

APPENDIX 1

SCR HEADS OF PLANNING: WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

AIMS

- To support obligations through the Duty to Cooperate;
- To strengthen the role of planning in delivering the ambitions of the current Strategic Economic Plan (and further iterations) as well as more inclusive forms of growth;
- To support continuous improvement of local planning services and greater consistency across different areas of planning; and
- To ensure that local planning and wider city region initiatives are well aligned and able to respond to future developments.

WORK STREAMS

i) Duty to Cooperate

Heads of Planning would be responsible for leading on shared work and can report progress to the SCR Infrastructure Board as well as contribute to other initiatives where required. The Group will also improve links with other SCR officer groups such as Housing Directors in order to deliver a more coherent response to policy and strategy issues at the SCR scale.

Current tasks:

- Undertake regular progress reports on the work programme to the Infrastructure Board.

ii) Shared Planning Approach

This is an evidence and data gathering exercise to establish a cost, income, resources, productivity and performance baseline for individual planning services. The evidence base will shape specific follow-up improvement plans. Importantly, this work would also establish the views of applicants/developers at the outset and lead to ongoing feedback on services. The work is being supported by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS).

Current tasks:

- First wave of 5 Local Planning Authorities start work on reviews in July (North East Derbyshire, Bolsover, Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield).
- A second 'wave' will be available for any remaining councils wishing to take part later in the year.

iii) Shared Evidence Bases

A good planning experience across SCR will attract more investment, leading to better-quality developments and delivery. However, perceptions are important, and the profile of the planning experience needs to be raised, for example, through better communications with developers and through Member development opportunities. This will be helped by a range of shared, evidence-based pieces of work to inform local planning decisions.

Current tasks:

- Prepare SCR wide Statement of Common Ground
- Undertake appraisal of employment land supply across SCR
- Develop a shared understanding of land values and viability across SCR

iv) Local Authority Recruitment and Retention of Staff:

The problems of recruiting and retaining good planning officers can be better addressed through exploring opportunities together to build the at the SCR scale. The work is proposed to focus on developing career paths for planners, strengthening links with universities to attract new graduates and increasing the numbers of students studying planning. It would also look at how innovation or good practice can be better rewarded in planning teams.

Current tasks:

- Initial meetings with universities to be held as a basis for more detailed proposals to help retain planning students in the SCR and also encourage them into local planning authorities.