



planning advisory service

## PAS Conference 2023



### **The Challenges and Opportunities: Panel Discussion**

- Alice Lester, Brent, Director Regeneration, Growth and Employment
- Karen Syrett, Colchester City Council, Lead Officer for Planning & Place Strategy
- Tracy Darke, Shropshire, Assistant Director Economy and Place

**3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023**

**[www.local.gov.uk/pas](http://www.local.gov.uk/pas)**

# Alice Lester

## Director Regeneration, Growth and Employment





# Challenge 1: declining applications and fees

## Major

### Applications

Fees are included in the Other Application section above

	2021-2022		2022-2023		Month By Month Difference	
	Fee Received	otal Number of Case	Fee Received	Total Number of Cases	Fee Received	Total Number of Cases
April	£ 27,011.00	4	£ 29,303.00	3	£ 2,292.00	-1
May	£ 2,028.00	2	£ 58,331.00	3	£ 56,303.00	1
June	£ 176,103.00	6	£ 70,336.00	4	-£ 105,767.00	-2
July	£ 88,109.00	3	£ 34,199.00	2	-£ 53,910.00	-1
August	£ 159,790.00	5	£ 468.00	2	-£ 159,322.00	-3
September	£ 34,188.00	2	£ 93,761.00	8	£ 59,573.00	6
October	£ 64,781.00	2	£ -	1	-£ 64,781.00	-1
November	£ 28,247.00	3	£ 63,089.00	2	£ 34,842.00	-1
December	£ 701.00	4	£ 116,891.00	3	£ 116,190.00	-1
January	£ 18,252.00	2	£ -	0	-£ 18,252.00	-2
February	£ 12,012.00	1				
March	£ 209,175.00	4				
	£ 820,397.00	38	£ 466,378.00	28	-£ 354,019.00	-10

## Pre

### Application Summary

	2021-2022		2022-2023		Month By Month Difference	
	Fee Received	otal Number of Case	Fee Received	Total Number of Cases	Fee Received	Total Number of Cases
April	£38,840.00	37	£76,780.00	27	£37,940.00	-10
May	£13,680.00	30	£47,600.00	34	£33,920.00	4
June	£34,700.00	29	£26,120.00	26	-£8,580.00	-3
July	£27,110.00	25	£19,250.00	21	-£7,860.00	-4
August	£51,590.00	35	£30,160.00	35	-£21,430.00	0
September	£54,720.00	43	£70,180.00	31	£15,460.00	-12
October	£37,080.00	33	£31,630.00	29	-£5,450.00	-4
November	£19,820.00	33	£29,500.00	39	£9,680.00	6
December	£33,240.00	18	£33,580.00	27	£340.00	9
January	£31,680.00	31	£31,800.00	19	£120.00	-12
February	£48,850.00	40	£9,838.00	21	-£39,012.00	-19
March	£36,960.00	33				
	£428,270.00	387	£406,438.00	309	-£21,832.00	-78

# Challenge 2: impact on housing delivery

## Context - housing need:

- 24,000 households on waiting list
- 120 presenting as homeless each week
- 14 years wait for a 3 bed;

Viability – construction costs, energy, supplies, - impacting on council's housebuilding programme

RPs – withdrawing from new build market to focus on fixing fire safety issues

BS9991.....

# Challenge 3: Planning Reform and system overload

Topic	Impact on Capacity	Impact on Capability
Infrastructure Levy	High	High
Local Plans	Med	Low
Infrastructure Planning	High	High
Community Engagement	High	Low
Design Coding	High	Med
Digital and data standards	Med	Low
Commencement and completion notices	Low	Low
National DM policies	Low	Low
Compulsory Rental Auctions	Med	High
Compulsory Purchase Orders	Low	High
Enforcement	Med	Med
Street Votes	High	High
Neighbourhood Statements	High	High

# Despite the challenges

Exceeding our housing  
delivery test:

- 20/21 3,205 homes delivered,  
25% affordable
- 2021/22, 3427 units delivered,  
21% affordable

New secondary school –  
on site

Highest in the country for  
enforcement notices

POCA successes

Highest in the country for  
New Homes Bonus

Local Plan investor launch,  
agents forum

Mentoring/buddy system

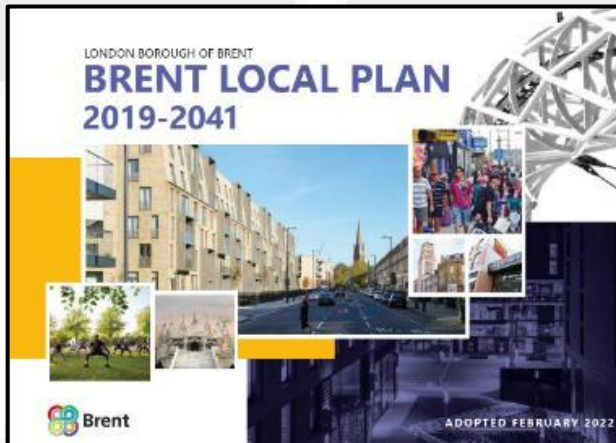
# Looking ahead....



# Planning and Regeneration - Opportunities



**Set a vision for regeneration and growth across the borough**



**Deliver quality new homes, jobs, infrastructure and place-making**



**Ensure existing and new communities benefit alike**





# Staffing and Resources

- 67 staff across planning:
  - DM (and technical support) -37
  - Enforcement - 8
  - Spatial planning and place-making (including transportation) – 25
  - 54% BAME (across Regen; 65% across the Council)





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# Planning Service

Fit for the Future?



Shrewsbury



# The Place

- Huge area
- 328,000 hectares
- Borders another country
- Population – 1 person per hectare
- Demographics interesting – we all retire to Shropshire don't we?
- 2 WHS, 1 AONB, lots of heritage, water, chickens and sheep!
- 97% of our businesses are SME's
- Digital deprivation

# Reflecting back

- It felt ok
- Performance seemed good!
- Officers were settled – but case loads were building
- Customers seemed very dissatisfied
- Very few external links
- Enforcement – what's that then?
- No time to think about any planning reforms
- However, local plan making good progress

# Here and now

- What we needed to do – basic housekeeping
  - Re-structure
  - Understand our costs
  - Getting staff buy in/culture
  - Awareness of what is likely to be coming down the track internally and externally

# Jack of all trades?

We are planners!! Not....

- landscape architects
- drainage experts
- highway engineers
- Ecologists
- Etc...

Do we know what is beautiful and what is ugly..... better than our communities?



# What next?

We need to:

- provide an agile service
- be less cost dependent on the centre
- be ready to respond to planning reforms
- have economic prosperity and growth top of the agenda



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# The Challenges and Opportunities:

Questions from the floor

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023

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