change);
- resolve the line management of staff on the **same grade**;
- develop capacity to work within a **strategic neighbourhood management** approach to deliver better places; and
- maintain **staff morale and engender staff support** for the new organisational structure.

- 2.6 Initially 41 members of staff were within the scope of the review, either because of their management role or because they were on a management grade. During the processing of the review, three members of staff left the service under the provisions of the VERA scheme. Later, one member of staff who had been on secondment to another department returned to the service area. Currently there are therefore 39 members of staff within the scope of the review.

Main report

Introduction

- 3.1 The following paragraphs summarise the key influences on this review.
- 3.2 The broad timeline of the early stages of the project up to the consultation exercise carried out at the end of 2013 is set out below.
- 6 June 2013 - Terms of reference agreed
 - 10 June 2013 - Project manager appointed
 - 27 June 2013 - Project Board hold their initial meeting
 - July 2013 - Initial consultations with staff and trade union on terms of reference and setting up of communications and Orb pages
 - 29 August 2013 – Project Board Workshop
 - 7 October 2013 – Workshop with staff in scope of review
 - October 2013 - Comparative studies completed
 - November 2013 - Options for consideration by Project Board completed
 - December 2013 - Consultation on options with in-scope staff, all other staff, other service areas. Project board members attended all team core briefing sessions
 - January 2014 – Consultation responses considered by project board.
- 3.3 At the outset, a wide range of information was gathered in respect of the situation in other parts of the council and elsewhere in other local authorities, both in Scotland and other parts of the UK. Taken together with the information provided as a result of the consultation paper and questionnaire in respect of the possible options at the end of 2013, all of this information informed the project board meeting in January 2014 when a favoured option was chosen, but which required further work to deliver the objectives of the review.
- 3.4 Further consultation followed with all three service managers and the acting head of service along with the Transport review project manager and representatives from HR and Finance. Further adjustment to the option was made, which was more transformational in character.
- 3.5 The key principles which have been used to guide the review can be summarised as follows:

- Service delivery should follow an area based model. Such an area based delivery helps to facilitate better relationships with neighbourhoods. Moving forward, the additional focus is on the neighbourhood programme managers who have a responsibility for coordination of regeneration initiatives.
- There is an acceptance that some service delivery, as in the case of policy formulation, benefits from delivery on a city wide basis, but requires justification in relation to corporate strategy and inter-authority relationships.
- The department is seeking an improved customer journey (the One Door Approach and its virtual teams are a part of this process) along with better service integration.

Developing the New Structure

- 3.6 Following on from that, further work was carried out to develop the new team structure which adhered to those principles and which would enable the service to move forward in a positive way.
- 3.7 The proposed revised structure comprises three streams of service delivery (see diagram in appendix 1). Each of these comprises 6/7 key areas of activity along with various support services. This would equalise the span of responsibility for each of the three senior managers. The rationale for the detailed team structure is set out below.
- 3.8 The city-wide area would contain all of the main policy formulation functions. However, given the importance of research and information work to the strategic planning process (which in turn informs the LDP), these teams have been linked together. This also gives an improved management span of control which is echoed in the joining together of the local development plan activity with the graphics technicians, who provide significant necessary support to that process. There is no change proposed to the data management team.
- 3.9 All natural heritage staff would locate together, requiring the arboricultural officers to move to the natural environment team, which will also deal with the recent high hedges legislation. In a similar way, streetscape, public realm and related place making functions are set within the built environment team.
- 3.10 It is proposed that local reviews and appeals will be managed alongside customer relations in a single team. This will be located within the city wide area where there will be the required degree of independence from development management processes for the local review body support. This team would also include those involved in community engagement and other related issues.
- 3.11 The east and west teams would share the processing of planning applications and building warrants on an area basis. The reasons for splitting the major teams into four areas are to develop alignment with the four programme managers who have a focus on regeneration initiatives in the areas denoted and to ensure a smooth transition from master-planning to application processing. Responsibility for area initiatives and planning delivery as well as developer

contributions would also rest with those teams. This would help bring together those activities which focus on outcomes for the communities in those areas.

- 3.12 In terms of development management, it is considered preferable both for the professional development of officers and for the provision of an integrated service, that the enforcement and listed building services be linked respectively to minor or householder-type application processing or to local developments. These teams would also handle the diminishing input to the licensing process. Overall, this split of development management functions into three (major, local and minor applications) parallels the approach to and delivery of pre-application advice. The place of Transport development management input into the DM process is noted and depending on the outcomes of that review, some fine-tuning of this arrangement may be necessary. The building standards teams have also been reduced in size and will be provided with a more focussed area delivery and enhanced team management.
- 3.13 The east and west area senior managers would also have responsibility for the shared support services relating to Development Management and Building Standards activities, which would be split into two teams – one of these would focus on intake and registration and the other would focus on decisions and records management. These two support teams would cover their own aspects of all planning applications and building warrants, etc. regardless of area. It is also proposed that a “lean” exercise should be undertaken to assess the full application support process required at intake and at decision issuing stages.
- 3.14 It is considered that this arrangement, in the east and west areas, will ensure more robust service delivery in terms of business continuity. There are currently too many areas where expertise lies with only one individual, which is a potential weakness in terms of service resilience and customer care. The proposed structure embeds responsibility for the quality of customer care across all team leaders and promotes working together to ensure consistency of delivery and decision making and to enable individual leads on specific subject areas.
- 3.15 Business development will be handled partly by the business managers (supporting head of service and senior managers) who would take the lead in terms of committee preparation and staff development and training. The handling of complaints would fall to the service delivery team whilst key aspects of service development, change management etc. would rest with the senior managers and team managers.
- 3.16 These changes can be summarised as follows:
- Closer integration between Planning and Building Standards service areas – Development Management & Building Standards teams managed jointly on an area basis;
 - Increase in number/reduction in size of Building Standards teams to improve management spans of control; integration and flexibility of service delivery and handle increasing work pressures;

- Integration of enforcement and listed building functions into mainstream Development Management activities;
- Integration of all natural environment activities (city-wide) within one service area (including new high hedges activity);
- Streetscape/public realm activities within built environment team to provide focus for Planning input to place-making activities;
- Provision for infrastructure delivery (including planning obligations & developer contributions) and area based projects within major application teams, aligned to regeneration areas;
- Increased support/technical staff within teams to improve efficiency and performance; and
- Appeals & reviews moved to city-wide service area to ensure independence from Development Management functions – aligned with other service delivery activities.

Consulting on the new management structure

- 3.17 A formal 30 day consultation with UNISON and those members of staff within the scope of the review was carried out over the period 25 March to 23 April 2014. This followed a presentation on 24 March to all staff within the scope of the review. Subsequent meetings, attended by the project manager and service managers, were held to explain issues to all members of staff within the service area. However, only 14 officers within scope made comments. UNISON also responded. A significant number of comments, including all but two of UNISON's, related to the process being followed and to the matching and allocation process. Some comments were on issues outwith the scope of the review and although they cannot be dealt with through the review, they will be addressed elsewhere. The comments are summarised in the following paragraphs.
- 3.18 **General Responses:** Support was expressed for the new structure and for the clear benefits it brought in terms of efficiency; resolution of the same grade issue; producing a flatter structure; clarifying management spans of control; and in taking account of a number of comments made previously. The integrated cross-cutting approach involving professional, technical and support staff was appreciated, with the disappearance of the former Building Standards, Development Planning and Development Management divisions. The retention of most city-wide policy functions was welcomed as this was seen as critical in delivering a coherent planning service. It was noted that staff have a track record of embracing and delivering change whilst maintaining a professional and customer orientated approach. It should be noted that some of these positive comments are not views which are universally held as will be seen from some of the detailed responses below.

- 3.19 **Responses relating to the structure:** Some general remarks were made about the ethos of the service, however, the main concerns centred on the composition and size of teams and the way in which resources would be allocated; the disproportionate impact on some service activities; the consistency of decision-making and potential loss of expertise; and the role of place-making.
- 3.20 The composition and size of teams in the proposed structure was driven by operational requirements and clear interdependencies between activities; the need to achieve improved service delivery, customer care and in recognition of the wider relationships with other service areas; and with regard to best practice principles of organisational design, including management spans of control, etc.
- 3.21 The disproportionate impact on some parts of the service, to which reference is made, is a direct consequence of the number of management and management grade posts within certain parts of the service.
- 3.22 The issues around consistency of decision-making and loss of expertise are noted as is the acknowledgement by some that there may well be equally valid ways of carrying out the activities in question. In this context, a number of other practical management issues, including work prioritisation and support service arrangements, were also raised. All of these matters would be the responsibility of the new team managers. The new structure would encourage greater flexibility, cross-team working and there would still be opportunities for individuals to maintain or develop expertise in specific areas.
- 3.23 In response to the comments on place-making, the former Built Heritage team has now been reshaped as the Built Environment & Place Making team and will be resourced appropriately.
- 3.24 **Responses relating to the process:** Requests by UNISON and members of staff for additional information in relation to particular issues have been responded to positively. Whilst some concerns were raised about the way in which the review has been carried out, this has been done in accordance with the Council's agreed process. Most of the other concerns centred on the matching and recruitment process which would be followed and to certain practical arrangements. These will be addressed in the transitional arrangements.
- 3.25 Individual responses to all of the issues raised in relation to the process being followed have been provided to staff.
- 3.26 **Responses relating to issues not in scope:** These concerns relate to certain grading issues among professional staff and the implications of the review for these. Adverse comments were made as to the adequacy of the pay protection arrangements. UNISON would like to formalise arrangements to encourage career progression which it is considered would raise morale and increase staff retention.
- 3.27 **Conclusions:** Whilst it is appreciated that some members of staff within scope of the review have concerns, two thirds have expressed no concerns about the

proposed structure. Furthermore, several of the comments which were made were positive. It is concluded therefore that there is broad support for the approach which is being taken.

3.28 Nevertheless, concerns have been raised and regard will be had to these when the matching and allocation process is carried out and there will be consultation on this process and on the drafting of the new job descriptions. Many of the concerns about how the new teams will be managed; work allocated; priorities decided and cover provided for absences, etc. will be issues for the new team managers to resolve, as in the current structure. It is considered that no fundamental flaws in the current approach of matching and allocation have been identified.

3.29 Until the structure is finalised, it is not possible to accurately quantify the savings which will be achieved, but these will exceed the £125,000 saving which was set against the project in the revised budget for 2014-15. The costs associated with the temporary transitional arrangements have been fully met through the allocation of increased fee income from both parts of the service area.

Transitional Arrangements

3.30 In order to ensure a smooth transition from the existing structure to the finally agreed new structure, transitional arrangements have already been put in place. In order to even out management spans of control, all support staff are currently being managed by the Building Standards Manager. The key day-to-day tasks of the Development Management Manager are being undertaken by two DM Coordinators who are managing all the DM teams including the new task force which has responsibility for improving performance on householder and other minor applications. The Acting Head of Service will be assisted over the transition period by two Project Managers who will lead on the implementation of the new management structure and the wider issues of cultural and process changes.

Measures of success

4.1 A Planning and Building Standards service which meets Council core values of customer first, working together, forward thinking and being honest and transparent. It should meet aspirations in terms of improved efficiency, performance and productivity; resolve same grade issues; improve the customer journey; improve capacity to work on strategic neighbourhood management projects, and maintain staff morale and support.

Financial impact

5.1 The review achieves efficiencies in the management structure which will result in cost savings. These savings will achieve the £125,000 target set out in the 2014-15 budget. The costs of the temporary transitional arrangements have been met through increased fee income.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The key risk associated with the new management structure is that, if not implemented, the outstanding issues remaining from Modernising Pay within the service area will not be resolved by the time same grade payments cease. The Council has already extended that period to enable the issue to be resolved. A sufficient time has been allowed in the project timeline to mitigate this risk.
- 6.2 The review has been carried out in accordance with the agreed policies and procedures of the council and has no adverse impact on any existing policy of the Council.
- 6.3 There are no specific health and safety, governance, compliance or regulatory implications that elected members need to take into account when reaching their decision.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 There is no relationship between the matters described in this report and the public sector general equality duty. There is no direct equalities impact arising from this report. It should be noted that a protocol for matching and assignment will be drawn up for the review and will ensure that all identified employees are assigned to the new structure through a clearly understood, transparent process, consistent with established Council procedures. As set out in paragraph 7.4 (e) of the Organisational Review Procedure efforts will be made to take account of staff preferences for assignment in relation to locality, hours, working pattern, where it is relevant and reasonably practicable to do so.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The impacts of this report in relation to the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties have been considered. Relevant Council sustainable development policies have been taken into account. The implementation of this review will have no adverse impacts on carbon emissions, the city's resilience to climate change impacts, achieving a sustainable Edinburgh or in respect of social justice, economic wellbeing or good environmental stewardship.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Full consultation with staff within the scope of the review and with UNISON has been carried throughout the processing of the review. There has been a variety of staff workshops, meetings and briefings as well as formal consultation in line with Council procedure. Dedicated pages have been set up on the Orb where relevant information has been posted and which has been made available to all members of staff in the service area, not just those who are within scope of the Review. One of the consultation exercises was open to all staff to comment.

Background reading/external references

10.1 None

John Bury

Acting Director of Services for Communities

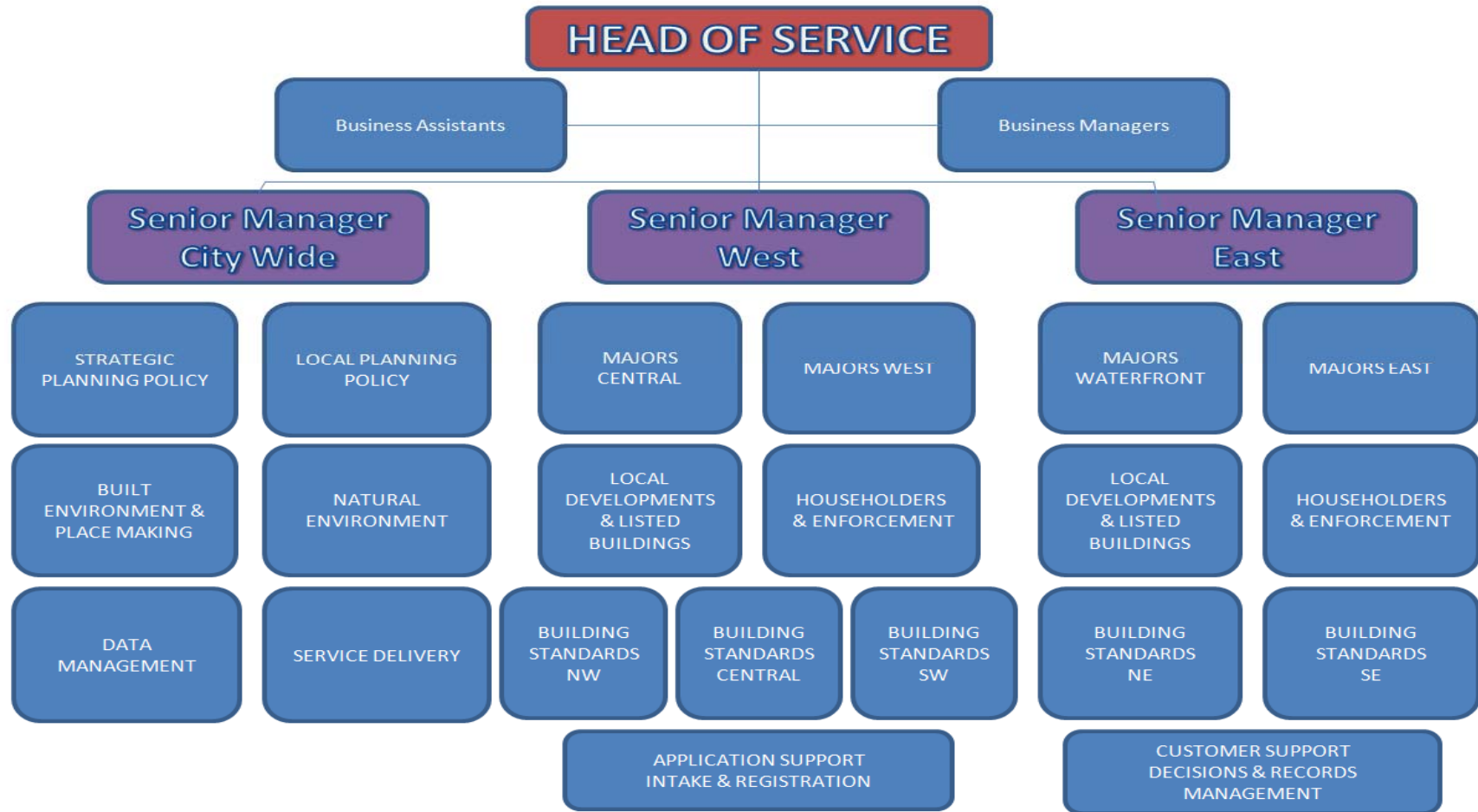
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Links

Coalition pledges	P26 – Establish a policy of no compulsory redundancies P27 – Seek to work in full partnership with council staff and their representatives
Council outcomes	CO24 - The Council communicates effectively internally and externally and has an excellent reputation for customer care CO25 - The Council has efficient and effective services that deliver on objectives CO26 - The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver on agreed objectives CO27 - The Council supports, invests in and develops our people
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4 Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric
Appendices	1 – New management structure diagram * 2 – Map showing boundary between East and West areas

P&BS MANAGEMENT REVIEW – PROPOSED STRUCTURE



- Developmet East and Waterfront
- Develoepmet West and city Centre
- Wards

