



Report to Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee 26th April 2017

Report of: Policy & Improvement Officer

Subject: Economic Landscape in Sheffield – Evidence Session 2

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The Committee agreed to a task group on Economic Landscape in Sheffield. The timetable and format has been amended in light of agreement to a Western Road First World War Memorial task and finish scrutiny working group.

Further activity on this topic will have to be recommended for inclusion in draft work programme for 2017/18 municipal year.

Evidence was heard from Sheffield Chamber of Commerce and Industry as part of Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee on 15th February 2017.

For this evidence session 2, Creative Sheffield and Planning Services, Sheffield City Council, have been invited to present their response to the same questions:

1. Is Sheffield serving the needs of business/developers?
2. Are there any lessons for the future?
3. How do we compare with other Cities or places?

Background information in regard to Planning Services is attached as Appendix A. Background information in regard to Creative Sheffield can be found at <http://www.welcometosheffield.co.uk>

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

- Gather information in response to the questions
- Consider the responses, provide comment in regard this topic and action for draft work programme 2017/18

Category of Report: OPEN

**BACKGROUND REPORT TO THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL
WELLBEING SCRUTINY AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
SERVING THE NEEDS OF BUSINESSES/DEVELOPERS – THE PLANNING
SERVICE**

26th April 2017

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide background information for the Economic and Environmental Wellbeing Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, who are seeking information in response to three questions:

- a) Is Sheffield serving the needs of businesses/developers?
- (b) Are there any lessons for the future?
- (c) How do we compare with other cities and Core Cities”?

In addition, there is a specific question about how members can be aware of applications in their wards.

2. Context

2.1 Sheffield is ambitious for growth. The city is the key driver of the Sheffield City Region economy. The SCR Growth Plan aims to create 70,000 jobs over the next 10 years of which Sheffield's share is 25,000 new jobs. To achieve that rate of economic growth, the city needs to deliver 43,000 new homes over the next 20 years. Recent announcements on the HS2 station location, investment from China and the commencement of the Retail Quarter mean that the city centre will be a focus for major regeneration and development over the next 10 – 20 years.

2.2 The Council's Planning service is fundamental to enabling the delivery of this growth and development and the transformation of the city as a place, with the necessary infrastructure, community facilities and quality of environment to support it. To achieve this growth a properly resourced service is required to deliver:

- the Sheffield Plan – the statutory planning framework which will provide the blueprint for the city's growth over the next 20 years and give certainty and confidence to the development industry and local community about the scale, location and quality of development the city is ambitious for;
- up to 150 major planning applications a year for housing and commercial development, around a third more than the service currently handles, plus around 2,500 minor and other applications;
- the related increase in master planning and design work, conservation and building regulations consents necessary to ensure the design quality and

standard of buildings, spaces and landscape which Sheffield is ambitious for.

- 2.3 All of this comes at a time of significant budget pressure on the Council, with revenue support grant being replaced by retained business rates and council tax. There is a need for services to be efficient, business-like and commercially focused to minimise costs and maximise sources of income to help fund services in future.
- 2.5 Two parallel pieces of work have recently been undertaken to review the approach to growth the Council takes, including the role of the Planning Service:
1. Establishing a set of agreed priorities across the Creative Sheffield, Planning Services, Property and Transport Teams. These priorities relate to creating sustainable growth.
 2. An analysis of planning services at 3 other northern Core Cities, which are targeting growth – Manchester, Leeds and Nottingham - to benchmark planning resources and organisational structures.

3. Core Cities Benchmarking

- 3.1 The attached data sheet provides a comparison of staff resources, budgets and workload performance at the 4 core city councils of Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester and Nottingham. The following points are important to note:
1. Caseloads/officer across planning applications, Building Control and Enforcement teams are greatest in Sheffield (with the exception of Nottingham's Building Control service), suggesting efficiency and productivity is comparatively good in Sheffield.
 2. Although the number of policy staff is greater at Sheffield and Leeds, neither Manchester nor Nottingham are currently progressing a Local Plan, which requires a spike in resources.
 3. Management at Sheffield is not top heavy at a ratio of 1:10 staff compared to Manchester at 1:15.
 4. The Urban and Environmental Design team at Sheffield includes 7 Landscape Architects, which explains its size in relation to Manchester and Nottingham. Sheffield also acts as the Secretariat for the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.
 5. Although the net cost of the Planning service at Sheffield is greater than both Manchester and Nottingham, there are reasons in addition to larger workloads. Manchester's service does not include Policy Team costs, which forms part of a combined policy unit in Growth & Neighbourhoods. Nottingham's costs do not include corporate recharges.
 6. Both Manchester and Nottingham Council's socio-economic geography

comprises predominantly city centre and commercial areas, with suburban areas under adjoining local authorities in Greater Manchester and Nottingham. Whereas the administrative areas of both Sheffield and Leeds cover the whole city, with residential communities who are engaged in the planning process. This has a bearing on staff resources required to deal with Neighbourhood Plans, Conservation and resident objections in both Sheffield and Leeds.

7. The administration and technical staffing at Sheffield does appear proportionately larger in relation to application and staff numbers, compared to the other 3 core cities. (Since this report, measures have been taken to significantly reduce these costs and drive further efficiencies, aided by the adoption of new workflow processes. Some re-profiling of the mix of grades is also taking place as opportunities arise, further reducing costs.)
- 3.2 In terms of organisational structures, whilst no two Councils are the same, at Manchester, Nottingham and Leeds, Planning Services sit within directorates of development and/or growth and the Heads of Planning report directly to strategic or corporate directors with responsibility for growth:
- At Manchester the Head of Planning & Building Control reports to the Deputy Chief Executive, who is responsible for Growth and Neighbourhoods;
 - At Nottingham, the Head of Planning reports to the Corporate Director of Development and Growth, who is also responsible for Transport, Economic Development and Property;
 - At Leeds, the Chief Planning Officer reports to the Director of City Development, who likewise combines Transport, Economic Development and Asset Management.
 - At Sheffield, the Head of Planning used to report to a Director of Development Services, who in turn reports to a strategic director with responsibility for both economic growth and place management. With the departure of Simon Green his replacement Lorraine Manley is reviewing management structures to ensure that the service is fit for purpose and able to act efficiently and effectively in the best interests of the whole community.
- 3.3 What was apparent at all three of the benchmarked northern city region authorities is that development and growth is recognised as a strategic priority with dedicated corporate director responsibility. Within this planning is recognised and understood as a key delivery arm of growth and development and grouped with those services which enable growth. The corporate leadership of planning is to support growth, particularly so at Manchester and Nottingham.

4. How members can be aware of applications in their wards

- 4.1 The Planning Service regularly briefs the Cabinet Member and Chairs of the Planning and Highways Committee on any major or controversial new planning applications, who then determine when further cascading of information and consultation with local members is required.
- 4.2 All members are responsible for taking an interest in applications in their wards and assisting their communities with engaging with the application process. They are often contacted by constituents on these issues and have the same access to application process. The Council has invested in good quality online resources and publishes in a transparent and open way virtually all information relating to planning applications on its web site. To assist members, they can make online searches bespoke to their own ward of all new planning applications submitted; this more sophisticated online search facility has replaced printed 'Weekly Lists', but they can be recreated in digital format.
- 4.3 Local members will also be informed directly wherever appropriate and including the following circumstances:
 - If there is a pre-application briefing of the Planning and Highways Committee
 - If there is a public meeting about an application

Benchmarking data for Core Cities**Staffing:** (Figures in FTEs as at April 2016)

| City | DM | | BC | Policy | Design | Tech. & Admin | Man. |
|------------|------|------|----|--------|--------|---------------|------|
| | DC | Enf. | | | | | |
| Leeds | 40 | 20 | 27 | 26 | 17 | 39 | 19 |
| Sheffield | 20.7 | 6 | 15 | 17.1 | 14.4 | 29 | 10.6 |
| Manchester | 21.5 | 5 | 20 | 6 | 4.5 | 18 | 13 |
| Nottingham | 12 | 5 | 8 | 8.1 | 5.6 | 10.3 | 5.9 |

Budgets: (Figures in £000s for 2016/17)

| City | Costs | Income | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|--------|--------------|----------|------------|-------|
| | | Total | Pl. app Fees | Pre-Apps | B. Control | Other |
| Leeds | 8,300 | 5,097 | 3,402 | 195 | 1,500 | 0 |
| Sheffield | 5,048 | 4,001 | 1,962 | 229 | 843 | 967 |
| Manchester | 3,626 ¹ | 3,226 | 2,326 | - | 900 | 0 |
| Nottingham | 2,000 ² | 1,790 | 1,100 | 85 | 450 | 155 |

1 Does not include Policy team costs as in Corporate Policy unit

2 Does not include corporate recharges e.g. HR, Legal, Finance, IT

DM & BC Performance: (figures for 2015/16)

| City | Planning Applications | | | | | | | | Pre-apps |
|------------|-----------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|-------|-----------|----------|
| | Majors | | Minors | | Others | | Total | | Total |
| | No. | KPI (%) | No. | KPI (%) | No. | KPI (%) | No. | Case load | |
| Leeds | 221 | 96% | 1006 | 91% | 3157 | 94% | 4384 | 110 | 803 |
| Sheffield | 112 | 90% | 625 | 80% | 1743 | 88% | 2480 | 120 | 601 |
| Manchester | 107 | 82% | 858 | 80% | 1064 | 81% | 2029 | 95 | DNR |
| Nottingham | 63 | 92% | 372 | 88% | 879 | 87% | 1314 | 110 | 391 |

Key benchmarks

| City | Appeals | | Enforcement | | Building Regulations | |
|------------|---------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| | No. | % allowed | Cases | Cases per officer | Number of Applications | Cases per surveyor |
| Leeds | 231 | 26% | 1254 | 63 | 3502 | 130 |
| Sheffield | 40 | 28% | 592 | 99 | 2237 | 150 |
| Manchester | 42 | 43% | NR | - | 1500 | 75 |
| Nottingham | 21 | 48% | 450 | 90 | 1480 | 185 |