

Development Management Improvement Plan

Final draft – 2 October 2015

Improvement activity	Actions to deliver improvement	Resources needed	Benefits	Timing	Led by
Strategic overview – to ensure a clear focus for the service to drive its culture and future direction					
Develop service vision and ethos and communicate this to all stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft vision statement, drawing on service review • Engagement with stakeholders, including members, staff, consultees, customers and other service users • Adopt vision 	<p>Officer time</p> <p>Possible support from Communications and Customer Services in drafting and engagement</p>	Clear understanding of how the service works	Autumn 15	Service Manager Corporate Director
Staffing (incl. leadership and management) – to address capacity and retention issues within the service and to improve and focus leadership and management of the service					
Develop and implement new staffing structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft and cost revised structure • Secure SLT support • Consult with staff as required • Recruit to posts as required • Induct employees appointed, stressing importance of delivering the service vision. 	<p>Officer time</p> <p>Support and advice from Organisational Development and Financial Services</p> <p>SLT support</p>	New structure to provide stronger focus on planning delivery; greater resilience for the service; improved staff retention; to implement improved customer care and performance management.	Oct – Dec 15	Chief Executive Corporate Director Service Manager
Improve engagement with staff to deliver the Improvement Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular programmed briefings for all staff in the service, with key staff from 	Officer time	Better informed and engaged employees	From Sept 15 and ongoing	Service Manager/ Corporate Director

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	<p>other services (e.g. Finance; Customer Services) invited as and when required;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include briefings on structural changes; Improvement Plan delivery; customer focus standards and expectations; performance culture 				
<p>Increase staff capacity to deal with large developments by exploring introduction of Planning Performance Agreements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review how other authorities use these. • Identify examples of their successful introduction, including how legal obstacles have been overcome • Engage with potential developer funders • Draft out roles and responsibilities/contractual agreements if required • Introduce new PPA-funded role 	<p>Support and advice from Legal Services; Financial Services; Organisational Development</p>	<p>Potential to bring in Fully funded additional staffing resource to drive forward larger development.</p> <p>Potential for combined planning and project management support for such development.</p>	<p>Autumn 15</p>	<p>Service Manager</p>
<p>Review duty planner service</p>	<p>Linked to pre-app charging and process improvements. Consider what alternative arrangements might be put in place.</p>	<p>Call centre support</p>	<p>More calls dealt with at first contact stage. More efficient use of the resources within the Development Management team. More self-service.</p>	<p>March 16</p>	<p>Service Manager</p>

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Systems and processes – to ensure the service is operating as efficiently as possible, reflecting good practice and making full use of electronic means of service delivery, and that it does this in a manner consistent with customer expectations					
Fully review and overhaul all existing processes, with a view to improving efficiency, making greater use of IT (and away from paper systems); increasing self-service and improving customer satisfaction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and agree processes for review with timetable • Identify and, if necessary externally procure technical and professional support to review processes • Fully map those processes as in place at present • Review associated consultation processes • Identify recognised good practice at other authorities and visit/meet with those authorities • Identify recognised good practice at Gedling BC in terms of process review and re-engineering and discuss with respective managers • Introduce new processes • Ensure staff are trained and supported in introduction of new processes • Ensure ongoing staff engagement • Review ongoing staff needs, including Service Support, in the light of changes 	<p>Full and continuing engagement from IT Services; Organisational Development and Customer Services.</p> <p>Possible external support to be commissioned, funded from Transformation Fund or similar.</p> <p>Support from key external suppliers incl UNIFORM</p> <p>Support from Housing Services to get the most from benchmarking with other authorities and services</p> <p>Other partner authorities as “critical friend”</p>	<p>Modernised service. More use of IT, less paper. More efficient use of staff resource. More customer focused service.</p>	<p>Reviews by Mar 16.</p> <p>Implement by end 16</p>	<p>Service Manager/ Service Support Officer/ Principal Planners</p>

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	<p>introduced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop benchmarking tools 				
The following are specific actions to improve and develop systems and processes already recognised within the service for early action					
Introduce Development Team approach for co-ordinating responses to major development pre-applications and planning applications	Regular diaried round table meetings including Planning, PASC, Public Protection, Communities, County Highways, Education and others as required, to review major development proposals, provide advice on the schemes and what supporting information will be needed, and to understand the potential impacts and benefits of the proposal.	Regular commitment from all partners.	<p>Applicant gets comprehensive comments on the proposal.</p> <p>Council services areas can understand not just the impact for their own area, but how these can be developed to deliver greater benefits for the Council and community as a whole.</p>	<p>Protocol to be drafted early 2016.</p> <p>Development team to be launched early 2016.</p>	Service Manager
Introduce Consultee Access to enable electronic consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees	Full e-consultation for all 150 bodies.	IDOX support. Training for consultees.	Reduced monitoring of P&E inbox. Document management.	4 months FTE plus support from OD service and/or IT	Service Manager/ Service Support
Publish consultee responses online	Encourage all applicants/agents to register for Public Access updates.	IDOX support.	Customer service.	4 months FTE plus support from OD service and/or IT	Service Manager/ Service Support
Improve County responses to searches	County to populate search responses in Total Land Charges, not e-mail.	County Council	GBC staff currently spend up to 1 day/ week populating Total	Oct 15	Service Manager/ Service Support

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			Land Charges		
Review Solicitors requests post Land Charges/compliance	Explore and if feasible introduce charge for producing “letters of comfort”			Nov 15	Service Support
Update Validation List	Full review of validation list and update accordingly	Principal Planning Officers	Ability to refuse to validate incomplete applications and not be challenged. Co-ordinate with CIL software.	Oct 15	Principal Planning Officers
Improve the quality and clarity of application descriptions	Amend the descriptions submitted on applications to ensure that they cover all the development proposed in a consistent and coherent manner	Validating case officers. Acknowledgment letter to be changed. Engage and test with Members	Clearer descriptions. Fewer requests to clarify. Co-ordinate with CIL.	With immediate effect.	All
Introduce charging for viability assessments	Where there are concerns about the information submitted supporting the viability of a proposal, the applicant will pay for an independent third party assessment of these	Website updated. Payment process agreed.	Independent validation. Reduced negotiations.	With immediate effect.	Service Managers – Planning and Housing
Improve and clarify Enforcement processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and refresh procedures. • Improve awareness of the Enforcement policy. • Explore further use of Uniform IT module. • All complaints to be contacted after site visit with initial findings. • Strengthen implementation of 	Officer resource. IDOX support.	Customer service. Fewer calls chasing progress.	Mar 16	Service Manager

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	enforcement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce resilience by making part of Planning Officers' roles, covering Enforcement Officer absence and workload peaks. 				
Performance management – to develop a stronger performance culture within the service; to improve absolute and comparative performance against key performance measures (especially nationally recognised measures) and sustain that improvement					
Critically review all existing performance measures for relevance and importance to the service and to customers as measures of performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current PIs • Research alternatives used by good practice authorities • Specifically research customer satisfaction measures • Specifically research cost and income measures • Review and incorporate key measures set out in Service review, especially around workload and backlog 	Advice and support from OD service Advice from PAS	Clear indications of what a high performing service looks like.	Dec 15	Service Manager/ Corporate Director
Propose and when agreed implement a new suite of performance indicators that better reflect performance and cost of the service and customer expectations				Apr 16	Service Manager
Strengthen performance culture	Brief staff at beginning of process		Creates and	Oct 15 and	Service Manager/

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within the service, raising its profile and widening ownership	<p>and once new measures introduced.</p> <p>Explore personal PIs and individual targets for each officer</p> <p>When reviewing processes, look at making Case Officer responsible from start to finish.</p> <p>Introduce a monthly performance dashboard for display</p> <p>Routine inclusion on team meeting agendas; specific reference in PDRs</p>		<p>strengthens individual responsibility</p> <p>Healthy competition.</p> <p>Easier to identify blockages</p>	ongoing	Corporate Director
Sign up to Planning Quality Framework to benchmark performance	<p>Input data and set up customer surveys.</p> <p>Monitor customer satisfaction.</p>	IT/Comms	Improved comparative performance data.	Autumn 15	Service Support
Income generation – to ensure the service identifies and progresses commercial opportunities, while retaining the integrity of its quasi-judicial role					
Introduce pre-application charging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure service has capacity and systems in place to deliver successfully • Establish and agree basis for charging levels and actual charges to reflect that • Put in place systems to deliver • Train staff involved in 	Finance/IT/ Communications/ Customer Services	Additional income.	Jan 16	Service Manager

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	<p>delivery, in Planning and in other service, including Customer Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement awareness campaign amongst key stakeholders • Identify and provide administrative support 				
Explore further income generating opportunities for Development Management.	<p>Various examples to be explored</p> <p>See also potential Planning Performance Agreements above</p>	Finance/ Communications/ Customer Services		During 2016/17	Service Manager/ Principal Planning Officers
Customer care – to develop and embed a stronger customer focus throughout the service, recognising the multiple customers served					
Develop better understanding of the customer perspective	Identify different customers and their needs and preferences.	Comms. Customer Services.	Better understanding of what customers want, and use this to shape future service delivery.	15/16	Service Manager
Regular customer care training for Development Management officers	Customer care. Report writing. Uniform. Site safety.	HR/external	Able to prioritise workload and understand what's required.	Nov 15	Service Manager
Review and reduce e-mail mailboxes	Eliminate obsolete and under-used mailboxes Review monitoring arrangements.	IT/Customer Services/Comms	Easier access and monitoring. More efficient use of staff resources.	Nov 15	Service Manager / Service Support
Review and fully update website	Full review of content; use of language; clarity, from user perspective	Comms support	Self-service by service users	Dec 15	Service Manager

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Review and update training to improve the interface between Customer Services and Planning	Re-training. Improve filtering of enquiries.	Customer Services support	More efficient sifting of calls/e-mails. Reduced hand-overs. More efficient use of staff resource.	ongoing	Service Manager / Service Support
Develop and publish service standards	Draft and publish to reflect customer expectations.	Comms/ Customer Services	Demonstrates good practice	Dec 15	Service Manager
Improve the quality and frequency of feedback to customers on the progress of planning applications	Where an application is likely to go out of time, the applicant will be updated at the end of week 6/start of week 7 to explain why.	7 week list run weekly.	Customer service.	Dec 15	Service Manager / Service Support
Encourage better use of IT so all applicants and consultees can self-serve	Encourage all applicants/agents to register for Public Access updates.	Update acknowledgment letter; applicants responsibility.	Customer service.	Dec 15	Service Manager / Service Support
Democratic improvements – to modernise and reflect latest good practice in democratic process, and improve efficiency of systems and processes that support the process					
Migrate committee and delegated reports to modern.gov	Implement on modern.gov.	IT/Members' Services	Consistency with corporate systems	Apr 16	Service Manager
Review structure, layout and content of Planning Committee reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review good practice in layout and presentation Draft new report template to reflect that Engage with Legal Services and Members Services Consult and engage with members and service users 	IT/Members' Services/ Members	Shorter, with improved structure, with recommendations more prominent; with consultation narrative appended	Apr 16	Principal Planning Officers
Review timing, frequency and	Frequency/agendas/reports/	IT/Members' Services/		16/17	Service Manager

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operation of Planning Committee	member briefings Engage with Committee Chair and committee members	Members		municipal year	
Review Member engagement in the Development Management process	Consider existing arrangements and impact on performance	Members		16/17 municipal year	Service Manager
Review the operation of the Delegation Panel	Consider existing arrangements and impact on performance	Members		16/17 municipal year	Service Manager