

## **Minutes of MS Teams Meeting held between RSUA Members and Head of Planning CC&GBC held 01 May 2024**

Attendance:

Denise Dickson - Head of Planning - (DD)

Julie Sullivan– RTPI Northern Ireland Administrator - (JS)

Mark Hand – RTPI Director of Wales, Northern Ireland and Planning Aid England

Murray Bell - Local RSUA Rep – Bell Architects Ltd – (MB)

George Dorrian – RSUA Policy and Public Affairs – (GD)

Stephen McCrory – Studiosixty3 – (SMC)

Tom Stokes – TSA Planning – (TS)

Gemma Jobling – JPE Planning (GJ)

Eoighin Farren – Farren Architects - (EF)

Carol Gourley – C.McIlvar Ltd (CMI)

Alana Durrent – (AD)

Scott Kennedy – Bell Architects – (SK\_)

Richard Hunter - (RH)

### *1.0 Introduction*

- 1.1 DD opened the meeting, welcoming attendees. She acknowledged the continued benefits of holding a hybrid meeting.
- 1.2 DD advised that the focus of the agenda for this meeting will be on a new PADs process and Validation Checklist.

### *2.0 Minutes of Previous Meetings:*

- 2.1 DD tabled the minutes from the meeting held 06 December 2023 advising that when agreed these will be published on Planning section of Council's website for those who cannot attend to view what has been discussed and for open and transparency.
- 2.2 No issues of accuracy were raised by those in attendance and the minutes were accepted as agreed for publishing.

### *3.0 Action Points from Previous Meetings:*

3.1 DD went through the action points from previous meetings and updated as follows:

- Development Management Information Leaflet 04 on renewal applications published on website - **complete**
- Finalise draft PADs paper for final comment – **ongoing focus of meeting** – DD.

#### 4.0 *Pre Application Discussions*

4.1 Draft PAD procedures circulated prior to meeting.

4.2 Discussion took place around the proposed new PADs process. It was confirmed that the PAD process is confidential and not published on the Planning Portal. Concerns were raised in relation to communication and statutory consultees input. GD and MH confirmed that a meeting with the DfI Minister is scheduled for June.

4.3 Those present agreed that the PAD process should be more focused and agents to advise in the PAD form of the consultees (if any) they request to input into the PAD process; if delay in consultee responses proceed to issue PAD response and follow-up with consultee responses.

4.4 DD agreed to proceed to finalise the new PADs procedures taking into account comments raised and bring to Planning Committee for agreement to implement.

#### 5.0 *Validation Checklist*

5.1 Draft Validation Checklist circulated prior to meeting.

5.2 Discussion took place around the documents detailed in the Validation Checklist. CG advised that Armagh, Banbridge Craigavon Borough Council retain the application fee for one month. Planning Portal needs changed to refuse to accept the submission of the planning application if the necessary information is not submitted. A Planning Statement should be submitted with each application irrespective of whether Plan Strategy adopted or not.

5.3 MB stated that we all want to improve the quality of planning applications. EF advised on top 5 items listed on RoI Portal.

5.4 Agreed to add Planning Statements to the list of documents and proceed with Validation Checklist to Planning Committee for implementation.

## *6.0 Speed/Inefficiency of planning applications*

- 6.1 MB queried front-loading of the system from Planners and concern that applications were not progressing and some left to sleep on the shelf.
- 6.2 DD advised that this is not the case, applications are reviewed but the issue is case loads and if waiting a period of time on information to be submitted on an application these files are only reviewed periodically. DD agreed there is work to be done from Planners in front-loading the application assessment when valid application received.
- 6.3 TS stated that Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) are used by Belfast City Council and agreed to send copy to DD. MH advised that PPAs are also used in Wales.

## *7.0 NI Water Conditions*

- 7.1 DD advised that NI Water conditions relating to sewerage network capacity are considered on a case-by-case basis. It has been raised at Planning Statutory Consult Forum as to whether this issue can be dealt with outside of the planning application system but it has been advised that it must be considered within the planning application process due to environmental impact.
- 7.2 TS advised that the CEF is to lobby the DfI Minister on the issue. GD a meeting is scheduled with the Minister for 29 May.

## *8.0 Planning Portal*

- 8.1 DD advised that update to the Planning Portal to allow for online submission is scheduled for September.
- 8.2 DD agreed to check if Planning Officer needs to tick 'publish' before consultation responses are viewable by public.

## *9.0 Enforcement Process*

- 9.1 MB raised concern over the Council having the highest number of enforcement prosecutions out of 11 Councils. He raised concern regarding the tone of warning letters and agreed to send copy of warning letter issued by Belfast City Council which he considered to be better worded.

## *10.0 AORB*

- 10.1 None

## *11.0 Date of Next Meeting:*

11.1 The date of the next meeting to be confirmed.

## ACTIONS

Issue	Action	Owner
Minutes	Publish minutes of meeting on Planning section of Council's website	DD
PADs process	DD to further refine the and bring to Planning Committee to agree implementation	DD
Validation Checklist	DD to further refine the and bring to Planning Committee to agree implementation	DD
Planning Performance Agreement	TS to send copy of PPA to DD	TS
Front-loading planning assessment	DD to review and seek improvements to delays at the beginning of the planning process	DD
Planning Portal	DD to check if tick required to publish consultation responses	DD