

Implementing Area Team Planning in Cornwall

It has been recognised that the increase in neighbourhood planning necessitates a more localised approach to decision-making. A trial has been running in the Liskeard/Looe Community Network Area (recently expanded to include Cornwall Gateway) exploring different ways of working. The trial operated an area-based approach to all types of planning and enforcement related matters and consisted of a small multi-disciplinary team of officers who reviewed the processes from receipt through to decision to explore opportunities for efficiencies. The aim of this Area Team Trial was to improve the quality of development within a supportive community and with positive and engaged staff.

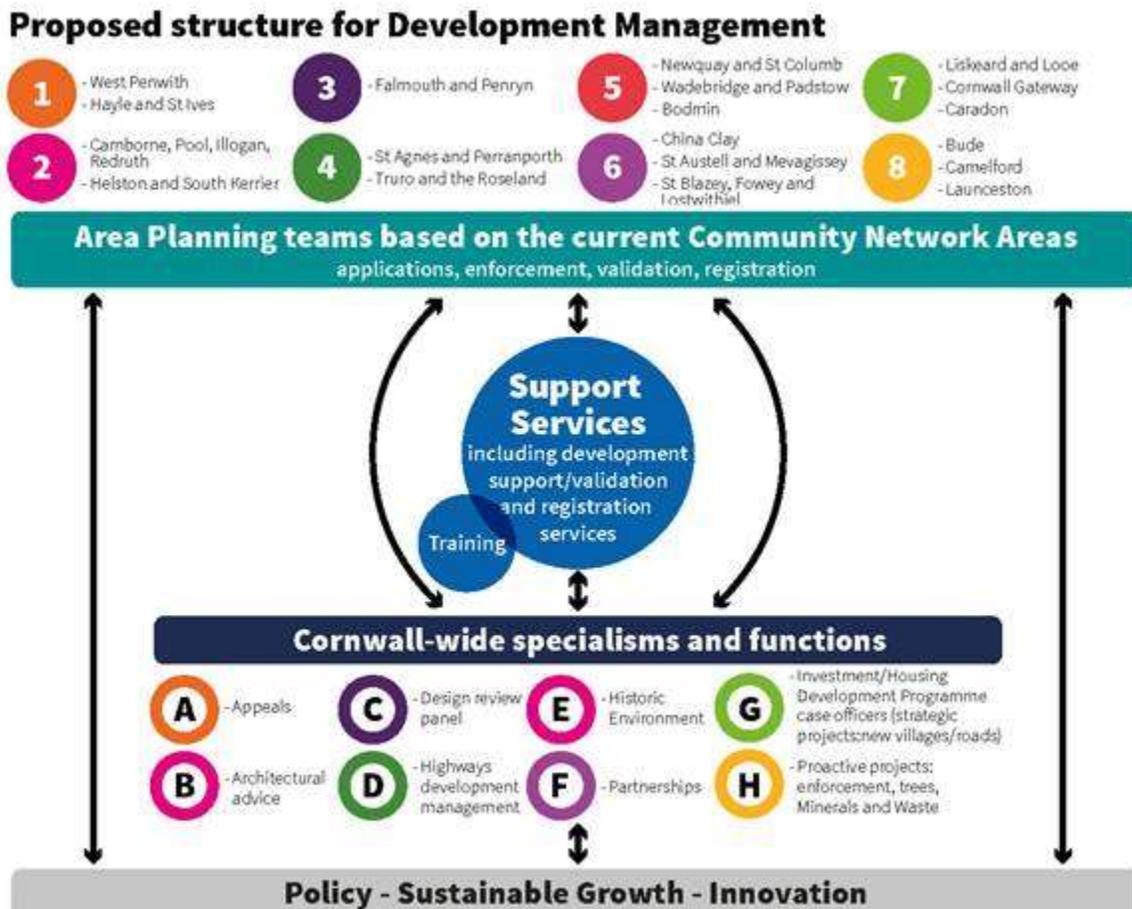
The Area Team Trial has demonstrated a number of benefits in respect of helping to develop positive working relationships with Local Councils. The team have met with most Local Councils within the Community Network Area and have given a short talk on the work of the Area Team Trial, whilst obtaining feedback on ways that we can work better together. This has helped Local Councils put faces to names in order to build relationships and improve trust in the decision-making process. This has also opened up channels of communication so that that Local Councils have the ability to contact and discuss planning related issues with the officers working within their area. It has also enabled us to develop bespoke ways of working with Local Councils including (for example) the provision of a short summary of the relevant considerations for particular applications before they are discussed at Local Council Meetings.

Several of the Local Councils taking part in the Trial have expressed how helpful this has been in setting out the relevant material planning considerations. Indeed, within the Area Team Trial area, over 97% of recommendations in respect of planning applications have been in accordance with the Local Council consultation response, demonstrating that this approach to working has the potential to result in more aligned decision making. This closer working relationship means that Local Councils will get to know the officers individually in their area and at that point, the area team network of officers will replace the current arrangement for friendly link officers in Development Management.

The area-based approach to working has also enabled officers to develop deeper knowledge and understanding of Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) to ensure decisions are made in accordance with the relevant NDPs. Furthermore, working in a more concentrated geographical area has enabled officers to improve their knowledge of the local area and local issues whilst strengthening their emotional connection with the area. All of these factors have the potential to improve the quality of planning decisions.

As a result of this successful trial it is intended to roll out this area-based approach to ensure that the benefits are achieved across Cornwall:

- Eight multi-disciplinary planning teams based on a group of community network areas dealing with all types of planning applications and enforcement matters from receipt through to decision;
- a Cornwall-wide team of specialist functions, including a dedicated development management function for the Council's Investment and Housing Development Programmes and a pro-active enforcement service; and
- a central flexible and responsive function of support services.



The principle of the Area Team approach has received endorsement from The Cornwall Planning Partnership and positive feedback was received at the first of the Local Council's Planning Conferences in Penzance and St Austell. Further updates on the area

team structures and also the Development Management and Planning Enforcement process changes are being given at the remaining Local Council Planning conference on 28.2.19 in Liskeard.

Latest news

The preparations to launch the eight new area teams and Cornwall-wide team for Development Management are well advanced to be ready for the implementation date of 1 April 2019.

Development Management Area Planning Teams from April 2019



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Important progress has been made with Areas 7 and 8: Area 7 was the original Area Team trial in Liskeard and Looe and Cornwall Gateway. From the beginning of this year, Area 7 expanded to include Caradon Community Network Area so is now fully launched. A second area will be implemented earlier than scheduled - Area 8 (Bude, Camelford and Launceston) will be going 'live' on 28 January.

Meet the Planners in your area

There will be an opportunity in March for Local Councils and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups to send representatives to events being organised by Planning. This will be a chance for you to meet the planners from the different teams in Planning & Sustainable Development. There will be officers from the new Area Teams in Development Management, Policy, the Neighbourhood Planning team and Delivery who will be giving a short presentation. This will be followed by the opportunity to chat to officers informally.

- West Penwith, Hayle and St Ives Community Network Areas (Area 1) – 11 March 2019 – 4.30-6.00 pm in Ludgvan Community Centre
- Camborne Pool Illogan Redruth, Helston and South Kerrier Community Network Areas (Area 2) – 4 March 2019 – 4.30-6.00 pm in Heartlands, Pool
- Falmouth and Penryn Community Network Areas (Area 3) – 13 March 2019 – 4.30-6.00 pm in Emmanuel Baptist Church, Falmouth
- St Agnes and Perranporth, Truro and the Roseland (Area 4) – 22 March 2019 – 4.30-6.00 pm in Threemilestone Community Centre
- Newquay and St Columb, Wadebridge and Padstow, Bodmin (Area 5) – 20 March 2019 – 5.00-6.30 pm in Wadebridge Town Hall
- China Clay, St Austell and Mevagissey, St Blazey Fowey and Lostwithiel (Area 6) – 21 March 2019 – 5.00-6.30 pm in the Council Chamber, St Austell One Stop Shop
- Liskeard and Looe, Cornwall Gateway, Caradon (Area 7) – 27 March 2019 – 5.00-6.30 pm in Liskeard Town Hall
- Bude, Camelford, Launceston (Area 8) – 28 March 2019 – 4.30-6.00 pm in Launceston Town Hall

Invitations will be sent nearer the time. However please note that places will be limited to three spaces per local council/NDP group together.

Updates will be published on the [What's new in Planning](#) webpage.

Area Team Planning Project Team
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