

PLANNING ADVISORY SERVICE – REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL’S PLANNING SERVICE

Item HP 25/52 referred from Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee of 2 December 2025

Careful consideration was given to the report of the Planning Advisory Service in respect of the Borough Council’s planning service (attached at Annex 1). A number of recommendations had been made and proposed actions, timescales and ownership were set out in the Action Plan (attached at Annex 3).

Members welcomed the views of the Planning Advisory Service, recognised the importance of maintaining an effective working relationship between Officers and Cllrs and improving communication, supported consideration of heritage, design and landscape as part of a wider service review and noted that validation of planning applications would be formally monitored as a Key Performance Indicator from 2026/27. Further detail was requested in respect of planning appeal statistics and these would be provided out of meeting.

Particular reference was made to recommendations in respect of rebuilding member-officer relationships and the pre-application service, as detailed in R3 and R5 of the Action Plan (Annex 3) and on the grounds of improving engagement and communication with Members the Chair proposed that these be amended to include:

- (i) Area Planning Chairs and Vice-Chairs; and
- (ii) the Cabinet Member for Planning and Chair of Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee respectively.

These were seconded by Cllrs Hood and Thornewell respectively and supported unanimously.

The Chair proposed, Cllr Dalton seconded and it was

***RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the contents of the Planning Advisory Service Review report, including the recommendations for action, be noted and commended to Cabinet;
- (2) subject to the amendments set out at (i) and (ii) above, the proposed Action Plan (Annex 3) for delivering on the Planning Advisory Service Review recommendations be endorsed and commended to Cabinet for adoption;
- (3) the proposed timescales in the Action Plan be noted and commended to Cabinet; and
- (4) an update on progress on the Action Plan be reported to the May meeting of the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee.

***Recommended to Cabinet**

