

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**CABINET - 26 APRIL 2012****ENCOURAGING GROWTH - A NEW WAY OF WORKING****REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: BUSINESS, DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING****LEAD CABINET MEMBER: Cllr C Smith – Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development****PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT****1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 To deliver some 'quick wins', following the implementation of the management restructure in February 2012 to commence the change process to secure inward investment and the way we work with existing businesses to make Telford & Wrekin a 'Business Winning Council'. To update on the planning process and in particular the Council's approach to development to support inward investment and economic growth. To adopt and embed a Development & Business Charter to underpin a new joined up, proactive and business focussed approach that supports the desire to drive growth and deliver jobs.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the Proposals and 'quick wins' set out in the report to produce greater certainty for investors and to adopt and launch the Development & Business Charter (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 That Cabinet provide delegated authority to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development to amend the Development & Business Charter as included in Appendix 1 following consultation with various stakeholders.
- 2.3 That Cabinet note that the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing and the Assistant Director: Environment & Leisure will establish and lead a steering group to monitor approach relating to the Charter and also to coordinate management of planning obligations in line with Planning Policy and Council Priorities.
- 2.4 That Cabinet recommend that a report is taken to Plans Board and/or the Council Constitution Committee to amend the scheme of delegation for changes as suggested in this report.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	A growing local economy to create jobs
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	Consult with Telford Business Board, Chamber of Commerce and Co-operative Commission Sub Group on Employment Skills and the Economy in May 2012. Launch Charter in June 2012 and commence delivery of related actions	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	See sections 5.2 and 5.3
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The provision of Legal advice in respect of the Council's regeneration, property and planning functions is a key part of the Legal Services workload. The new approach to development to promote investment described in this report is in accordance with current law and guidance. Legal advice will continue to be provided during the implementation of the changes on matters including any CIL proposals, the drafting of new S106 agreements, reviews of existing S106 agreements, property/commercial transactions and generally maintaining the independence of the planning process.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	See section 5.3
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1 **Governments Agenda** - The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's priorities for planning. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This includes planning for the economic, environmental and social needs of a community and the NPPF clearly states that these three components are to be pursued in an integrated way as there is no necessary contradiction between increased development and protecting and enhancing the environment. Planning must operate to encourage sustainable growth and not act as an impediment. To achieve this the NPPF introduces a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is defined as a golden thread running through both the plan making and decision taking carried out by Local Planning Authorities (LPAs). The LPA should plan positively for new development, and approve all individual sustainable proposals wherever possible. The NPPF states that Local planning authorities should:

- prepare plans that objectively assess how development needs should be met, and with sufficient flexibility to respond to rapid shifts in demand or other economic changes
- approve development proposals that accord with statutory plans without delay;
- grant permission where the Development Plan is absent, silent, indeterminate or where relevant policies are out of date.

All of these policies should apply unless the adverse impacts of allowing development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

4.2 **Development Context** - Since 2008 the global recession has had a severe impact upon investment, house building rates and development in general terms. The number of planning applications received by the Council has fallen considerably, with the biggest reduction being from housing developers relating to small to medium numbers of housing sites where they have found difficulty in securing finance and in some cases have ceased trading or significantly downsized their operation. The overall effect has damaged growth, directly impacted on the economy and the companies involved as well as reducing income from both planning and building regulation applications. The level of housing completions in the Borough has continued to increase albeit at a level considerably below that anticipated under the previous Regional Spatial Strategy. This bucking of the national trend has been sustained to a large degree by delivery of the Strategic Housing Sites (Lawley, Lightmoor and Ketley) and the construction of other sites with planning permission previously secured. Being able to secure a mortgage has significantly impacted on delivery of housing with the viability of all schemes being borderline at best in the current market. In addition developers with permissions are increasingly seeking to renegotiate S106 agreements to address the viability of development.

4.3 Inward Investment opportunities have also been very limited since 2008 and nationally, Foreign Direct Investment halved in 2010 and dropped further in 2011. We have had local successes in Nom Dairies and Stadco, but it is clear that only local authorities that are responsive, proactive and well resourced will succeed in attracting these investments. Production figures in the automotive and aerospace industry is expected to increase across the UK up to 2017 and already opportunities from Jaguar Land Rover at i54 in Staffordshire and Nissan in the North East will provide supply chain inquiries for tier 1 and 2 companies. Many local businesses have expansion plans backed by healthy order books, but they need support finding suitable local premises to grow into and also in some cases financing equipment purchases with pressure on financing in the current climate being a significant challenge.

4.4 **Development Management** - The term Development Management was introduced to cover the wide range of activities and interactions with numerous stakeholders that together transform the 'control of development and the use of land'. This Development Management approach is significantly different from its previous function of Development Control. The former control approach used planning applications and planning enforcement to react to and control the effects of unrestricted development. Development Management uses the same planning applications and enforcement but as a proactive tool for managing development opportunities in order to optimise the benefits for the community of inward investment in development. Development Management should not however be seen to promote development regardless of its quality. The NPPF reinforces this and states that the primary

objective of development management is to foster the delivery of sustainable development, not to hinder or prevent development. Local planning authorities need to:

- approach development management decisions positively – looking for solutions rather than problems so that applications can be approved wherever it is practical to do so
- attach significant weight to the benefits of economic and housing growth
- influence development proposals to achieve quality outcomes; and
- enable the delivery of sustainable development proposals.

4.5 The relationship between development management and development plan-making should be seamless and both should recognise the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the positive approach to planning set out in this Framework. The application of the presumption should achieve the delivery of enhanced levels of development consistent with national, strategic and local requirements. It is also important to ensure a strong and reciprocal relationship between development policy and the Borough's economic and housing strategy. Key tools within Development Management are Section 106 agreements, a potential Community Infrastructure Levy and Pre Application discussions. (See Appendix 5).

4.6 **Co-operative Commission** - Cabinet agreed in July 2011 to establish a Co-operative Commission of partners, community groups and local leaders to help shape the Council's development as a Co-operative Council. The Commission identified and prioritised five themes to focus and review and to discuss ideas and develop proposals and recommendations. At Cabinet on 28 March 2012 recommendations were approved from the Co-operative Commission Sub Group on Employment Skills and the Economy with the most relevant to the subject of this report set out below:

That Council and its partners need to develop a more effective focus on attracting inward investment and support for existing businesses to boost the local economy by adopting a more commercial approach to economic development and promoting itself as a 'Business Winning Council'.

From the Sub Group the desired impact relating to a more commercial approach is:

- More openness, transparency and data sharing across organisations to secure inward investment and provision of support to existing businesses
- Retain and support existing businesses to grow locally
- Increase and develop understanding of Telford's 'offer'
- For Telford to be nationally recognised as a great place to do business

In relation to the recommendations for Telford to promote itself as a 'Business Winning Council', the desired impact identified by the Sub Group is:

- Attracting new businesses in to the Borough
- Securing economic growth
- Potential of attracting wealth into the area by marketing that Executive Homes are more affordable in Telford

4.7 **Challenges** - The current financial climate heightens the requirements for the public sector to assist and facilitate growth and attract inward investment, but there are a number of areas of concern with the current approach to handling development enquiries and processing planning applications. In effect, in the current economic climate investors have to work twice as hard for half or less of what was being secured in the economic climate of pre 2007. This has resulted in many schemes not being viable with the consequence of development stalling. The following is a list of items that developers, Stakeholders and planning teams nationally and locally have identified as important to deliver better outcomes:

- Provision of pre application planning advice on all schemes
- Provision of support from all teams within the Council in relation to Planning Application Workshops
- Provide clarity for investors regarding the Council's expectations
- Register Planning Applications in a timely manner
- Provision of timely consultation responses to applications and the discharge of conditions
- Early responses to any viability assessments to avoid any delay in determining applications
- Recognition that general developer contributions and Affordable housing schemes are not viable in many cases in the current economic climate

- Providing certainty about the Council's approach relating to the governance of S106 process and the obligations required
- More minor applications determined through officer delegation and fewer smaller applications determined through plans board

4.8 It is also important to respond to the new NPPF regime and support the Council's growth and inward investment agenda. It is important that internal services work with business clients in an integrated manner and ensure that decision making is responsive, efficient, transparent and coordinated to create certainty and confidence for investors. Communication with investors will be delivered through a single point of contact to ensure consistency of communication and control of the messages emanating from the Council. This new approach to delivering our business must have the customer at the heart of what we do.

4.9 **Development, Business & Housing Service response to issues** - This difficult financial climate has made the need to attract inward investment and support business growth even more important and this is amplified by the findings of the Co-operative Commission Sub Group and comments from the Telford Business Board to name only two stakeholder groups. The Council had already identified similar issues and in recognition of this as part of its senior management review the Council has created a Development, Business & Housing service area with a mandate to streamline the existing processes and deliver a commercial approach to our business to truly become a 'Business Winning Council' and to bring the customer to the heart of everything delivered within the service. The new structure will embed an approach and culture to the way we do business with investors and existing businesses and most importantly the way we support customers. Taking the best of each process, learning from the business sector and ensuring our behaviour mirrors Council values, we will improve our service, deliver new jobs, provide sustainable economic growth, regeneration and progress towards meeting housing needs.

4.10 **Early Proposals** - To underpin a new joined up approach to investment it is proposed to adopt a Development & Business charter (appendix 1). This sets out a series of pledges which will ensure a streamlined, consistent, personalised and supportive service is provided to our customers. The implementation of the Charter will require commitment by all parts of the Council, not just the teams within Development, Business & Housing and a range of partners including HCA, external consultees and Registered Providers. The result will be delivery of some 'quick wins' to establish Telford as a recognised Enterprise Area and that we are 'open for business'. The table below focuses on the planning and development management process proposing a number of changes to the service, this is in the context of 'quick wins' as part of our change process to deliver a new service. Delivery hinges not only on those working in planning service but on many other council services sharing in and supporting the proactive, business focussed approach to enable the planning system to deliver the homes, business, infrastructure and thriving local places that we need.

4.11 'Quick wins' as part of delivering the new Business & Development Service

Challenge	Proposal
Provision of pre application planning advice on all schemes	We will provide timely, appropriate and free pre planning application advice so that investors receive integrated advice promptly that supports and enables investment decisions either through written enquiries or through discussions. For a period of time we will continue to provide a reception as part of the Customer First Point in Darby House for all planning enquiries. We will explore proposals and will provide a Development & Business Customer First Point within the new Civic Offices in Wellington, with details developed and resourced in the coming months.
Provision of support from all teams within the Council in relation to Planning Application Workshops	The Strategic workshop will be replaced by all applications being able to receive support and guidance and not just an arbitrary line relating to the scale of development. The Planning team will produce written procedure notes on how this will work. For example, there will be a requirement that attendance at the meetings by empowered staff on behalf of their specialist areas to make timely and informed decisions without continual reference to colleagues. The pre application process must also include reaching agreement on the heads of terms of any S106 agreement. A group will also be set up by Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing and Assistant Director for Environment & Leisure to monitor progress against the charter and to support the management of planning obligations in line with planning

	policy and council priorities as covered in recommendation 2.3.
Provide clarity for investors regarding the Council's expectations	We will endeavour to provide a dedicated Customer Contact as the single point of contact for all enquiries, accessible and empowered to support business from pre application through to delivery and aftercare/business support. This could be a member of staff from Planning, Economic Development, Property etc. They will not be able to cover all areas in specific detail but they will be responsible for supporting our customers and securing support from the Council to improve the investment experience. We will develop and maintain a development plan including a clear, transparent and viable tariff based system of planning obligations providing certainty and confidence to inform investment decisions. Appendix 3 details the current position for planning obligations and this report is not seeking to amend this position.
Register Planning Applications in a timely manner	Review local list of registration requirements to improve and provide certainty throughout the registration process. Amend current practice to register all applications (if pre application advice has been sought) on submission of the application and write to investor within 5 working days requesting missing information if applicable.
Provision of timely consultation responses to applications and the discharge of conditions	Need for all internal teams such as geotechnical, Environmental Health, drainage, technical support etc. to recognise the Council's growth agenda and to have a realistic approach regarding the risks associated with development proposals when responding to consultation requests. There is a need to respond to condition discharge requirements within set timeframes to ensure good quality customer service, related pledges and commitments will be developed by the Planning team.
Early responses to any viability assessments to avoid any delay in determining applications	Introduce standard model for viability that developers can use as part of their pre application discussions. Produce guidance notes clarify roles in reviewing these viability assessments.
Recognition that general developer contributions and Affordable housing schemes are not viable in many cases in the current economic climate	Recognise that the Development Manager will determine between competing priorities and make recommendations to Plans Board in line with Council priorities and supported by Assistant Directors referred to in recommendation 2.3. S106 must be negotiated and discussed as part of the pre application discussions and well in advance of the relevant plans board meeting.
Providing certainty about the Council's approach relating to the governance of S106 process and the obligations required	Recognise that the hierarchy of contributions will be based on Council Priorities when there are competing priorities and we have to choose as part of testing viability of schemes. There would always need to be a caveat by whatever would need to be done to make development acceptable in planning terms e.g. Highways Works to allow access etc. It is proposed that the Assistant Directors: Development, Business & Housing and the Assistant Director: Environment and Leisure establish a steering group to support and monitor the priorities in this regard.
More minor applications determined through officer delegation and fewer smaller applications determined through plans board	Recommend that amendments to scheme of delegation be processed to remove the need for small applications automatically needing to be presented to Plans Board. A report to Plans Board will follow as covered in recommendation 2.4.

4.12 **Action Plan** - In addition to the proposals described above an Early Action Plan (Appendix 2) has been developed as part of the Business & Development Charter. This will focus on a number of key actions which are as follows:

- Performance, behaviour and values
- Business Support & Aftercare
- Tailored Customer Management of all business and development enquiries
- Join up and coordinate responses from all in house services so advice is timely and aligned with corporate priorities
- Add value, speed up and provide specialist support
- Land and Property enquiries – One Stop Shop for development
- Housing offer
- Monitoring & Review

- 4.13 **Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) Asset Management** - The Council and HCA are establishing a protocol to enable the Council's property team to proactively promote and manage the development of HCA employment land as part of the localism agenda which will allow the council to facilitate growth and take decisions locally. With the management of HCA land together with existing Council owned land it provides in excess of 90% of all available employment land within the borough being managed and controlled through a single point of contact. This will provide investor confidence and certainty in taking investment decisions together with a single point of contact which will be another critical factor in securing growth.
- 4.14 **Monitoring & Review** - The new service area will embed a 'critical friend' approach to delivering continual improvement in the service by working with a representatives drawn from key sectors including new and long standing investors, The Co-operative Commission Sub Group, Telford Business Board and Chamber of Commerce etc. to work with officers to review service delivery, address barriers and further develop the offer.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 5.1 **Financial/Value for Money Impact** - The adoption of the Development & Business Charter will impact on the working practises of a number of services across the Council. In order to deliver the service improvements and pledges as detailed within this report these services may be required to realign their budgets and staff resources. This may lead to pressures on existing staff budgets and have a detrimental effect on the income levels for trading services. In particular, the commitments regarding free pre application support to all applicants will affect those services whose income budgets reflect a time based charge out rate for officers.
- 5.2 The ability to deliver the outcomes of the Development & Business Charter within existing budgets will need to be explored with each of the affected service areas, and will depend upon a number of factors. If the Charter is adopted finance staff will work with the relevant budget officers to identify resource and budget implications. Further reports will be brought forward if budget pressures are identified which cannot be mitigated by the realignment of existing budgets. JAC 280312
- 5.3 **Risks and Opportunities** - All opportunities are detailed within the main body of this report and the risk is delay in adopting this new approach could result in potentially missing out on further opportunities.

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 None

Report prepared by David Fletcher, Development Management Service Delivery Manager

Business & Development Charter

- We will provide a customer focused single point of contact for all investment enquiries being accessible and empowered to ensure good quality customer care and support.
- Create a 'One Stop Shop' to provide a single point of contact for customers, where we can support all business, planning and property enquiries.
- Through a joined up approach to economic development, property, regeneration and planning we will provide a delivery orientated service tailored to business needs, to enable investment and growth through a 'can do' approach.
- We will provide timely, appropriate and free pre planning application advice so that customers receive support promptly to enable investment decisions.
- We will maintain a consistent, fair and transparent approach to Business and Development.
- We will develop and maintain an up to date development plan including a clear, transparent and viable tariff based system of planning obligations.
- Statutory Agencies are key to development for example the Environment Agency and the Highways Agency. A memorandum of understanding will be developed so that working arrangements are defined to allow issues arising from proposed developments to be dealt with swiftly and constructively.
- We will monitor and review feedback on performance. We will report regularly on performance through agreed indicators.

Appendix 2 - Business & Development Charter – Early Action Plan

- 1 The nature of traditional Local Authority structures is that internal services co-exist and work with business clients but the approach is not integrated and decision making can be slow, can lack transparency and is often uncoordinated. Communication with investors can also fail due to the number of contacts involved and the potential for variations in approach and messages which will be improved to ensure a good customer experience.
- 2 The new management structure will embed a revised approach and culture to the way we do business with investors and existing businesses. Taking the best of each process, learning from the private sector and ensuring our behaviour mirrors council values, we will improve our service deliver new jobs, economic growth, regeneration and meet housing needs.
- 3 The implementation of the Charter requires commitment by all parts of the Council and a range of partners including HCA, external consultees and registered providers. The result will be to establish Telford as a recognised Enterprise Area we are 'open for business'. To reach a truly investor friendly business and development charter we will take a number of actions which are listed as follows:
- 4 **Performance, behaviour and values**
 - Recognise the key to delivering the pledges, all staff will operate in a businesslike manner working with customers to understand their needs and constraints and to bring forward and encourage development
 - Invest in supporting staff development to ensure the good, professional and skilled approach is supported by an improved, coordinated customer service
 - Adopt a 'can do' approach and willingness to explore new ideas to encourage the delivery of sustainable development delivery in what is a challenging economic climate
- 5 **Business Support & Aftercare**
 - Provide an up to date business support service that is linked to specialist providers and funders
 - Ongoing communication of business news and information to investors
 - Support business networks to facilitate the sharing of best practise, collaboration and business growth
 - Support local businesses to maximise procurement opportunities and support collaborative partnerships
 - Support Telford Business Board and continually work with the business community to facilitate growth and development
 - Through the proposed Customer Management approach, maintain contact with businesses and regularly review their needs including expansion, relocation and skills support
 - We will provide a single point of contact through a website and phone number and we will run regular workshops and business support events
 - We will actively seek opportunities for funding, business loans and development support for local and relocating businesses
- 6 **Tailored Customer Management of all business inquiries**
 - We recognise the diversity and complexity of business enquiries and these will be managed by Customer Managers. The Customer support will act as the single point of contact for investors, offering advice and support covering the Customer's needs and ensuring a seamless and quick response. This will be far more than signposting, it will be enabling and supporting.
 - A free pre-application planning procedure which sets out a clear and consistent set of service standards and guidance, escalation procedures and contacts to resolve any issues and prevent delays before the submission of a full planning application including proactive approach to planning applications
- 7 **Join up and coordinate responses from all in house services so advice is timely and aligned with Council Priorities**
 - Clear lines of project ownership and decision making up to Plans Board led by the Planning Officer
 - Embed the Pre Planning Application team approach for all Planning Applications
 - Development Management to make decisions and recommendations in relation to S106 contributions prior to Board

- 8 **Add value, speed up and provide specialist support**
- Offer options to use in-house 'design' or master planning service and access to specialist professionals including geotechnical, ecological environmental health etc. to encourage and enable investment and speed up the planning process
 - Provide a fully e enabled planning service
- 9 **Land and Property Enquiries– One Stop Shop for development**
- Provide a single point of contact for all public sector land opportunities (HCA and T&WC)
 - To provide competitive terms for the acquisition of land and property
- 10 **Housing offer**
- Offer advice and support to new business investors to access housing options for employees moving into the borough
 - Use open book viability approach to housing obligations and cross subsidy models that are geared to meet local housing needs and encourage investment
- 11 **Monitoring & Review**
- Embed 'critical friend' approach to delivering continual improvement in service working with a representative drawn from key sectors including new and long standing investors, Business Board and Chamber of Commerce to work with officers to review service delivery, address barriers and further develop the borough offer

Appendix 3 – Current Planning Obligations Grid

Policy	Type of obligation	Residential		Commercial		
		1-14 dwellings	15+ dwellings	Less than 100sq m	Between 100 and 1,000sq m	More than 1,000sq m
H23	Affordable Housing	X	Yes	X	X	X
H22	Education	X	Yes	X	X	X
H22	Community Facilities	X	Yes	X	X	X
T22	Highway Infrastructure works	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
TSS	Transport Infrastructure Improvements	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
OL12	Open Land and landscaping	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
LR4 LR6	Open Space Sport & Recreation	X	Yes	X	X	X
UD 5	Public Art	X	X	X	X	Yes

Appendix 4 - Current values and Planning Obligations

Type of Obligation	Core Strategy and Wrekin Local Plan Saved Policies	Central Telford Action Area Plan Policy CT23
Affordable Housing	38% on-site obligation	Calculated on a site by site basis
Education	Calculated on a site for site basis: contribution for Nursery and Primary Schools	Calculated on a site by site basis: contribution for Nursery, Primary School and Secondary School places
Economic and Community Development	Non-financial obligation	Calculated on a site by site basis
Water, Sewage and Surface Water Drainage	Calculated on a site by site basis	Calculated on a site by site basis
Highway Infrastructure Works	Calculated on a site by site basis	Calculated on a site by site basis
Transport Infrastructure	Calculated on a site by site basis per additional traffic-based trip	Calculated on a site by site basis
Site Specific Measures	Calculated on a site by site	Calculated on a site by site basis
Nature Conservation Enhancements	Calculated on a site by site basis	Calculated on a site by site basis
Nature Conservation Other	Calculated on a site by site basis	Calculated on a site by site basis
Open Space, Sport and Recreation	Calculated on a site by site basis	Calculated on a site by site basis
Environmental Protection	Calculated on a site by site basis	Calculated on a site by site basis
Historic Environment	Calculated on a site by site basis	Calculated on a site by site basis
Public Art	1% of Design and Development Costs - usually a non-financial obligation	Calculated on a site by site basis

Appendix 5 – S106, CIL, Pre Application Discussions

1 Section 106 Agreements

Section 106 enables Local Planning Authorities (LPA) and developers to agree to planning obligations to require operations or activities to be carried out on land (in-kind obligations) or require payments to be made (financial obligations), to mitigate the impacts of development proposals. A planning obligation under s106 may only be demanded prior to the issue of planning permission if it is:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- directly related to the development; and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Most Local Planning Authorities (LPA) seek planning obligations in respect of the following:

- Affordable Housing
- Community Facilities
- Education Facilities
- Public Open Space/Recreational facilities
- Transport
- Public Art
- Development viability

Circular 05/2005 states in some instances it may not be possible for the proposed development to meet all the requirements set out in the local, regional and national planning policies and still be economically viable. In such cases it is for the LPA to decide what is the most appropriate balance of contributions made by developers and it should be based on negotiation over the level of contribution that can be demonstrated as reasonable to be made whilst still allowing development to take place. There will however be cases where a development may not be approved e.g. because the developer has paid too much for the land and cannot afford to meet the required S106 obligations to compensate for the harm the development will cause.

2 Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations were introduced in April 2010 and enable Local Authorities to introduce a CIL, which is a standard levy to be applied to new development. The Council is required to prepare an evidence base to inform the level of the CIL payments and this is linked to the infrastructure planning for the local area and would be a part of the Local Development Framework. In adopting a CIL it will be necessary to adopt a Charging Schedule for CIL to identify which types of infrastructure may be dealt with using a CIL approach and which may continue to be addressed through Planning Obligations. The Council's Planning Policy Team will be assessing the impact of NNPF in relation to using a CIL and will prepare a timetable for implementation by May 2012.

3 Pre Application Discussions – Development Team Approach

The Council has introduced a Development Team Approach to strategic application development enquiries. This begins at the pre application stage and is followed through to the complete application process. The approach seeks to provide the applicant with a clear indication at the earliest possible stage of whether the LPA are likely to support the proposal, what package of information will be required to pursue the proposal up to a planning application stage and suggested s106 contributions. The discussion takes the form of an initial submission of site details and proposals by the investor. These are circulated at least two weeks in advance of the meetings. The exact disciplines required will be determined by the nature of the proposal but could include Highways, Conservation, Urban Design, Geotechnics, Drainage, Parks and Leisure, Education, Environmental Health, Ecology, Trees, Strategic Housing, Legal, Building Control and Planning Policy. The meeting is coordinated by a Planning officer and basically comprises a presentation by the developer followed by a discussion on main issues and potential section 106 contributions. An agreement is reached on a programme of future meetings if required together with the agreed dates for a response from the LPA. The formal response is normally issued within 10 working days of the workshop and covers a summary of the issues raised, highlights whether the principal of development is supported and identifies documentation required to support the formal planning application and the Heads of terms for any section 106 agreement. The revised approach will be to support free pre application advice for all customer enquiries regardless of size of development.