

**Jack Ricketts - S106 Team**

# **S106 Affordable Housing Monitoring**

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21/1/21

# The current problem

- At some point in its lifecycle, a development ceases to be a reference number and becomes a number newly created homes, each with a unique address.
- We have no mechanism to link these two things. This means that we have no way of verifying that what was secured by a S106 was delivered, or that it continues to exist at any point thereafter.
- We are unable to quantify the numbers of homes that leave the system legitimately, or otherwise, i.e. right-to-buy, 'staircasing', or by fraudulent methods.
- It very quickly becomes impossible to link S106 agreements with housing delivery, and therefore maintain provision of affordable homes in Southwark.
- Excel and annual audits aren't fit for purpose, or appropriate for this task.

# Background - 2016 to 2019

- Nov 2016. The Ombudsman [found against](#) Southwark Council, saying that “*the Council failed to implement a structured procedure for supervising compliance*”.
- Early 2017. The S106 team audited all known housing associations in Southwark and concluded that an annual audit was not appropriate.
- Late 2019. The S106 team began working as part of a joint delivery team with a service design agency to [develop a solution](#).
- Dec 2019. Delivered the first phase of a [fully working service](#) to track individual homes from planning application, through to post occupation.

# Publicity - 2020

In 2020, the service was nominated for a number of national tech awards, including:

## [The RTPI](#)

Excellence in Tech Within Planning Practice

## [National Technology Awards](#)

Best Public Sector Project

Innovation of the Year

## [UK Digital Leaders100](#)

Digital Public Service Innovation of the Year

## [MJ Awards 2020](#)

Best Social Housing Initiative



# Proposal

- I propose a two phased approach for implementation and further development of the service.
- Phase 1 (Implementation) will enable the council to monitor individual units **from application to delivery**
- Phase 2 (Development) will enable the council to monitor individual units **post delivery**

# Phase 1 - Implementation of existing service

- Once in use, the service will immediately start providing real-time insight into the negotiation and delivery of housing in Southwark.
- The service has been designed and tested with current Southwark officers, so little will be required in terms of onboarding, but refresher guidance will be provided. This will likely take the form of a recorded demo, but support will also be available in working hours.
- Once in use, the service can be user tested and refined, based on feedback. This is a priority and the service cannot be enhanced until this is achieved.

# Phase 1 - Limitations of existing service

- It will act only as a monitoring service for those homes secured by S106 agreement from the point the service goes into use.
- This service will only track the progress of individual homes through the planning process, to the point of delivery and sale to a Housing Association (HA).
- It will not monitor the ongoing provision of individual homes past the point of sale to a HA and post occupation.
- It will not monitor those homes that leave the system via RTB or 'staircasing'.
- In its current form, it will not enable homes to be added to the system retrospectively and will therefore not address concerns regarding historic provision.
- The above can be achieved, but requires further development.

## Phase 2 - Development of existing service

- Options to add previously secured homes will be scoped and tested.
- The infrastructure that has been developed will enable rapid development, leading to further automation and interoperability with external data sources, such as HM Land Registry, Companies House and MHCLG. This will enable the continued monitoring and reporting of the status of individual homes.
- In order to procure an agency\* to create a service which monitors S106 secured AH across their **entire** lifecycle, including post occupation, there needs to be formal approval of the following:
  - Vision
  - Outcomes
  - Governance

\* (it would be advisable to retain dxw, but this is not compulsory).



# Vision

**Maintain the continued provision of affordable housing in Southwark, whilst providing accurate information to all users, in real-time.**

# Outcomes

- Accurate monitoring of individual homes, from application to post-occupation.
- Elimination of spreadsheet and manual approach to monitoring.
- Elimination of single annual monitoring reports, in favour of live monitoring.
- Increased automation of reporting.
- Interoperability between related services and organisations.
- Efficiency savings for the department and council.
- Increased staff skills and capabilities across both the department and council.

# Governance

- The responsibility for monitoring S106 obligations falls to the S106 team. Helpfully, this team is to merge with planning enforcement (compliance and monitoring team) on 1 March 2021.
- In line with the Council's [Digital Declaration](#), governance is an established practice which will be constant throughout work.
- The delivery team will work together on this single project full time.
- All work will be carried out in the open and with full transparency.
- Progress will be published weekly and presented to stakeholders fortnightly, with the opportunity to cancel or redirect the project every two weeks.

# Timescales

- **Implementation of the existing service** will take 1 week from approval.
- **Development of the existing service** is predicted to take 12 weeks from approval.
- A team of designers and developers has been stood up, to begin 1 March 2021 (latest).
- **Delivery 1 June 2021.**

# Finance and Procurement

- The **implementation of the existing system**, its support and maintenance will be minimal and will be amalgamated with the development cost.
- The **development of the existing service** and delivery of identified outcomes, remains as quoted in January 2020 - **£150k**
- These costs are to be funded by a combination of existing S106 receipts (general admin, AH admin and AH payments).
- It is recommended that dxw continue to be our delivery partner, procured via 'single supplier' gateway and a call off contract from the [Digital Marketplace](#).

# Benefits

- For the first time we will be able to track individual homes across the lifecycle of a development.
- We will be able to do this with maximum efficiency, accuracy and confidence.
- We will make financial savings for the department, by minimising time required to report data.
- We will minimise the legal costs of enforcement.
- This service and real-time publication of outputs, will dissuade unlawful breaches.
- We will improve public engagement, particularly with groups such as the 35% Campaign.
- We will develop in-house skills and knowledge, increasing our capabilities, reducing our reliance on external agencies.

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**THANK YOU**

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29/1/21