

Planning Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 2 March 2017

Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy – timetable for improvements

Item number	7.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide a timetable for further changes to customer service changes within Planning and Building Standards.

The report addresses the remit from the [8 December 2016](#) meeting of Planning Committee to provide a programme for forthcoming changes as part of the refocused Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy.

Links

Coalition Pledges	P15 , P28 , P40
Council Priorities	CP5 , CP7 , CP8 , CP8 , CP9 , CP12
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1

Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy – timetable for improvements

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- 1.1.1 notes the timetable for improvements.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 8 December 2016, the Planning Committee noted the progress update on the Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy. The Committee requested a report from the Executive Director of Place on the timescale for the proposed IT developments coming on stream. This report addresses that remit.

3. Main report

Customer Engagement Strategy – timetable for improvements

- 3.1 The following is a timetable for customer improvements relating to the strategy, including ICT changes:

Change	Comment	Timescale
Online forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General planning and building standards enquiry form• Planning pre-application form• Building Standards pre-application form	Online forms will be used by customers to contact the service with general and pre-application enquiries. The forms will guide customers to online information and ensure we receive the relevant information to improve handling and responses to enquiries.	The programme for Transformational Change is in the re-planning process and a timescale for delivery is due in April this year. The Planning and Building Standards online forms will be included as part of this programme.
Planning and Building Standards calls to Customer Hub	General enquiry calls will be handled initially by the Customer Hub. Helpdesk Planners and Building Standards surveyors will then be responsible for call backs or responding to email enquiries	By end of April 2017.

	and in due course requests for information received through the online forms.	
Planning and Building Standards - quick guides	Short guides for use by customers will be produced to help with common enquiries such as replacement windows, house extensions and driveways.	First guides online end of March 2017
Planning and Building Standards web content review	A page-by-page review will be undertaken to ensure content remains customer focussed.	By end of March 2017
Online video guides	Short video guides will be produced to help customers understand aspects of the service such as how to find the weekly list of planning applications, how to check for protected trees, listed buildings and conservation areas.	First video guides online by end of March 2017
Knowledge Base	Online resource for customers based on common enquiries received.	The Knowledge Base remains a longer term aspiration for the service and discussions with the Transformational Change team to develop this will continue this year.

3.2 Planning and Building Standards service improvements will also undertake 'lean reviews' in relation to the handling of major planning applications and road construction consent. Changes to these processes will largely impact on internal processes to achieve efficiencies, but external customers will be made aware of any changes affecting them.

4. Measures of success

4.1 The Planning and Building Standards customer engagement strategy continues to evolve as part of the Council's customer transformation programme. Success will be measured through more customers accessing our online information and undertaking online transactions whilst increasing customer satisfaction.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 There is no direct financial impact arising from this report. However, in line with the Council's Transformational Change programme there continue to be opportunities to improve the delivery of services with a focus on reducing costs.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no perceived risks associated with this report. The report has no impact on any policies of the Council.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 The Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment indicates the following:
- The proposals will enhance participation, influence and voice as they promote better online services available to all whilst still allowing scope for direct contact where this is still required. They also set out what service standards the customer can expect;
 - There are no infringements of Rights under these proposals;
 - There are no identified positive or negative impacts on the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation;
 - The proposals promote the duty to advance equality of opportunity as they promote better and more accessible information systems which would benefit all whilst ensuring any groups who need bespoke advice still have access to this service;
 - The proposal to ask customers to self serve online may affect some groups such as those with disabilities and those of a different race. However, the strategy states that a direct service will still be provided for those who need it; and
 - The proposals promote the duty to foster good relations as they make clear the service standards that can be expected and so promote understanding.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The impact of this report in relation to the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties has been considered, and the outcome is summarised below:
- The proposals in this report will have no impact on carbon emissions because the report deals with customer engagement;

- The proposals in this report will have no effect on the city's resilience to climate change impacts because the report deals with customer engagement;
- The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because they promote they promote equality of opportunity by making services more easy to understand and accessible;
- The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because they will assist the economic well being of the City by concentrating our resources where they will facilitate major development.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 As set out in the report to the Planning Committee on 8 December 2016, engagement will continue through events, meetings and surveys with our various customer groups.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy and Service Charter
http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/49102/item_71_planning_and_building_standards_customer_engagement_strategy_and_service_charter
- 10.2 Planning and Building Standards Customer Engagement Strategy – progress report and next steps, report to Planning Committee 8 December 2016
http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/52715/item_81_-_planning_and_building_standards_customer_engagement_strategy_%E2%80%93_progress_report_and_next_steps

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11. Links

Coalition Pledges	<p>P15 - Work with public organisations, the private sector and social enterprise to promote Edinburgh to investors</p> <p>P28 - Further strengthen our links with the business community by developing and implementing strategies to promote and protect the economic wellbeing of the city</p> <p>P40 - Work with Edinburgh World Heritage Trust and other stakeholders to conserve the city's built heritage</p>
Council Priorities	<p>CP5 - Business growth and investment</p> <p>CP7 – Access to work and learning</p> <p>CP8 – A vibrant, sustainable local economy</p> <p>CP9 – An attractive city</p> <p>CP12 – A built environment to match our ambition</p>
Single Outcome Agreement	<p>SO1 - Edinburgh's economy delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all</p>
Appendices	None