

PLANNING WORKING GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE Approved by SPOA on 3 March 2017

General

Planning Working Group (PWG) is made up of the leading policy planning officers from all eleven district councils and the County Council.

The Group reports to the Surrey Planning Officers Association (SPOA) and provides a forum for information sharing and discussion on technical matters relating to planning policy development in the context of national, strategic and local priorities. In particular the Group provides a forum through which strategic and cross boundary issues can be raised in relation to the Duty to Co-operate and taken forward to more senior groups where necessary.

It is a complimentary Group to the Development Managers Group (DMG), which deals primarily with development management issues and also reports to SPOA.

Aims of the Group

1. To provide a forum for sharing general information and experience at senior level on policy issues.
2. To develop best practice and initiate joint working to aid the process of preparing sub regional and local policy documents.
3. To ensure that policies take full account of the strategic and cross boundary issues arising from plan preparation and ensuring that these are addressed in the most appropriate manner as part of the Duty to Co-operate
4. To develop a Surrey-wide overview in response to consultations and review processes taking place at a national regional and local level.
5. To maintain an information exchange and communication link with other relevant forums such as the Wider South East Officer Working Group.
6. To keep abreast and share information on issues and best practice outside Surrey, and on Policy development and implementation in such areas that will have an impact on Surrey.

Members

It is for individual authorities to decide whom to send to the Group. It is anticipated that PWG members will be of sufficient seniority to be fully aware and to be able to respond to issues raised and enable effective discussions and decisions on collaborative action to be taken forward. Usually one officer per authority will attend but there is no limit in principle. It is anticipated that officers with relevant specialist knowledge, including non planners, will attend from member organisations according to the agenda.

Relationship with SPOA

SPOA will have a commissioning or client role whereby the chairman of PWG will:

- report to SPOA on relevant topical technical spatial planning policy issues;
- provide technical support to SPOA and county-wide collaboration on joint project implementation;
- ensure agendas and minutes are sent to the Chairman of SPOA.
- attend SPOA as requested

- refer any proposals for new areas of work which have significant resource implications for all authorities to SPOA for discussion and approval.

Relationship with DMG

PWG will refer relevant issues to DMG. The Chairman of PWG will ensure agendas and minutes are sent to the Chairman of these two groups and will seek to ensure that the DMG minutes are circulated to PWG. Relevant issues raised at DMG can be discussed at PWG.

Scope of the Group

The Group will deal with policy development, monitoring and best practice across the whole spectrum of spatial planning issues. These may be raised by individual boroughs and districts, the County Council and will typically include:

- Local Plan preparation, infrastructure provision, public engagement and responses to consultations;
- Changes to Government legislation and new policy guidance;
- Cross boundary and strategic issues requiring consideration as part of the Duty to Co-operate
- Monitoring - either information gathering or dissemination of information of mutual benefit;
- minerals and waste policy issues;
- wider policy issues raised by significant site-specific proposals or new developments;
- other non-planning policies issues which impact on plan making – for example education provision assessments, economic development strategies and funding, devolution of local government

Administration

Planning Working Group is chaired by a member of the Group nominated and agreed by other members. The Group has been traditionally administered by the County. However, there is no reason in principle why these responsibilities should not be shared if any member organisation wished to take over the roles. The Group meets approximately 6 times per year with the different member authorities taking it in turns to host the forum.

Annual Review

The terms of reference including arrangements for chairing and administering PWG and a review of membership and its effectiveness will be reviewed annually, towards the end of each year and referred to SPOA for approval.

Mark Behrendt
Head of Planning Policy, Elmbridge BC
Chair of PWG
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