OUTLINE PLANNING IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROJECT – DRAFT

Appendix 1

Objectives

1. To support Economic Growth.

2. To improve Customer Service.

3. To improve efficiency, producing savings.

4. To respond to pressure to change e.g., National Planning Policy Framework and Development Plan.

5. To improve the quality of Councillor/Officer decision making and the quality of the completed development.

6. To deliver Training and Development programmes for staff and Councillors.

7. To improve Planning Enforcement and Untidy Sites Communication.

Actions – Draft

1. **Support Economic Growth**.

   - Seek a higher quality of submission and approve more applications, especially major and minor categories;
   - Speed up application processing, so projects can get the certainty they need;
   - Seek to be more flexible to changing circumstances;
   - Identify stalled sites due to site viability;
   - Bring forward Development Plan adoption to increase certainty about the Council's intentions and offer a clear policy lead that takes into account local evidence.
   - Ensure clarity of the Council's requirements for validation of applications;
   - Review Development Team approach from pre-application stage.

2. **Improve Customer Service**

- Improve ease of website use (analysis of actual usage);
- Increase amount of information available on the Council website to avoid other more costly methods (e.g., by phone or personal email);
- Ensure phone call and written responses by planning are done on time;
- Reduce time taken over applications, changes to improve quality;
- Complete Customer Surveys and act on results;
- Promote Agents and developer forum feedback;
- Review communications – internal/external, including to Ward Councillors.

3. **Improve efficiency, producing savings**

- Check newspaper adverts – cost;
- Check budgets for efficiency;
- Check staff levels for efficiency;
- Ensure we are adopting Best Practice wherever appropriate e.g., GIS/Land Charges;
- Identify relevant management indicators:- e.g., former NI157, backlog of time expired applications time taken to validate;
- Enhance the efficiency driving role in service;
- Review pre-application service processes including participation of parties outside planning and Section 106 obligations.

4. **Pressure to change e.g., National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Development Plan.**

- NPPF – consider position on Development Plan adoption;
- Update Local Development Scheme (adopted vs. latest estimates);
- 5 year land supply – ensure it is kept robust and up to date;
- Prepare Community Infrastructure Levy Plans;
- Establish a method for deciding on any action arising from pressure to change e.g., ministerial announcements;

5. **Improve quality of decision making and the quality of the completed development.**

- Review the lessons to be learnt from Planning Appeals;
- Review the 'Public face' of Plans Sub-Committees and call-in process to Committees;
- Expand the level of Royal Town Planning Institute RTPI (or equivalent) membership;
- Complete an assessment of quality of decision – making.

6. **Training and Development programmes for staff and Councillors**

- Ensure Continuing Professional Development is maintained by officers
- Consider obtaining RTPI Learning Partner status for Bromley Council;
- Short updates for staff e.g., lunchtime, by staff for staff;
- Circulation of professional updates e.g., Planning Magazine;
- Councillors – Training before participating in decisions on Applications or Policy for new Councillors as necessary;

   - Tour and assessment of completed developments;
   - Annual programme of Councillor updating, seminars, training on Planning.
- Consider attendance at Planning Summer School;

7. **Planning Enforcement and Untidy Sites Communication**

- Finalise and adopt an Enforcement and Compliance Strategy
- Improve the information available to Councillors on the progress with enforcement and untidy site cases, through an increase in the frequency and detail of reports to DCC and updating of Councillors interested in specific cases.
- Agree a package of performance monitoring information on enforcement/untidy site cases.
- Identify a manageable volume of priority issues where we monitor compliance e.g., types of planning conditions.
- Arrange Councillor Seminars on selected Planning Enforcement/Untidy Site topics