

COMMITTEE	PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE	28 October 2014
SUBJECT	Smarter Planning Champion Status 2014
REPORT OF	Leigh Palmer Senior Specialist Advisor (Planning)
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WARDS	All
PURPOSE	To advise members of the Smarter Planning Champion accreditation scheme.
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RECOMMENDATION	Members to note the content of this information report.

Background

The Government's online planning and building regulations resource 'The Planning Portal' has developed an accreditation scheme for participating members focusing on the delivery of best practice in the submission of online planning applications.

In an environment where there are ever increasing demands on the local government resources it is considered that the development of digital ways of working will assist in saving time, money and carbon for all those engaged in the planning process.

Smarter Planning Initiative

Eastbourne Borough Council has been awarded the 'Smarter Planning Champion' status in recognition of the service area's drive for efficiency and the continued improvement in the delivery of the service.

Eastbourne Borough Council are the 75th Council out of 385 to receive this accreditation.

To achieve its Smarter Planning Champion status Eastbourne Borough Council has had to demonstrate that it is actively applying best practice in

the processing of online planning applications - saving time and resources as well as money and carbon for all of its users.

Members will be aware that over the last year or so a number of Civica products have been rolled out across a number of service areas; these have supported a number of customer facing and back office functions of the Council.

This roll out of software and hardware has now resulted in full integration between the Council's planning function, the Council's web site and the Planning Portal. This full integration now means that the end to end planning function can now be commenced and concluded electronically without the reliance on a paper file (receipt, fee payment, consultation, evaluation and decision).

This integration now means that the electronic submission (via the Planning Portal) rate has risen to approximately 80-90% of all applications received, this rate exceeds the national average of 70% and places Eastbourne at the head of East Sussex authorities.

This integration all means that the Council strives to maintain its paperless ways of working by communicating with applicants/agents electronically throughout the decision making process including electronic validation (on screen), electronic case files that can be accessed remotely, registration on screen, e-consultation and e-decision notices.

Next Steps:

The Council are now entitled to host the 'Smarter Planning Champion' logo on its web site and outgoing correspondence.



In addition the Council have pledged to use its best endeavours to continue to promote 'digital' first ethos for its planning function and where possible seek/support our regular planning agents in their attempts to obtain accreditation.

Recommendation:

It is therefore recommended that Members note the content of this report.

