

The Role of Planning and The Planner

Health, Wellbeing and Planning Workshop
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What is Planning!

- Making sure the right development is in the right place
- Custodians of the natural and built environment in the interest of communities
- Facilitate new development in a planned, positive and controlled manner



The Different Areas of Planning

- **Plan-making** – Statutory Locals Plans/Local Development Frameworks with at least 15 year horizon. Allocating land & defining policies. Plan-led process.
- **Development Management** – Determining planning applications submitted to Council and giving pre-application advice.
- **Design and Guidance** – Interface between plan-making and decision taking. Implementation of policy.
- **Enforcement, Heritage, Trees and Landscape, Economic Development.**

Plan-making

- Local Planning Authorities need to prepare a statutory strategic development plan reflecting the needs and priorities of its communities (Local Plan):
 - Prepare a positive long-term planning strategy
 - Allocate land for development needs
 - Prepare strategic and detailed policies to deliver strategy
- Local communities can prepare their own plans which help deliver the Local Plan (Neighbourhood Development Plans)
 - Be consistent with the strategy of the Local Plan
 - More local issues can be addressed but can allocate land uses
 - Requires community approval via a referendum

Development Management

- Development Management is the decision making process dealing with planning applications.
- Decisions must be determined in accordance with Development Plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise within prescribed time periods (8 weeks and 13 weeks).
- As part of this process consultation with the public, statutory consultees and stakeholders takes place e.g. Highways Authority, Environment Agency, Health bodies.
- Depending on the scale of the proposals, impact assessments will need to be submitted e.g. Health Impact Assessments (HIA)
- Where applications are approved, conditions can be imposed and Section 106 legal agreements and CIL used to secure mitigating infrastructure, buildings, land etc.

Design and Guidance

- Design and guidance documents designed to help implement statutory development Plans
- These can cover any planning subject but importantly do not introduce new policies
- Referred to as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) or Informal Council Guidance all of which are material considerations in the determination of planning applications
- Typical subject areas are:
 - Affordable Housing
 - Design Guidance
 - Planning Obligations (Section 106)

National Planning Policy

- Coalition Government has introduced major reforms of planning system since 2010 – Regional Plans abolished
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced a series of national subject based policy and guidance documents
- The NPPF must be taken into account when preparing Local Plans and is a material consideration in the determination

National Planning Policy

- Introduction of a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'
- Local Planning Authorities now need to assess themselves the 'objectively assessed development needs' of their areas e.g. housing and employment targets and include in Local Plans.
- Localism Act has empowered local authorities to make the decisions about they shape their strategies to address this need.
- Government's focus in on housing delivery and economic development.
- Reforms of Section 106 process has led to the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- NPPF has section on promoting healthy communities

Planning and Health/Wellbeing

- Many Local Plans will have references to quality of life, provision of open space and broader health and well-being objectives.
- Some may have policies requiring Health Impact Assessment (HIA).
- Focus to date has been securing GP buildings and/or places. This has been undertaken through Section 106 planning obligations.
- Local Plans can integrate health and wellbeing requirements across policy areas e.g. transport, open space, leisure, design of places.
- HIA process could be wider reaching, but as Planners we need healthcare professionals to interpret the assessments.

Going forward

- Identifying the key contact staff in relevant organisations.
- Health professionals being involved in strategic plan-making at the earliest possible stage.
- Potential for pilot health and well-being audit for emerging local plans.
- Continue the work being undertaken through the Essex Planning Officers' Association (EPOA).

Questions