

Development Management

Action Plan following Planning Advisory Service Review

May 2024

Priority one	Action
<p>Introduce a short-term approach to clear through a back-log of applications</p> <p>Timescale: Underway now. All implemented by end of June</p> <p>Lead officer: Emma Parkes supported by Robert Hermitage</p> <p>NB backlog will take a number of months to clear</p> <p>NB Additional resource recruited but graduate role will not start until the summer</p> <p>NB a more detailed backlog plan to be produced</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use DLUHC backlog funding to recruit additional resource</li> <li>- Redistribute work and re-allocate backlog cases to officers with capacity across both planning application teams</li> <li>- Work to remove caseload of Applications Team Leader and reduce caseload for Application Principals</li> <li>- Use all officers with delegated powers across teams to sign off minor applications</li> <li>- Monitor output and input of new applications on a monthly basis</li> <li>- Ensure output is higher than input of new applications by 20 – 30 per month</li> <li>- Manage performance so it is still above statutory targets (to avoid special measures)</li> </ul>
<p>Priority 2</p> <p>Produce a communication strategy – how we communicate with our customers</p> <p>Timescale: End of July</p> <p>Lead officer: Charlotte Arundell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review the Customer Charter; ensure it is fit for purpose and the expectations are achievable</li> <li>- Implement the Charter</li> <li>- Communicate our strategy to our customers, setting expectations we can achieve through a customer advice note</li> <li>- Consider how customers access officers by phone</li> <li>- Speak to IT regarding monitoring call data (this was available in ringcentral but no longer available in teams)</li> </ul>
<p>Priority 3</p> <p>Introduce new ways of working to ensure the vast majority of new applications are determined in time (8/13/16 weeks)</p> <p>Timescale: All implemented by end of October</p> <p>Lead Officers: Adrian Smith /</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduce a milestones document which sets expectations of what must be achieved at what stage of an application process, including discussing a case with a senior officer</li> <li>- Legal / planning create a process note / protocol for S106s</li> </ul>

<p>Guy Everest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update access reports to show cases from validation, to assist with adhering to milestones</li> <li>- Ensure amendment guidance is complied with consistently</li> <li>- Re-introduce a checklist as part of report templates to ensure statutory requirements are met such as checking neighbours, consultees etc</li> <li>- The use and reason for EOTs is closely monitored and reported on quarterly</li> <li>- Ensure authorised officers feedback on report changes to officer – agree a uniform process for this feedback process</li> <li>- Introduce an internal policy on use of EOTs</li> <li>- Revisit delegated report process (re: simplifying and standardising templates, particularly with policy text / intro and formatting)</li> </ul>
<p>Priority 4</p>	
<p>Review and improve our pre-application enquiry offer</p> <p>Timescale: By end of October</p> <p>Lead officer: Faye Burchell</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider introducing a specific post-refusal pre-application route with fee</li> <li>- Set timescales that we can realistically meet with a similar milestone document</li> <li>- Monitor pre-app performance quarterly</li> <li>- Have a clear refund policy in place</li> <li>- Remove duty officer service (this must be coupled with a review of the website, a comms strategy, a review of alternative options available to customers and an improvement in the pre-app service)</li> <li>- Revisit PE templates for minor enquiries</li> </ul>
<p>Priority 5</p>	
<p>Implement a training programme for planning teams</p> <p>Timescale: A programme in place by end of June (not all training carried out)</p> <p>Lead officer: Emma Parkes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide report writing training, and explaining in plain english</li> <li>- Provide training on making defensible decisions</li> <li>- Provide training on S106 process, how to review/comment on drafts</li> <li>- Continue to provide workshops on water neutrality (encourage an open question approach)</li> <li>- Further training on conservation, LBs, landscape, drainage and trees – what to look for on site</li> </ul>
<p>Priority 6</p>	
<p>Review the current programme of councillor training on Planning matters as part of the wider Planning Committee review.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A review of planning committee is currently underway though now delayed until later in the year – led by Cllr Milne with support from Emma and Lauren</li> </ul>

<p>Timescale: End of July</p> <p>Lead officer: Barbara Childs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask Cllrs what training topics and methods of training would be beneficial for them.</li> <li>- Write a training programme led by Emma/Catherine/Barbara/Lauren</li> </ul>
<p>Priority 7</p>	
<p>Carry out a review of the existing Planning software arrangements</p> <p>Timescale: This is underway. Timescales outside of the control of planning.</p> <p>Lead officers: Emma / Charlotte</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is a corporate priority to move systems into the cloud.</li> <li>- Work is already underway to procure a new system which will provide better and more efficient ways of working in planning</li> <li>- There have however been delays outside of the control of the Council</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
<p>Priority 8</p>	-
<p>Create plain English guides to the planning system, produced for residents, Parishes and Cllrs</p> <p>Timescale: By end of October</p> <p>Lead planning officer: Madeleine Hartley</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Led by the communication team with input from planning officers</li> <li>- Speak to stakeholders to understand what would be useful / helpful</li> </ul>
<p>Priority 9</p>	-
<p>Review the Councils Statement of Community Involvement</p> <p>Timescale: After local plan examination</p> <p>Lead officers: Emma Parkes / Catherine Howe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This includes DM and strategic planning</li> <li>- Will need to be reviewed post local plan examination (given we will be tested by the Inspector based on the current Statement)</li> </ul>