OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

DATE OF MEETING: **17 August 2021**

TITLE OF REPORT: **Development Management Service update**

Report of: **Head of Place**

Cabinet Portfolio: **Place**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 For Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to receive an update on progress in the implementation of the Development Management Service Action Plan.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Committee is recommended to:

2.2 Note the content of the Assessment of the current Development Management Service: August (Appendix 1) and the Development Management Service Action Plan update (Appendix 2); and

2.3 Highlight any particular area which it thought would be useful for the Overview & Scrutiny Working Group to look at when it meets at the end of September 2021.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its July 2021 meeting received a oral update on the implementation of the Planning Development Management Service Action Plan. The Committee also received an update on current recruitment.

3.2 The Joint Chief Executive, Head of Place and Portfolio Holder for Place agreed to give an update at August's Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

4 PEER REVIEW

4.1 In December 2019, a Peer Review of the Development Management (DM) Service was published.

4.2 The Review highlights a number of Actions that the Council should implement to turn the Service from a Good to a Great Service.

4.3 A draft Action Plan was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) in July 2020. A Task and Finish Group of O&S Members was set up to shape the Action Plan. In addition, Planning Committee created its own Working Party to consider those recommendations which specifically related to the work of the Planning Committee function.

4.4 The Planning Committee endorsed a number of actions relating to the work of Planning Committee at its meeting on 17th August 2020. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered an updated Action Plan on 17th November 2020 and recommended that Cabinet approve it.

4.5 The Development Management Service Action Plan was approved by Cabinet in December 2020. The Action Plan divided the actions into Short Term (expected completion by 31st March 2021) Medium Term (expected completion by 31st December 2021) and Long Term (expected completion by 30th June 2022). An update to that Action Plan covering the position at August 2021 column and an Implementation column is attached at Appendix 2.

4.6 Ongoing assessment of Service performance needs to be considered in the context that the team, like the rest of the Council, are still dealing with the consequential implications of operating through the Covid-19 pandemic, including delayed site visits and staff re-deployment in to Covid-19 response tasks. There has also been an increase in day-to-day workload, with increases in March 2021 of 82% compared to this time last year, April increase of 39% and May increase of 75%. This increase reflects the national surge in applications. In addition to this, a key member of the management team has been on long-term sickness absence.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Any additional costs of implementing the Development Service Management Action Plan will be brought to Cabinet for approval if and when required.

6 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

7 EQUALITIES IMPACT

7.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from the recommendations.

8 ACTION

8.1 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee set up a sub working group to oversee the DM Action Plan targets and actions. The Planning Committee set up a sub working group to oversee the DM Action Plan target and actions relating to Planning Committee. A joint Working Group of the two sub groups has been set up for 28th September 2021. The respective Working Groups will report back later in the Autumn.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Assessment of the current Development Management Service: August 2021
Appendix 2 – Development Management Service Action Plan: August 2021 update