ADEPT

Association of Directors of
Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

Meeting Notes of the
Planning Sub-Group

23rd April 2024, 11am

Held on Microsoft Teams

Present
Paul Barnard (Chair), Barry Wyatt, Jamie Chadwick, David Dale, Georgina Bright, Greg Woodford, Hannah Bartram, Jonathan Smith, Jonathon Wellstead, Kylie Russell, Lucy Hargreaves, Matt Wood-Hill, Matthew Jericho, Laura McCulloch, Mike Garrity, Pam Neal, Rachael Ferry-Jones, Stacey Wylie, Graham Stallwood, Xavier Preston.

Apologies
Charlotte Ashton, David Dale, Catherine Duggan, Julian Harlow, Jonathan Smith, Matthew Brown, Nicola Melville, Caroline Sutton, Colin Haigh, Joe Jenkinson, Samantha Campbell, Helen Leach, Ian Achurch, Louise Wood, Sally Gill, James Crosbie, Rob Harbour, Anna Rose, Jan Feeney, Rob Murfin, Katie Hornsey, Margaret Baddeley, Matthew Jericho, Alison Ives, Jo Wall, Rob Westcott, Alison Ives, David Sutherland, Laurence Fallon, Oliver Meek, Michael Bingham, Adam Birchall, Ashley Baldwin, Caroline Danby, Sarah McLaughlin, Michael Brereton, Mark Patchett, Rebecca Drake.

Item		Notes	Actions
1	**DLUHC presentation on digitisation of planning**	**Digitisation of Planning DLUHC Digital Planning Programme overview presentation** By Matt Wood-Hill, Stephen Barnes, Greg Woodford Hope for a new future in the digitisation of planning. DLUHC will be asking for more funding from the next government. The current spending period is 2022-2025. Seeking to address the shortcomings of the current system and its inefficiencies. Taking a bottom up approach to change, asking officers first DLUHC working on a National Data Platform to be a 'one stop shop' for planning and housing data. It is the long term aim for this to also contain Article 4s and planning decisions data	Slides to be shared

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	LURA – Some nods to planning data within this Act. DLUHC looking to set some data standards. DLUHC working with third party data suppliers on standards. DLUHC have established 'Open digital planning'. A council-led community for forward-thinking planning teams. Platform to provide peer support. 2024/5 focus • Technology o Scale of adoption o Fund Land Assessment pilots • Data o 75+ LPAs publishing data to planning.data.gov.uk. o Believed that this 75 is the critical mass to get third parties to start using the data. Could facilitate automated systems. o Establish the first planning data standards in regulation by Spring 2025 • Service Improvement o Support LA planning departments to begin digital transformation o Improve digital and data capability development support • Community o Grow and formalise open digital planning o Define commercial future for ODP products First steps towards digital transformation: • DLUHC will eventually open digital planning community to all for free • Open digital maturity service to enable managers to understanding the digital maturity of your planning service • Improve & publish your planning data • Access training opportunities • Access ODP community • Explore digital data opportunities • Ultimately adopt modern digital planning **Greg Woodford on the PlanX service** PlanX is an online digital tool to guide people through the planning system. Increase public confidence in the planning system whilst decreasing costs. This also improves quality of applications. People do not need to know the planning system to use this pre-app tool. PlanX is two things; 'Find out' 'Apply for' PlanX will help applicants understand if permission is required or PD Applicants can then apply for permission using PlanX apply service PlanX notifies the applicant which documents are then needed.	

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	PlanX offers a LDC service **Stephen Barnes on the Back Office Planning System (BOPS)** To assist planning officers in DM, the BOPS system is one system and seeks to assist with the current challenges planning officers experience with current multiple systems and data sets. BOPS highlights • There is a constant feedback loop between users and software developers to ensure quick development. • BOPS receives info from PlanX, planning data platform and other. • It is 30% faster to consider an application inside BOPS • Planning officers make fewer avoidable mistakes • The BOPS system is flexible to planning system changes • Has management benefits, work can more easily be picked up by new officers if on leave etc. • Auditable – everything done inside system, not tied up in emails. • Focussed • Continuous updates **Questions** Paul Q: How do we reach data uniformity across software providers to reach this new system? A: Good consistent data. If all providers are consistent around way they receive data could work whilst still encouraging a competitive market. Private sector providers will need to conform to the same standards. Hannah Q: Parking smartphone apps all over the place – DfT looking to standardise process? A: Good analogy to issues with data and software Q: How is PlanX funded? A: DLUHC funded. 2019 first discovery brief. Every year have to justify continued funding. Paul Q: IS PlanX supported corporately in Lambeth? A: Yes, it is, in fact they want the software live now. Some elements are already available. Some pre-app services are already available to use Q: What should senior managers be thinking about in next 12 months? A: A maturity assessment of systems could be a good start. Matt Wood-Hill question back to all – What could DLUHC do?	

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		A: Some senior managers are limited in their understanding of digitisation. Some training for decision makers could be beneficial. This forum is a welcome test space.	
2	Lucy Hargreaves updates	David Waterhouse updated on planning skills delivery fund. £11m is allocated and a further £13m is forthcoming. Super squad appointments being made in May Enforcement measures go live this week Changing to 10 year time limit Changes to enforcement notices from 28 to 56 days. A model enforcement notice is to be included. Local Plans regs still being developed – post summer target date for consultation PDR consultation response after summer Noted that short stay lets changes being worked up.	
3	Graham Stallwood PINS appeals changes	**PINS presentation on proposed changes to appeals** There are 15,000 written reps per year. It is proposed to change the process to remove 3 steps in the process. These being; 1. Appeals statements, sometimes with extra evidence. 2. Comments on appeal by LPA and interested parties 3. Final comments Why Change? Re-use the officer report and decision notice. No extra work for a statement and final comments required. Streamlining process to assist with digitisation. Keeping it local – with just the officer report used, the appeal will use same info that was seen at the local level. **Questions** Paul 1hr 4 mins Q: Non-determination appeals, any advice on these? A: These can continue to be dealt with as the LPA see best fit, including an informal decision being requested by the planning committee Q: Risk of no statement being seen changes the odds and stacks against LPAs especially if the applicants still can submit statements or new evidence. A: understood that this is a risk that will need to be managed. Observation – welcome keeping appeals system as streamlined as possible as it is a huge cost to the planning department.	Graham to share slides via Hannah

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3	**AoB**	Hannah B – future agenda items May meeting to focus on a policy TBD Next meeting beyond this to focus on resourcing Then the next meeting on recruitment and retention Kylie – decided not to do BNG & LNRS meeting due to other meetings in the diary Looked instead at people centric planning, accessible places, inclusive design. Kylie has pulled together some ideas on these.	
4	**Confirm date of next meeting**	28th May 2024 at 11am (MS Teams)	