



Item

**ANNUAL REPORT OF  
3C BUILDING CONTROL SERVICE AND PLANNING SHARED  
SERVICE 2018/19**

**To:**

Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces

Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee [25/06/2019]

**Report by:**

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**Wards affected:**

All

**Not a Key Decision**

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report summarises the performance of the 3Cs Building Control Shared Service and the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service during 2018/19.
- 1.2 The principle of producing a single annual report for both the 3Cs and Greater Cambridge (2Cs) shared services was agreed at committee in July 2015.
- 1.3 The overarching Annual Report for the 3Cs Shared Services, submitted to South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Council Committees for scrutiny, includes ICT, Legal and Building Control Shared Services. At the City Council, only the Building Control service falls under the remit of this Committee, and therefore the annual report is extracted from the overarching report and enclosed below.
- 1.4 Greater Cambridge Shared Services Annual Report covers the Waste, Planning and Internal Audit services, and is submitted to the South Cambridgeshire District Council Committee for scrutiny, but at the City Council only the Planning

Shared Service falls under this Committee's remit and therefore the service report has been extracted and is included below.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to note the content of the report.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 In July 2015, Cambridge City, Huntingdonshire District and South Cambridgeshire District Councils each approved a model for sharing Legal, Building Control and ICT services. The three services went live within 3C Shared Services in October 2015 with a commitment to provide an Annual report.
- 3.2 The Shared Planning Service forms part of the Greater Cambridge Shared Services (2Cs). The business case for a Shared Planning Service (SIAS) between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council was approved by both Councils in 2017. The service went live in December 2017.
- 3.3 The overarching Shared Service performance is monitored through the Greater Cambridge Shared Services Management Board (containing the lead directors from each authority), Greater Cambridge Chief Executives' Board and 2C Joint Advisory Group (comprising of the leaders of each of the Councils). The Shared Planning Service also has a member led steering group.
- 3.4 The service business plans for the Shared Building Control and Planning services were approved by the City, Huntingdonshire District and South Cambridgeshire District Councils' committees in March 2018.
- 3.5 The business plans contain the priorities, key performance indicators and budgetary profiles for 2018/19.

## **4. Building Control Shared Service Annual Report 2018/19**

### **4.1 General Information**

- 4.1.1 3C Building Control was set up in October 2015 with the following objectives:

- Protection of services which support the delivery of the wider policy objectives of each Council.
- Creation of services that are genuinely shared between the relevant councils with those councils sharing the risks and benefits whilst having in place a robust model to control the operation and direction of the service.
- Savings through reduced managements costs and economies of scale.
- Increased resilience and retention of staff.
- Minimise the bureaucracy involved in operating the shared service.

- Opportunities to generate additional income, where appropriate.
- 4.1.2 When creating the shared service, the priorities were to improve capacity by expanding the skilled team with management arrangements that enabled resources to be deployed effectively and efficiently, the adoption of best practices and processes and to improve recruitment and retention in local authority building control services.
- 4.1.3 This Annual Report reflects progress against the Business Plan for 2018/19. The Plan contained detailed service information and was approved at partner committees in March 2018. Given the commercial nature of the service, only limited information has been included in this public report.

### **General Progress**

- 4.1.4 The Strategic Lead has been successfully recruited into a secondment into the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service for a six month period on a part time basis, commencing in April 2019. To facilitate this secondment, a Principal has been appointed to act up as Strategic Lead on a part time basis and a Senior has been appointed to act up as Principal. Recruitment has taken place of a replacement Surveyor, who is due to commence early in 2019/20.
- 4.1.5 There has been some slippage in the budget, which means the service review planned for 2018/19 is likely to take place in the new Financial Year, subject to finances. The service also will be in a position to review the proportions set for fee earning and non fee earning for the financial year 2019/20.
- 4.1.6 The team continues to improve its processes. The majority of applications are now made electronically and the aim is to achieve fully electronic processes by July 2019. This is being rolled out across hubs.
- 4.1.7 With regard to its marketing activities, the service has nominated 14 schemes for the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) National Building Excellence Awards 2019, and 11 of these are finalists. Out of the total number of finalists for the LABC East Anglia region, 3C Building Control has almost a quarter of the nominations. This is testament to the excellent schemes within the area of operation.
- 4.1.8 In terms of the recognition received by staff during the year, the team were nominated in the South Cambridgeshire staff awards; one member of the team was nominated in the South Cambridgeshire staff awards, above and beyond, and one member of the team was highly commended in the national LABC Rising Star Awards 2019. The team were also Finalists in the Association for Public Service Excellence Awards 2018/19 for the Best Construction Team.

### **Financial Performance**

4.1.9 The outturn position for 2018/19 is recorded in the table below:

£	Budget	Actual	Variance/Outturn
3C Building Control	1,801,160	1,533,956	267,204 (surplus)

4.1.10 It is a requirement that each Council contributes to the non fee earning account for all statutory works for which the service is unable to charge.

4.1.11 The service is currently forecasting an increase in the deferred income. This is a more positive position than the last two years.

### **Service Performance**

4.1.12 Building Control had eight Key Performance Indicators for 2018/19 ranging from acknowledging and determining applications to customer satisfaction levels. These KPIs form part of the quality management system adopted by the service.

### **Customer Feedback**

4.1.13 This is the first time customer satisfaction feedback has been obtained for a number of years. For 2018/19 the Building Control Partnership has been collating data on the percentage of customers who overall have rated the service as good and above. A KPI target has been reported on throughout the year. The service distributes customer satisfaction surveys to all customers, including those who submit regularisations. This is captured via an online questionnaire. Returns are generally positive. An interim target of 75% has been exceeded with an actual rate of 86% satisfaction. Some areas have been identified for improvement, which the service reviews and actions if appropriate.

4.1.14 The service will be working to a Quality Management Service Target of 95% in 2019/20.

### **Key Projects**

4.1.15 Building Control identified six development projects in its 2018/19 Business Plan. Four of these projects are on track, while two have encountered some (but not significant) slippage.

4.1.16 The service is undertaking a full review of the IT infrastructure to maximise effectiveness of the teams and enable agile working. This is ongoing and interlinked with other projects. The Council Anywhere project and new equipment should benefit the service; however, there has been some slippage with the roll out of new laptops and screens. Related to this, the service is working to transform paper based filing systems into a fully digitised records and management system.

- 4.1.17 Staff recruitment, retention and development is a key objective for Building Control. A recruitment drive has been successful and team development days have been held and working groups set up. Team members are undertaking training to enhance their skills. Further recruitment exercises have been undertaken in July and September 2018 and March 2019 to ensure succession planning is effective. There remain issues with recruitment of experienced professionals.
- 4.1.18 A project was identified to unlock the commercial potential of the team. To date the Strategic Lead has been undertaking some consultancy work.
- 4.1.19 Green ratings have been reported for implementing the ISO 9001: 2015 quality management system across the partnership and for developing a marketing and communication strategy for the service. These projects are now business as usual and not included in 2019/2020 Business Plan.

## **5. Planning Shared Service Annual Report 2018/19**

- 5.1.1 The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service went live in April 2018 with the following objectives:
- To create and deliver an effective programme for the creation of a single, unified "Greater Cambridge" planning capability serving the Planning Committees of each of the participating Councils.
  - To build a shared capacity and capability within the combined teams (and provide opportunities to support others) in a way that seizes opportunities for greater efficiency and improvements to the quality of service and subsequent development across the area by providing services and products (including additional charged services) that meet the needs of users and the community at the lowest net cost.
  - To deliver a service that can be flexible - in deployment and delivery.
  - To build/retain a reputation for professionalism, staff development, the delivery of high quality outcomes and competent "business management" amongst peers and partners.
- 5.1.3 The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service is the "Local Planning Authority" for the areas of South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council. It therefore has a number of statutory roles to perform on behalf of the two Councils and, in addition, undertakes a number of "discretionary" activities that complement the delivery of corporate and strategic planning objectives.
- 5.1.4 The service can charge fees, which are set nationally for planning and related applications and for land charge searches. It also levies a range of discretionary charges for pre-application advice.

### **Financial Performance**

*Further information is provided in the performance report in the Appendix.*

5.1.5 The budget position for 2018/19 is recorded in the table below:

£	Budget	Actual	Variance/Outturn
Planning	4,485,235	3,209,758	1,275,477 (surplus)

The total underspend of £1,275m primarily relates to revised costs (including staffing) and significant increased income for South Cambridgeshire District Council.

### **Service Performance**

5.1.6 During 2018 the service implemented a new management structure. This comprises two service centred teams (led by the two Assistant Directors, Sharon Brown and Paul Frainer) and a central support/enabling team to assist the senior management team in managing the efficient operation of the “business” led by Steven Winsor. During the implementation phase of the project, the service is also being supported by a discrete implementation capability.

5.1.7 The service’s performance against the three indicators that it monitors is on track. No slippage is reported. The on track indicators are:

- Decision making within statutory or agreed timelines for Major applications
- Decision making within statutory or agreed timelines – Minor applications
- Decision making within statutory or agreed timelines – Other applications

*Further information appears in the Appendix.*

5.1.8 The previous Head of Implementation left in April 2019 and to mitigate the impact of this, Heather Jones 3C Building Control Strategic Lead has been seconded into the shared service on a part time basis. Her role will be to assist with the second phase implementation and transition phase of the shared planning service. Recruitment to the Operations Manager post has been successful with a start planned for May 2019.

5.1.9 With regard to ICT matters, an e-mail address has been confirmed and will shortly be implemented. A focused recruitment website is also to be progressed this year along with the upgraded new planning software system(IDox). Implementation of the IDox solution, has slipped to the autumn to allow for the Council Anywhere (CA) rollout in the service, the progression of the phase 2 implementation and the need to focus resources on operational priorities in 3C ICT and the planning service. Council Anywhere implementation is currently underway and appears favourable. Team members will receive their new devices in through June, Office 365 training is now being offered to all.

5.1.10 Work has commenced on the service’s branding. It is anticipated there will be some quick wins for team development.

- 5.1.11 The service can report on some significant achievements and success stories. This year has seen the conclusion of the Local Plan process to put in place an up to date Development Plan for the Greater Cambridge Area. Work on the Development of the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan, underpinning the Housing Infrastructure Fund Bid has also started. The adoption of the Local Plan has been accompanied by ongoing work on the Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) for strategic sites at Waterbeach, Cherry Hinton and Bourn Airfield and adoption of SPD for Mitchams Corner and the Grafton Centre. Support for the GCP and Combined Authority programmes have seen significant engagement with those bodies.
- 5.1.12 On the Delivery side, approval of reserved matters on a number of Strategic sites and progress around project delivery at Wing, Northstowe, Waterbeach, Darwin Green and on a number of key employment sites has nevertheless been accompanied by ongoing service delivery challenges associated with staff workloads and system performance.
- 5.1.13 On 27 February 2019 the service held a celebration to mark 50 years of the Cambridge Conservation Area in the Guildhall. It was a successful event with over 100 attendees. There was an afternoon session with exhibition and talks highlighting the significance of conservation areas along with display boards of the history of various buildings within Cambridge Conservation Area. The evening session consisted of a series of talks and question and answer panel of James Littlewood, CPPF, Ian Harvey, Civic Voice, Duncan Wilson, Historic England. Talks ranged from community involvement in the Conservation Area and a national picture of their importance along with ideas for future evolution. This supports the vision of the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service.
- 5.1.14 With two finalists in the National Urban Design Awards, it was fantastic that the co-housing at Marmalade Lane won the public sector award on 28 March 2019. These awards celebrate the best in the design of towns and cities, streets and spaces and there are five categories in total. Marmalade Lane is the first co-housing project in Cambridgeshire consisting of 42 housing units and communal space with common ownership. The community were involved throughout with the design team, City Council as land owner, South Cambridgeshire District Council as planning authority and Members to collaborate on this successful scheme.

### **Customer Engagement**

- 5.1.15 Data for South Cambridgeshire show satisfaction running at 72%. Data has not historically been collected for Cambridge City. New measures are being developed for the whole service alongside the proposed creation of additional capacity in the service to improve customer insight.
- 5.1.16 The service continues to engage actively with users through forums (Agents and Parishes) and has undertaken joint projects, such as village design statements in South Cambridgeshire throughout the year.

5.1.17 All planning services traditionally receive a number of complaints. This is generally due to the decision making process; however there are other reasons such as response times. Whilst both Councils have been transitioning into the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service this has impacted on the response to complaints for the service. Measures are now being put in place to address this. Complaints tend to be complex, requiring lengthy investigation time and are generally related to development management issues.

### **Key Projects**

5.1.18 The service has two projects on track, two have experienced some slippage that is not significant and one has significant slippage. The projects on track are Phase 2 of the shared service planning programme and a review into how improved accountancy will allow the service further to account for and recover where possible the costs of delivering projects, advice or services to others in line with the objective of maintaining our capabilities (to deliver high quality development on behalf of communities) at lower net cost and meet 2019/20 MFS commitments.

5.1.19 Amber progress is reported in respect of the review advice services and the recruitment and retention programme. The Planning software upgrade has seen significant delays. The upgrade to Uniform has been re-phased and likely implementation is proposed in the autumn. The Council Anywhere Programme will be delivered through May/June on site; Planning is one of the first services in this rollout. It will be followed by mobile phone deployment to support agile working across the service.

## **6. Implications**

### **a) Financial Implications**

The financial implications are shown in section 4.1.9 above and in the Appendix.

### **b) Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications.

### **c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

Not required for this report.

### **d) Environmental Implications**

None for this report.



## **e) Procurement Implications**

None specific related to the service. Any procurement relating to the service provision is carried out in line with the Councils' policies.

## **f) Community Safety Implications**

There are no community safety implications.

## **g) Consultation and communication considerations**

This will be conducted in accordance with the Council's agreed policy.

## **h) Background papers**

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

Shared Service Quarterly reports

Greater Cambridge Shared Services 2018/19 Annual Report

3C Shared Services 2018/19 Annual Report

## **i) Appendices**

Planning Shared Service Budget Position and Service Performance Against Indicators

## **j) Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Fiona Bryant, Strategic Director, tel: 01223 - 457325, email: [fiona.bryant@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.bryant@cambridge.gov.uk).

**PLANNING SHARED SERVICE****Budget Position**

	<b>2018/19 Budget £</b>	<b>2018/19 Actuals £</b>	<b>2018/19 Variance £</b>
<b>Income</b>	(5,435,193)	(5,158,326)	(276,867)
<b>Expenditure</b>	9,920,428	8,368,084	1,552,344
<b>Total (Net)</b>	4,485,235	3,209,758	1,275,477

**Service Performance Against Indicators**

Decision making within statutory or agreed timelines for Major applications. Monthly	2018/19 Target 60% Actual 71% GREEN <input type="checkbox"/>
Decision making within statutory or agreed timelines – Minor applications. Monthly	2018/19 Target 65% Actual 70% GREEN <input type="checkbox"/>
Decision making within statutory or agreed timelines – Other applications. Monthly	2018/19 Target 80% Actual 86% GREEN <input type="checkbox"/>