

Appendix A

Planning Improvement Plan

PAS Toolkit Themes	Ref	Action	When	Who
1. Performance Management Purpose: to understand how the Service is performing, what this means for our customers (external and internal) and to enable the Service to continuously improve and demonstrate consistency with clear communication with customers	1.1	Develop, implement and monitor against a suite of qualitative and quantitative performance measures.	November 2021 (align with implementation of new software)	PW /CB
	1.2	Review and update data reported to DM Committee in line with 1.1 above.	November 2021	PW
	1.3	Benchmarking against performance of other councils to be reported to DM Committees on six-monthly basis (this is already undertaken against councils within the South West Region internally but has not previously been reported to Members)	From October DM committees and updated when MHCLG publish data	PW
	1.4	Develop, implement and monitor quality assurance/quality control measures to improve consistency including a new process where senior officers review a sample of reports	December 2021	PW
	1.5	Undertake stakeholder analysis and develop channels for customer feedback, review and continuous improvement.	January 2022	CB
	1.6	Reintroduce Agents and Developers Forum, initially every two months	Commenced Aug 2021	PW
	1.7	Create and maintain a DM Process Manual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to form part of induction process • for regular reference by whole Team • to cover applications and enforcement 	March 2022	PW
	1.8	Adopt DM Customer Charter which sets out our commitment to customers and better manage expectations including a communications plan in line with the Corporate Strategy.	October 2021	CB

2. Financial Management Purpose: to properly manage income forecast, and to flex resources against demand	2.1	Review 'cost of core service' against 'income'.	Initial exercise undertaken	PW
	2.2	Assess full cost of DM Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • income • expenditure 	December 2021	PW
	2.3	Review arrangements for the Planning Reserve to ensure financial resilience and flexibility against future demands.	December 2021	PW
3. Resource Management Purpose: to understand what resources are needed to deliver an effective service, deliver continuous improvement and to ensure flexibility to meet changing demands	3.1	Carry out an initial capacity/resource review to identify resources needed to deliver an effective service	Completed	PW
	3.2	Utilise 3.1 above to undertake further analysis and determine optimum organisational structure to ensure that resources can be flexed to meet changing demands	January 2022	PW
	3.3	Identify and set a role-specific target of active applications per officer and monitor weekly	October 2021	PW
4. Processes, IT and Administration Purpose: to ensure that there are clear processes for all staff which are regularly reviewed to remain fit for purpose and that the website is customer friendly	4.1	A review of the DM IT software has taken place and a new system will go live later this year	Review is completed and new software system being implemented	FIT project
	4.2	Review and update website including review of what is published online, and build in process for continuous improvement	Review December 2021 after the new IT software has gone live.	HS
	4.3	Review all templates (including Decision Notices) in the new IT system to ensure that they are customer friendly, update if necessary and train staff on any changes.	Review in December 2021 make any changes by end of Jan 2022	HS/PW
	4.4	Draft a list of standard conditions for Decision Notices and train staff accordingly	March 2022	PW

	4.5	Review procedural guide for discharge of condition process (and include in Manual at 1.7)	October 2022	HS/PH
5. Political Leadership Purpose: effective political leadership in decision making and ensuring the right applications are brought to scrutiny	5.1	Review the DM Training Programme for Members and include effective decision-making in planning and chairing skills. Include provision for briefing Members on major changes to planning legislation.	November 2022	PW/DW /DF
	5.2	Arrange a World Heritage Site Training session (for all WD Members)	December 2022	PW/DW
	5.2	Newly elected Members to be provided with full training programme including information on applications within their ward and weekly monitoring lists.	Election 2023	DW/HS
	5.3	Arrange a session with all members to identify what DM information Members wish to be provided with, and how they would like it to be provided, including whether a single point of DM contact for Members would be appropriate.	October 2021	PW
	5.5	Review of the Delegation Scheme, and Planning Code for Members: clear training requirements for Members before participating in decision-making and clear process for decision-making and good practice guidance.	May 2021	DF
	6. Team Management Purpose: effective management of staff and clarity of expectations and accountability; clear communications and consistency of service delivery	6.1	Ensure that all staff have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual appraisals to set performance targets and actions with mid-year review • Regular PCIs and dialogues to demonstrate continuous improvement, ensure professional and personal development, wellbeing and other issues are discussed regularly 	New Performance Framework for all staff to be implemented from November 2021
6.2		Weekly Team meetings to discuss and communicate best practices, changes in legislation, continuous improvement, share common learning points, and consistency of approach	Ongoing	PW

7. Training Purpose: ensuring that all staff have the skills they need to do their job and to effectively communicate with each other, Members and our customers	7.1	Team Training & Development Programme to ensure resilience, consistency, accuracy, with regular feedback to wider Team	November 2021	PW/CB
	7.2	Legal to feedback to DM & Enforcement appeal decisions to upskill officers and Members	Ongoing	DF
	7.3	Arrange political awareness training for all Development Management staff (enforcement, planning case officers, and case management)	Arranged	PW/CB
	7.4	Ensure all officers are aware of the current Site Visit Protocol, delegation scheme, and risk assessment and are undertaking site visits accordingly.	Completed May 2021	PW
8. Pre-applications Purpose: to have a clear, well publicised process for pre-applications	8.1	We have a clear adopted pre-application procedure which works well and we have an increase in pre-application submissions that are dealt with primarily by dedicated pre-app officers. The increase in numbers has required the provision of additional resource to the pre-app caseload and an additional officer has been allocated.	Completed and in place	PW
	8.2	Review to see if further additional resource is needed to process the increased number of Householder pre-apps. New officers at an appropriate level have been appointed and start in September.	Sept 2021	PW
	8.3	Develop a system to monitor the effectiveness of pre-application advice that should encourage more pre-application submissions	March 2022	PW
9. Receipt & Validation Purpose: to ensure there is a well-publicised process which maximises valid applications and ensures efficient and timely registration	9.1	Review Validation Checklist and draft new checklist if necessary to maximise valid applications.	Completed	PW
	9.2	Adopt and promote new Validation Checklist. The checklist is at consultation stage with a response deadline of September 2021.	Oct 2021	PW
	9.3	Validation training for all officers when new Validation checklist is adopted and include process for checklist in Process Manual at 1.7	Oct 2021	PW/HS
	9.4	Invalid Applications: determine baseline target following a review of how to minimise invalid apps with a set programme for improvement; consider retaining part of fees if application has been returned to cover costs.	Jan 2022	PH/HS

	9.5	Identify common reasons for invalid applications and discuss with agents either individually and/or through Agents Forum. Invite Lead Members to Forum	Jan 2022	PH/HS
	9.6	Set realistic targets within the validation process whilst ensuring that applications get to case officers quickly and thereafter monitor performance against the targets set	Jan 2022	PH/HS
10. Consultation and Allocation	10.1	Have a clearly documented Allocation system with oversight from Head of Practice, and include within the DM Manual as set out at 1.7	Mar 2022	PW
Purpose: Clear allocation process to ensure applications dealt with effectively with clear documented consultation process	10.2	Introduce a Memorandum of Understanding with Parish and Town Councils to ensure timely receipt of local views.	To parishes in Sept 2021 and implement	DF
	10.3	Review consultee checklist (both internal and external) to ensure the right consultees are contacted on the right applications; clear guidance on which applications need to be referred to consultees.	Oct 2021	PW / CB
	10.3	Develop, implement and monitor service standards and performance for internal consultees.	Jan 2022	PW / CB
	10.4	Review publicity of applications.	Mar 2022	PW
11. Considering an application	11.1	Develop a consistent approach to (and include in Customer Planning Charter in 1.8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different types of application • when a site visit is required • re-advertising / refusal / determination including the extent of revisions that will be accepted during the life of an application. • negotiations and extensions of time and when applicable / monitoring of out of time apps or where an application is not good enough first time 	Oct 2021	CB/PW
Purpose: to determine applications in line with national standards and local processes and to ensure that they are managed consistently	11.2	Hold further workshop with DM staff to consider this element of the PAS toolkit to identify any further actions or improvements.	Nov 2021	PW/CB
12. The Officer Report	12.1	The Officer Report has been reviewed by the Head of Legal Services last year and the suggested changes have been discussed and implemented. Staff Training on how to complete the report delivered.	Completed	DF / PW
Purpose: to ensure consistency and quality				

of reports	12.2	As set out in 1.4 develop a Quality Assurance process for reports including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a checklist to be completed with reports • regular reviews of sample reports by senior officers 	Dec 21	PW
13. The Decision and Conditions	13.1	To have a clear and transparent Delegation Scheme, and monitor number of decision going to Committee	Reviewed May 2021 and ongoing	DF/PW
Purpose: Clear Delegation Scheme, clear and unambiguous decisions	13.2	Review process for signing off decisions to ensure they are robust and risk based	Jan 2022	PW
	13.3	The review of conditions and the introduction of standard conditions at 4.4 to include minimising the use of pre-commencement conditions.	Mar 2022	PW
	13.4	Establish a system for applicants to feedback on DM decision-making process to enable continuous improvement	Mar 2022	PW
14. Monitoring and Enforcement	14.1	The enforcement element has not been considered in detail at this time. The enforcement team has had a significant change in staff and the specialist role is still vacant and is proving difficult to recruit. A number of changes have already taken place, the older cases are being actively progressed and the meetings with members have re-started. A robust process was adopted in September 2019 for prioritising cases. It is acknowledged that the enforcement process needs to be reviewed against the PAS Toolkit and it will be done by the end of 2021 once the new staff had chance to bed in and will be able to actively engage in the process	December 2021	PW /HS /CB
15. Appeals	15.1	Review appeal administration procedures to ensure all elements of the process are captured and a robust process is in place	Oct 2021	PW/PH
Purpose: To ensure that the process is managed efficiently and effectively and to ensure that the Councils position is defended appropriately.	15.2	As part of 1.2 above provide additional report to DM Committees on overall appeal performance and awards of costs.	Nov 2021	PW

--	--	--	--	--