



CAI.43 15/16

Challenge and Improvement  
Committee

22 February 2016

**Subject: Development Management Improvement Plan**

Report by:

Chief Operating Officer

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

This report presents the first version of the development management improvement plan to the Committee for comments.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- 1) That councillors examine the improvement plan which has been formulated following intensive work with the service, stakeholders and external critical friends during the autumn of 2015 and make any suggestions for additions or amendments.**



## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal:** None arising from this report

**Financial :** FIN/CLT/40/16 Finance have read this report and can see no financial implications relating to this report.

**Staffing :** None arising from this report

**Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:** None arising from this report.

**Risk Assessment :** None arising from this report

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :** None arising from this report

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

West Lindsey District Council –Development Management, Peer Challenge Report – November 2015

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

**Yes**

☐

**No**

**x**

**Key Decision:**

**Yes**

☐

**No**

**x**



## 1. Background

- 1.1 The need to develop a comprehensive approach to the improvement of the council's development management service was recognised during 2015 through the following indicators:
  - Rise in the number of complaints (year on year)
  - Consistent messages from customers that it was difficult to contact a “planner” and calls/emails were not being returned.
  - Performance across a range of indicators was falling, putting the service at risk of intervention by central government.
  - Anecdotal evidence from businesses that the service was not meeting their needs
  - An audit identified that the current approach to improvement needed significant work to ensure that it delivered the changes necessary for the service to improve
- 1.2 The reasons for the poor performance were unclear at this time (August 2015) and there was a need to properly diagnose what was causing the issues and develop a clear, agreed improvement plan to address the issues comprehensively.
- 1.3 In order to diagnose the problem an improvement team was assembled (under the Chairmanship of the Chief Operating Officer) to identify the issues and develop an action plan to address them. This team consisted of officers from across the council and was not confined to the service under review.
- 1.4 It was clear from the start that the improvement work needed to included stakeholders, customers, partners and colleagues from other council services who relied to some degree on the development management service.
- 1.5 As part of the improvement work the Local Government Association's Planning Advisory Service was commissioned to carry out a “peer challenge” of the service. This would give the council an external perspective on the service and improve the quality of the outcome.
- 1.6 From the start of the process the work was themed around people, systems and processes, performance, customer and finance and with one exception the improvements have been grouped around these themes in the final plan. The exception was the “one team” theme which emerged from the peer challenge.
- 1.7 Finally a key objective of the work was to ensure that the improvement recommended and implemented are sustainable over the long term.



## **2.0 What has changed?**

- 2.1 From the date of the initial recommendations from the peer challenge team changes the issues identified have begun to be implemented (October 2015).
- 2.2 For example from late October 2015 the phones were fully opened in the team to allow all customers to contact a planner when they needed to. So customers could access the information when they needed it, rather than when this office was open.
- 2.3 In early November 2015 all newly received planning applications were scanned as that all customers had access to information electronically.
- 2.4 Also in November 2015 the way members are notified about planning applications in their wards changed so that all members are notified individually about applications in their wards on the date the planning application is validated (a move away from the old weekly list system).
- 2.5 Following a training session with members in November an agreed training programme for the year was put in place. It was also agreed that representatives of parish and town councils be invited to these sessions to improve the understanding of planning across the district and to improve the engagement of these local councils in the process. The first joint training session was held on 9 February 2016.
- 2.6 Less obviously detailed work has been undertaken with the team to improvement performance and clear the backlog. This has seen the back log of planning applications come down from around 300/400 at the time of the peer review to around 100 at the end of January 2016. This work has also seen performance rise across all categories of applications and this is reported in the regular progress and delivery reports.
- 2.7 In parallel with this work a group has been specifying and evaluating new computerised planning systems which should improve efficiency in the service. This is due to be implemented later in the year.
- 2.8 Over the period the improvement programme has been in place the number of complaints has fallen (given the nature of development management there will always be complaints) to a more normal level. More importantly complaints about a poor standard of customer service have also dropped.

## **3.0 What remains to be achieved?**

- 3.1 Whilst the service has come a long way from its position in August 2015 there remains much to be done.
- 3.2 First and foremost the improvement work is about sustainability, making sure that the improvements introduced stick and that a culture



of continuous improvement is introduced to the service. The service has had interventions in the past which have resulted in short term improvement, but these have failed to stick.

- 3.3 Key to delivering the sustainability is to put in place appropriate team management with the day to day responsibility for driving the improvement in the team. A post was identified by the peer challenge team as key to taking the service forward. So far the post has been advertised twice (second time with an increase in salary) without success. All options are now being reviewed to ensure that a credible candidate is recruited.
- 3.4 Another key improvement is the installation of a fit for purpose ICT system. Procurement of a system is underway with a likely implementation time of 6/9 months.
- 3.5 Work is needed with the staff to ensure that they are set specific, measurable, achievement and realistic targets which can be measured over time. In order to move towards this all the principal planners have been trained in the use of the council's appraisal. Targets will be introduced through the appraisal process in 2016.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

- 4.1 This report contains a flavour of the work that is either completed, underway or yet to start. The full improvement plan which covers all the actions identified through the internal work and the work of the peer challenge team is attached as appendix.
- 4.2 Members are asked to review the information in the improvement plan and question the relevance of particular action or to suggest actions which might be included. The improvement plan is intended to be a "living document" with completed actions being removed and new actions added.
- 4.3 It is further proposed in the interests of ensuring the sustainability of the improvement plan that it is reviewed every six to nine months by this committee to ensure that progress is being maintained.



# **Development Management Action Plan**

## **Version 1.0 9 December 2015**

This Improvement Plan is the first edition of a collection of actions identified from the diagnostic phase, peer challenge, customer first strategy, performance evaluation and IT Systems evaluation.

The actions form the basis of the activities to be undertaken to 'redefine' the Development Management Service.

It is anticipated that these actions will be aggregated into projects, or project phases to maximise staff utilisation and review time. Therefore dates shown in these plans at this stage are indicative.

The aggregated work plans will then be linked to an MSP Programme Plan, bringing together all aspects of review and delivery.

Further actions and activities are may will be generated from these activities; and will be incorporated into the plan during its lifetime.



# Development Management Improvement Action Planning

## Theme Name: Delivery of the Council's Ambitions - One Team

	Activity Title (Linked into Programme Plan)	Description of Activity	Outcome Expected	Measure of Success	Driver	Who Responsible	Anticipated Timescale
1	Development Management at the centre of the Corporate Plan.	Ensure development management is at the centre of the delivery of the emerging corporate plan to significantly increase the importance of planning in delivering the open for business, local plan, asset management and residents first priorities. The corporate plan needs to contain the "golden thread" from the corporate priorities around, open for business, residents first etc. to the service that will have a key role in their delivery including DM. Clear liaison mechanisms set up between growth team and development management team. Major investment applications dealt with in a different way (major investment planning applications dealt with by the growth team or a member of the DM team under the management of the growth team leader - see below).	New corporate plan recognises the role of development management in delivering its priorities. More efficient delivery of the corporate plan outcomes around homes, jobs and investment. Better delivery of the corporate plan objectives through clear "buy-in" from the service teams.	<p>Clear link (golden thread) from the Corporate plan through Business and Service Plans which demonstrates Development Managements role in the Corporate Plan Delivery.</p> <p>Performance in dealing with major investment applications. Increase in number of major investment proposals received in the District (especially Gainsborough)</p>	Peer Challenge Action R1	COO/Strategic Lead Customer First	April 2016
2	Consistent approach to policy interpretation	Review and agree planning policy; and educate DM staff so that it is applied consistently. Ensure that there is a consistent approach to policy interpretation to provide good decision making not open to challenge. Create leadership within the team through the new team manager working with the principal officers (as part of a team management group) to establish a consistent approach to policy matters - interpretation of the GPDO, five year housing land supply, member involvement at appeals etc. Undertake audits on some decisions to ensure that any 'drifts' are addressed quickly.	Consistent interpretation and application of Policy. Consistent customer outcomes.	Fewer complaints from agents and applicants. Fewer member complaints. Strong performance at appeals.	Peer Challenge Action R5	COO/Strategic Lead Customer First	April 2016



3	Strategic Leads Matrix Management of Planning Delivery	Agree priorities for how strategic leads work together and how they jointly share responsibility for planning delivery in a way that consistently supports the political priority for growth. Strategic leads to meet regularly to review how the services are aligned to deliver the corporate plan priorities and to communicate this to the team managers. SLs to work with team managers to ensure that their work is aligned to the delivery of the corporate plan priorities through the service plan process	More efficient delivery of the corporate plan outcomes around homes, jobs and investment.	Monitored through the revised progress and delivery process where performance reporting is aligned to the measuring of the delivery of the new corporate plan.	Peer Challenge Action R6	COO/Strategic Leads	April 2016
4	Major/Investment Application Approach	Growth Team to deal with the most important investment planning applications through a development team approach. Development team approach to be adopted on all major investment applications in Gainsborough. Lead officer to be identified at the start of the process who coordinates the development team and manages the application through its processes. Establish protocols for integration between Economic Growth teams and the DM Teams	More efficient and effective delivery of development outcomes for the District/Gainsborough. District more attractive place for investment as a result of improved relationship management with key developers. Ensure that achieving planning approval is integral part of the growth development process.	Performance time for major applications - more major applications dealt within the statutory timescales. More major investment applications received (need for a baseline to be set for the performance on major investment applications in Gainsborough and the number of major investment applications received in the town.	Peer Challenge Action QW5	Strategic Leads for Economic Development and Neighbourhoods and Customer First	Process established from January 2016.
5	Account Management for Key Investment Stakeholders	Evaluate whether an account management function for agents and developers could work for the Council	Enable the Council to build key relationships with investors, agents and developers who regularly interact with the Council; and are integral to the ambitions of the Council	Improved investor and developer satisfaction. Better working relationships. More major schemes and corporate critical schemes approved.	Diagnostic Outcome	COO/Strategic Leads for Economic Development and Neighbourhoods and Customer First	June 2016



# Development Management Improvement Action Planning

## Theme: Staff and People

	Activity Title (Linked into Programme Plan)	Description of Activity	Outcome Expected	Measure of Success	Driver	Who Responsible	Anticipated Timescale
1	Support and Team Engagement	One to one meetings with Development Management Staff to tease out the major issues within the team.	Accurate background information to feed into diagnostic process and emerging action plan	Feedback used as part of overall assessment. All team members participated in the work.	Diagnostic Outcome	AR	Completed
2	Team Vision Workshops	Workshops with Development Management Staff in order to start to embed the purpose of DM and the characteristics of an excellent DM team. Development of a vision for DM.	Common understanding of what the purpose of DM is, what good could look like and a draft vision.	Team vision delivered	Diagnostic Outcome	Project Group	Completed
3	Management and team structure	Review and define a team structure which clear sets out both line management and development responsibilities to be established, utilising the analysis undertaken during the "diagnosis" work. Recruitment of New Team Manager (corporate player). Major application support, Technical and other support to be taken into consideration. Review pay and grading structure as part of the process. Establish a financial model to support restructure costs; additional posts or other t&C implications to form the future DM Team. Team resilience to be considered when forming new structure.	Robust and fit for purpose structure; which can support the demands of the service and the Councils aspirations. Internal and External management and account management, which is capable of delivering the sustained and long term improvement in the service. Strong leadership and stability for the team. Improved resilience in the team. Internal management (system, performance, processes, budget Management etc) in place and effective.	Team Manager in post. Clear structure agreed and implemented. All staff brought into the vision. Consistency of interpretation of what the team are seeking to achieve. Major investment applications dealt with in a different way (major investment planning applications dealt with by the growth team or a member of the DM team under the management of the growth team leader). Identified budget provision.	Diagnostic Outcome Peer Challenge Action R4 & QW6 & QW8	MS/JL/MC	Define Jan 2016 - Implement Apr 2016
4	Appraisal Training	Conduct Appraisal training for any staff operating as line managers or staff mentors.	Robust appraisal process in which all staff have been appraised and objectives set for the coming year.	Development of Skills and Experience to support ongoing staff development and performance	Diagnostic Outcome	HR/DM Line Managers	Jan 2016
5	One to One's	One to one meetings - across team on a regular basis. Appropriate notes to be produced and signed off. Which deal with performance issues, financial matters and objectives set in appraisals	Regular forum for honest discussion. Monitoring and management of workload, health and wellbeing and issues. Opportunity to intercept any problems in infancy	Reduce levels of stress within the team. Consistent and improving performance.	Diagnostic Outcome	Team and Line Managers	Nov 2015
6	Team Joint Working & Meetings	Regular Development Management Team meetings - standard agenda to be introduced with corporate up-dates. Establish regular team "sharing sessions	One Council approach - team up to date with corporate news and feedback from various meetings and systems. Enable staff to share and learn from cases, policy changes and other considerations. Building a team culture. Embedd a culture of performance management and improvement in service performance.	Improved performance across all areas. Improved customer satisfaction	Diagnostic Outcome	Team Manager	Commenced Sept 2015 - on-going
7	Appraisals	Appraisals and regular appraisal reviews to ensure objectives are being delivered	Sound objectives from Service Plan	Delivery of Service Plan	Diagnostic Outcome	Team and Line Managers	Feb-Apr 2016
8	Personal Development	Development plans to be produced for each team member	Opportunity to discuss and agree any training/progression requirements for delivery of objectives and required competencies.	Improved performance across all areas. Improved customer satisfaction	Diagnostic Outcome	Team and Line Managers	Feb-Apr 2016



9	Aspirational Development	Recognition and development of aspiring team members. Establish training and mentoring approach for staff and define a clear progression path for developing staff.	Ensure staff are equipped to undertake work allocated; and develop staff to manage a wider and more complex range of applications; and to enable promotion within. Progression opportunities, improved succession planning and service continuity.	Improved performance of individuals. Extension of skills and experience.	Diagnostic Outcome	Team and Line Managers	On-going
12	Delegations	Review delegated responsibilities allocated to officers for approvals and decisions	Decisions taken at the most appropriate level to ensure consistency and speed of decision making as well as probity.	Improved performance across all areas. Improved customer satisfaction	Diagnostic Outcome	MC/Principal Officers	Jan 2016
13	Commercial Awareness	Finance and undertake a programme of 'commercial awareness, viability and assessment' training and knowledge transfer	Ensure that DM staff are able to understand both the aspirations of the Council, and the economic aspirations of key stakeholders. Commercial priorities of major investors in the District understood. Ensure appropriate financial provision for formal training, job shadowing and other information sharing mechanisms	Improved team skills; advice and decisions better supported on a commercial basis. Improved customer satisfaction from the major investors.	Peer Challenge Action R3	EMF/MC/ER	Mar/Apr 2016
14	Training and Development Programme	Establish a structured training programme to ensure that DM team have the appropriate competencies and skills to deliver high quality and customer focused services, including an appropriate level of professional qualification and Continuing Professional Development. Allocate sufficient funds to match qualifications and skills to the quantity and complexity of workload	Skills and experience to meet the demands of the service, the changing landscape of planning; and the aspirations of team members for career development.	Skills Gap Closed. In-house skills available when desirable. Identified budget provision	Peer Challenge Action R3	JL/MC/Finance	Mar 16



# Development Management Improvement Action Planning

## Theme: Systems and Processes

	Activity Title <i>(Linked into Programme Plan)</i>	Description of Activity	Outcome Expected	Measure of Success	Driver	Who Responsible	Anticipated Timescale
1	Mapping of document journey	Understand how and where we receive and store information	To provide information on the process and system used in order to identify where systems or process can be changed or stopped in order to make the system and process more efficient, effective or economic.	Improve performance around validation times, processing times for pre-application advice and planning applications	Peer Challenge Action QW2	Darren Mellors	Completed - Sep '15
2	Mapping of current Pre-App Processes	Mapping of current processes process to understand how it works at present and to identify the current issues and wastes within the process.	To provide information on the pre-application advice process in order to make it more efficient, effective and economic and deliver for the customer.	Quicker turn around times for requests for pre-application advice. Greater customer satisfaction. Higher levels of income.	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed - Sep '15
3	Mapping of current Householder processes	Mapping the current process for householder applications to understand how the current system works and to identify the issues and wastes within that process.	To provide information on the householder applications process in order to make it more efficient, effective and economic and deliver for the customer.	Quicker turn around times for householder applications. Greater customer satisfaction.	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed - Sep '15
4	Mapping of current Minor/other category of applications processes	Mapping of current processes for minor and other applications to understand how the current system works and to identify the issues and wastes within that process	To provide information on the process and system used in order to identify where systems or process can be changed or stopped in order to make the system and process more efficient, effective or economic.	Quicker turn around times for minor/other applications. Greater customer satisfaction.	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed - Oct '15
5	Mapping of current Major processes	Mapping of current processes for major applications to understand how the current system works and to identify the issues and wastes within that process.	To provide information on the process and system used in order to identify where systems or process can be changed or stopped in order to make the system and process more efficient, effective or economic.	Quicker turn around times for major applications. Greater customer satisfaction. District more attractive for major investors.	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed - Oct '15
6	Learning from best practice.	Peer Challenge - 21 to 23 October 2015. Visit to Blaby District Council to look at their improvement journey	Robust improvement plan and sustainable improvements in the service over the long term.	Improvements in all measures of performance across the service over the long term.	Diagnostic Outcome	John Leney	Completed - Nov '15
7	Attendance of LCC Highways officer	Fortnightly visits from LCC Highways officers	A more efficient consultation process is offered and better advice on highways issues in development proposals	Quicker turn around of planning applications where there are highways issues.	Diagnostic Outcome	Mark Sturgess	Completed. Nov '15
	Case Officer Allocation	Revise processes to ensure that DM Officer is allocated to the case immediately on passing validation	To ensure that Customers & Stakeholders have a 'point of contact' from the beginning of the DM process	% of Cases with allocated officer within 'x' days	Peer Challenge Action QW3	John Leney / Danielle	Completed. Nov '15
8	Tech Clerks: Realising Potential	Follow up work with Tech Clerks to continue work undertaken by 'Go People' consultancy	Streamline of working practises, Development of validation principles, Creation of procedural guides, take advantage of team skills.	Reduction in the volume of invalid applications received. Reduction in validation time taken. Additional activities absorbed by Team Members.	Diagnostic Outcome, Peer Challenge Action R8	Denise/Danielle/Darren Mellors	Nov '15 - Jan '16
9	Electronic scanning of planning information	Scanning of applications when received and any subsequent documentation and information and uploaded on to the council's website. Review the application process to identify key documents which should be placed online and agree a scan and load process to ensure that relevant information is available online as quickly as possible.	Better service to the customer as all information on planning applications can be accessed 24/7. Reduce unnecessary contact asking about specific information; and to encourage channel shift onto digital access to planning information.	Reduction in telephone, email and face to face contact with the service. Reduced demand for the services of the duty planner.	Peer Challenge Action QW2	Denise/Danielle/Darren Mellors	Nov '15 - Jan '16



	Electronic Case Files	Provide facilities, tools and techniques to enable all case files to be maintained electronically	To ensure that all information on the case is maintained electronically and therefore is available to Officers, Customers and Stakeholders at any time.	% of files maintained entirely by electronic means	Peer Challenge Action QW2	Denise/Danielle/Principals/Darren Mellors	Nov '15 - Jan '16
10	Electronic Communications by Default	Establish ways to issue decision notices and other communications electronically as default. Review methods of providing local communications as cheaply as possible e.g. delivery by officers at time of site visit.	Reduce unnecessary activity and material/postage costs. Greater availability of information. Timely access to information.	Reduction in administration activity. Reduction in material/postage costs.	Peer Challenge Action QW2	Denise/Danielle/Darren Mellors	Nov '15 - Jan '16
11	Role of Duty Planner	Identify the type and frequency of demand received by the Duty Planning Officer. Review the availability, role and responsibilities for the Duty Officer, based on demand.	Understand customer and stakeholders requirements so that the duty planner service is better able to meet their needs. Ensure that appropriate access to planning support is available; and tailored to the demands.	Improved customer satisfaction. Better utilisation of Duty Officer Time.	Diagnostic Outcome	Principals/MC/DM	Jan '16
12	Visibility of process mapping	Presentation of current processes and issues to planning officers	Acknowledgement of the need to alter the way that officers work in order to be more efficient, effective and economic. Changed ways of working in order to improve performance.	Improved understanding of issues within team.	Diagnostic Outcome	DM/Principals	Jan '16
13	Redesign of Householder process	Redesign of process to reflect	Streamline of working practises, Development of principles, Creation of procedural guide - set target times for each stage of the process (validation, site visit, technical assessment, requests from agent (do once), write up, issue), removal of customer issues, improving communication and information points in the process.	Improvement in service performance, Increase in customer/stakeholder satisfaction, Reduction in average processing time.	Diagnostic Outcome. Peer Challenge Action R3	DM/Principals	Jan '16
14	Redesign of Pre-App process	Redesign of process to reflect customer/stakeholder expectations	Streamline of working practises, Development of principles, Creation of procedural guide - set target times for each stage of the process (validation, site visit, technical assessment, requests from agent (do once), write up, issue), removal of customer issues, improving communication and information points in the process.	Improvement in service performance, Increase in customer/stakeholder satisfaction, Reduction in average processing time.	Diagnostic Outcome. Peer Challenge Action R3	DM/Principals	Jan '16
15	Redesign of Minor process	Redesign of process to reflect customer/stakeholder expectations	Streamline of working practises, Development of principles, Creation of procedural guide - set target times for each stage of the process (validation, site visit, technical assessment, requests from agent (do once), write up, issue), removal of customer issues, improving communication and information points in the process.	Improvement in service performance, Increase in customer/stakeholder satisfaction, Reduction in average processing time.	Diagnostic Outcome. Peer Challenge Action R3	DM/Principals	Feb '16
16	Redesign of Major process	Redesign of process to reflect customer/stakeholder expectations	Streamline of working practises, Development of principles, Creation of procedural guide - set target times for each stage of the process (validation, site visit, technical assessment, requests from agent (do once), write up, issue), removal of customer issues, improving communication and information points in the process.	Improvement in service performance, Increase in customer/stakeholder satisfaction, Reduction in average processing time.	Diagnostic Outcome.	DM/Principals	Feb/Mar '16
17	Specialised teams	Identify whether specific focussed teams such as a Growth or a 'Householder' team would assist in the performance of the Unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer a bespoke service service</li> <li>The establishment of specialist teams</li> </ul>	Increase customer satisfaction and improved performance.	Diagnostic Outcome. Peer Challenge Action QW6	Darren Mellors	June '16



18	Area working	Identify whether organising teams into district area teams would have benefit to the processing and performance of the teams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow for a greater understanding of the District</li> <li>Reduction in claimed mileage</li> </ul>	Reduced costs of operating the service.	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Mar '16
19	Service task audit	Undertake an audit to ensure that we fulfil our statutory responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A fully compliant and legally sound service is provided</li> </ul>	Nil successful legal challenges or successful ombudsman complaints.	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Apr '16
20	Agile Working	Review processes to increase the work and data capture which can be undertaken out in the field.	To reduce the times that information is 'touched twice' ....	Reduced time for 'administration' of systems. Better utilisation of staff time.	Agile 2	DM/MC	June '16
21	Use of Photographic Evidence	Review the capture and availability of photographic evidence, to be more accessible to all field workers across the Council.	Enable the use of photographic evidence taken by field workers across the Council, so that it can provide support to all in their work.	Reduce visits to 'check the situation'	Diagnostic Outcome	Principals/ Conservation Officer	June '16
22	Systems Support	Implement the revised/new ICT system	Ensure that the ICT is fit for purpose and supports effective DM processes.	Enhanced processing and ease of communication to stakeholders	Diagnostic Outcome. Peer Challenge Action R7	JL/MC/DM	Sept 16
23	S106	Establish processes and resources for better management of S106 agreements.	Ensure that the Council are delivering against S106 agreements and the benefits are being achieved in the community.	Number of S106 delivered. Income derived from S106 contributions	Diagnostic Outcome. Peer Challenge Para 1.6	COO/MC/JL	June '16
24	Site Visits	Review the process of establishing information via site visits; and trial/pilot whether there are other options to establish or gain information in different ways or at different times in the process.	To improve the outcome from site visits, or to remove the need for travelling to sites, if little benefit is achieved	Clear principles for site visits in place.	Diagnostic Outcome. Peer Challenge Action R3.	MC/JL/DM	June '16
25	Delegated Approval Decisions	Review delegated responsibilities allocated to officers for approvals and decisions	Ensure that decisions can be made quickly and within minimal bureaucracy.	Amended delegated powers, and constitution updated (if reqd).	Diagnostic Outcome	COO/MC/JL	June '16
26	Pre-application Advice	Review our stance and approach to pre-application advice	Weed out developments which don't require planning permission, improve the quality of submissions made to the Council; and build relationships with our regular submitters.	Increase in pre-application requests.	Diagnostic Outcome	COO/MC/DM	June 16
27	Perfect Timelines	Identify ideal 'timeline' for applications for householder, minor and other; and set SLAs.	Timeline the optimum process, from start to finish, as a standard for each application type.	Customer Service Standards on expected process completion	Diagnostic Outcome. Peer Challenge Action R3.	Principals/Darren Mellors	Jan '16
28	Conditions of Discharge	Review policies and procedures around issuing conditions of discharge	Take a stance to reduce number of conditions, to reduce workload required to discharge these (focus on the income generating work)	Reduced number of irrelevant conditions to be discharged. Reduction in administration costs to discharge	Diagnostic Outcome	Principals/Darren Mellors	March 16



# Development Management Improvement Action Planning

## Theme: Visible Performance

	Activity Title <i>(Linked into Programme Plan)</i>	Description of Activity	Outcome Expected	Measure of Success	Driver	Who Responsible	Anticipated Timescale
1	Configuration of planDET sheet to show 'live' 2015/16 performance	Development of planDET to show current performance so that performance information is available to all officers.	Robust performance tool showing both leading and lagging measures which will enable officers to improve their performance by the use of data	Information available to staff.	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed. Sep '15
2	Identification of Pre-app performance	Identify levels of performance from Apr-Aug '15	Understanding of levels of performance at team and individual level and use of data to drive performance improvement.	Baseline of Performance achieved	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed. Sep '15
3	Identification of Householder performance	Identify levels of performance from Apr-Aug '15	Understanding of levels of performance in relation to householder applications at team and individual level and use of data to drive performance improvement	Baseline of Performance achieved	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed. Sep '15
4	Householder benchmarking	Conduct benchmarking exercise (2014/15)	Understand how well WLDC performances compares with other Las and use data to drive performance improvement in relation to national standards.	Baseline of Performance achieved	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed. Sep '15
5	Identification of Minor performance	Identify levels of performance from Apr-Aug '15	Understand levels of performance in relation to minor and other applications at team and individual level and use of data to drive performance improvement	Baseline of Performance achieved	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed. Oct '15
6	Identification of Major performance	Identify levels of performance from Apr-Aug '15	Understand levels of performance in relation to major applications at team and individual level and use data to drive performance improvement.	Baseline of Performance achieved	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed. Oct '15
7	Minor benchmarking	Conduct benchmarking exercise (2014/15)	Understand how well WLDC performances compares with other Las and use data to drive performance improvement in relation to national standards.	Performance benchmarked against other authorities.	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed. Oct '15
8	Major benchmarking	Conduct benchmarking exercise (2014/15)	Understand how well WLDC performances compares with other Las and use data to drive performance improvement in relation to national standards.	Performance benchmarked against other authorities.	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed. Oct '15
9	Discussions with ICT regarding visibility of performance	Discussions with ICT to identify how Minerva can assist with the visibility of performance across the team	Greater visibility of performance information within the team.	Minerva can be used to display both officer and service performance	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Completed. Nov '15
10	Identification of historical householder performance	Reevaluate the performance for 2014/15 based on learnings from the analysis phase, to establish a wider baseline, based on demand and staffing levels.	Understand levels of performance from 2014/15. Understand the potential impact of the Planning and Housing Bill	True performance understood.	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Dec '15
11	Identification of historical minor performance	Reevaluate the performance for 2014/15 based on learnings from the analysis phase, to establish a wider baseline, based on demand and staffing levels.	Understand levels of performance from 2014/15. Understand the potential impact of the Planning and Housing Bill	True performance understood.	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Dec '15
12	Identification of historical major performance	Reevaluate the performance for 2014/15 based on learnings from the analysis phase, to establish a wider baseline, based on demand and staffing levels.	Understand levels of performance from 2014/15. Understand the potential impact of the Planning and Housing Bill	True performance understood.	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Dec '15



13	Service Measures	Identify a range of service delivery measures that encourages continuous improvement, through the balanced scorecard system.	Embedd a culture of performance management Improvement in service performance	A 'live' balanced scorecard with both leading and lagging measures	Diagnostic Outcome	Darren Mellors	Jan '16
14	Officers Performance Awareness	Performance information is configured to allow planning officers to fully understand their performance levels and how they contribute to servcie performance (derived from service and P&D measures)	Data is used by officers to drive performance improvement and encourages a healthy level of competition within the team	Demonstrable understanding of performance by Officers.	Diagnostic Outcome Peer Challenge Action R4	Darren Mellors	On-going
15	Regular Performance Reporting	Establish formal reporting to provide daily, weekly and periodic basis key support information for managing the service.	Measure the performance of DM including no of apps coming in, outstanding apps, apps approaching time, average decision time, throughput of officers etc.....	Team, Senior Management and Councillors informed	Diagnostic Outcome Peer Challenge Action R4	Darren Mellors	Jan 16
16	Publishing of WLDC performance externally	Explore the potential to publish performance information upon the Councils website	Provide a wider transparency of our service performance to our customers, stakeholders and interested party	Visibility of performance on website	Diagnostic Outcome Peer Challenge Action R4	Darren Mellors	June 16
17	Workload management	Weekly meeting with Planning Officers to review current workload and ensure that applications are determined in a timely manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduction in 'live' planning applications (removal of 'back-log')</li> <li>▪ Improvement of service performance</li> <li>▪ Workforce meets current demand</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduction in 'live' planning applications</li> <li>▪ Service performance aligned to government guidelines</li> </ul>	Diagnostic Outcome Peer Challenge Action R4	Darren Mellors	Dec '15



# Development Management Improvement Action Planning

## Theme: Customer & Stakeholder

	Activity Title (Linked into Programme Plan)	Description of Activity	Outcome Expected	Measure of Success	Driver	Who Responsible	Anticipated Timescale
1	Customer Notification of Delays	Ring all customers whose applications were in the backlog to advise of delay and give assurances that this is being worked on and that would make contact with them again to advise on dates for officer allocation. Rang customer back during October to advise progress and who allocated officer was. As a result of this work a letter was then created so that Customers could be written to to advise of delay in allocating officer and when to expect officer to be assigned to application	Ensure that all customers with planning application awaiting officer allocation were aware of delays and eventually name of officer dealing with application. Keeping customer up to date with situation	Reduction in calls chasing progress	Customer First Strategy	Lyn Marlow	Completed Sept/Oct 15
2	Initial Diagnostic Stakeholder Analysis	Undertook specific survey work with Agents, Parish Councils and customers (using application list from Feb 15) to gauge a benchmark of opinion	Responses have been analysed and provides a benchmark for future survey work in order to build on the poor comments turning them into positives	Established a benchmark of perception of how Development management is perceived by some of our key customers	Diagnostic Outcome	Lyn Marlow	Completed Oct 15
3	"Phones Open"	Improve the phone answering rates and appointment availability in the DM Team	To ensure that Customers or their Agents are getting to speak to Officer when they need to in order to progress their application.	% satisfied Customers and Stakeholders on availability of Officers	Peer Challenge Para 4.5	John Leney	Completed Nov 15
4	Contact Analysis	Undertake a contact demand analysis, capturing who, what, why, how and when customers are contacting us.	Understand the reasons for contact; to identify 'waste' demand. Reduced waste demand	% of contact which has value - this should be shown as increasing over time as a % of all contacts.	Customer First Strategy	Lyn Marlow	1st Phase Oct 15 to be repeated in Jan 15 and then every 1/4
5	Channel Usage	Evaluate the volume of applications, objections and other key information received by different channels; and by key customer groups to look at the profile of receipt. This will be influenced by the move to create a digital planning application file so there will be less need for customers to contact the council about planning matters.	To identify where we are on the journey towards digital by default.... And to set a strategy for channel shifting planning customers. Fewer telephone, email, letter or face to face contacts. Baseline should be the week before we started creating a digital online planning application file.	% applications and other planning submissions received online. Number of phone, email, letter or face to face contacts	Customer First Strategy	Michelle Carrington	1st Phase Dec and repeated
6	Validation Failure Analysis	Review reasons for validation failure; and map for specific reasons for distinct groups of applicants – resident, business, planning agent, property developer; and against application types (major, minor, householder)	Reduced the failure rates on validation and notify particular trends of failure reasons to 'regular' applicants.	% of applications passing validation first time % of invalid applications requiring 2 or more submissions % of invalid applications made valid within x days	Customer First Strategy. Peer Challenge Action R8	Russell & Dan	Dec 2015
7	Customer Journey Mapping	Undertaken further customer journey evaluation with a range of recent applicants, selected from each customer group, on different types and scale of applications.	Establish the Customer Journey that they undertook and gain feedback on what was good, what was not so good and 'how we can help them in this process' for the future	Number of process or information improvements identified	Customer First Strategy	Michelle & Lyn	Jan 2016



8	Stakeholder Journey Mapping	Undertake further stakeholder analysis with consultees to provide feedback on 'their' journey and experiences.	Establish feedback and identify 'how we can help' in order to improve the processes for other stakeholders; improve quality of responses; and to reduce wait time on responses.	Number of process or information improvements identified	Customer First Strategy	Michelle & Lyn	Jan 2016
				% Stakeholder satisfaction with process		Michelle & Lyn	Feb 2016
9	Customer & Stakeholder Communication	Identify and introduce set customer / stakeholder notification points into the application process at key milestones, or when particular issues arise.	Improve communication to customers, agents and developers; and to reduce unnecessary contact	% Customer satisfaction with communication % Stakeholder satisfaction with communication	Customer First Strategy	Michelle & Lyn	Mar 2016
10	Information & Guidance Notes for Applicants	Develop information and guidance for different applicant groups	To support enhanced quality of applications first time	% of Customers who felt advice & information was helpful. Increased levels of customer satisfaction	Customer First Strategy	Team, overseen by MC/LM	Feb 2016
11	Contact Resources	Review the staffing arrangements around supporting contact by email, telephone and face-to-face	Decide how best to manage f2f, telephone and email contacts and types of contacts	% of customers satisfied with first contact	Customer First Strategy. Peer Challenge Action QW4.	Michelle, Russell, John	Jan 2016
12	Extension of Time Communications	Review communication to stakeholders on extension of time	To reduce number of neighbours (and others) who wish to know what is happening on the application	% Reduction in neighbours contacting us on progress	Diagnostic Outcome	Russell Clarkson	Jan 2016
13	Website Planning Pages Review	Review the contents of the planning pages on the website Use exemplar planning authorities for background.	Ensure that our planning information is easy to understand, comprehensive and tailored to our different customer groups.	% of customers finding our web information helpful?	Customer First Strategy. Peer Challenge Action QW1.	Michelle, Russell	Feb 2016
14	Online Planning Support	Review whether further online support is required to support non-application processes	Enable easy online recording on other information for DM outside of the 'standard' logging of applications.	Number of additional online transactions created	Customer First Strategy. Peer Challenge Action QW1.	Michelle, Jeanette	Feb 2016
15	Online Services Promotion	Promote online services; and the availability of planning information.	Shift demand for information to digital by default and reduce 'non-fee generating' enquires.	% increase in online applications (following promotion period)	Customer First Strategy	Michelle, Julie Heath	Jan - April (post website impl)
16	Pre-application Usage	Assess the use of pre-application advice; and those that would have benefited from pre-application advice	Review our stance with regard to pre-application advice, charging and	% of applications which benefited from pre-app discussion	Diagnostic Outcome	Russell Clarkson	March 2016
17	Agent Forums	Establish regular agent forums; with clear objectives and information sharing agenda.	Both advise and receive feedback from agents on planning policy and development matters.	% of agents who find the agent forum informative	Diagnostic Outcome	Michelle, Russell, Lyn, John	First Agents forum 10 December 15. Six monthly thereafter
18	3Cs	Review complaints, comments and compliments regarding planning matters	Identify reasons why people are complaining or commenting and whether there are any improvements in process.	% of complaints which are process related, rather than planning matters	Customer First Strategy	Lyn Marlow	Jan 2016
19	MP Communications	Identify improved processes with Edward Leigh office over MP complaints	To reduce the time spent dealing with communications which are not 'complaints'	Reduction in non complaint MP letters	Customer First Strategy	Lyn Marlow	Mar 2016
20	Mystery Shopping	Undertaken mystery shopping on planning processes	To test out changes applied and see if they are embedded and working	% of actions not to standard or as expected	Customer First Strategy	Michelle, Lyn	March 2016



21	Feedback	Establish mechanisms to regularly receive feedback from applicants and stakeholders on their customer journey (across the Council)	Measure success of improvements across time, to see if our changes are having measurable benefit; and to establish any other future opportunities.	Number of feedbacks received	Customer First Strategy	Michelle, Lyn	March 2016
22	Marketing the service	Implement a marketing plan to communicate the vision and service objectives of DM (and the links to Corporate objectives) to customers and stakeholders. Establish a funding model to support the execution of those marketing activities.	Improved understanding of the service, its objectives, ambitions and expectations. Funding to develop communication links, agents forums and other networks (targeting the online community) and maximising exposure for the Statutory and Commercial services	Demonstrable improvements in understanding. Identified budget provision	Customer First Strategy	JL/MC/Finance	Mar 16



# Development Management Improvement Action Planning

## Theme: Finance & Costs

	Activity Title (Linked into Programme Plan)	Description of Activity	Outcome Expected	Measure of Success	Driver	Who Responsible	Anticipated Timescale
1	Agency Staffing	Agree the funding route for retention of agency staffing support through the backlog processing, process review and systems implementation periods	To ensure sufficient funds are budgeting for; and any virement or approvals are obtained.	Balanced budget	MTFS, Performance & Delivery	JL/MC/Finance	Dec 16
2	Income Predictions	Review and identify future income predications, based on economic, trends; growth plans and DM knowledge	To provide realisitc income generation predictions to input into the Councils Budgetting process	Actual Income Generation with accepted variance from predictions	MTFS	JL / Principals / Finance	Jan 16
3	Cost of Service	Identify realistic actual cost of running the DM service; identifying ancilliary and non-service costs within budget. Establish appropriate cost measures for service provisoin; matched to appropriate SLAs	To fully understand the cost profile of the service; to support efficiency changes; service charges; future charging and support mechanisms; and to provide a base on which to map service processes and timelines. DM Officers to be aware of the costs of providing the DM service, how much of those costs are covered by income and how much their time is worth (commercial awareness).	Realistic Cost Model understood; and is used as valuable tool for service management. DM Officers are better informed and can demonstrate understanding of costs to time spent.	MTFS, Performance & Delivery, Peer Challenge Para 5.1	JL/MC/Finance	Jan 16
4	Systems Financial Model	Establish a financial model to support Systems replacement or Renewals costs, intregated across DM, Building Control and Land Charges (as appropriate)	Ensure sufficient funds are allocated and reserved to support future systems developments; including procurement, resources and other related costs.	Identified budget provision	MTFS, Performance & Delivery	JL/MC/Finance	Jan 16



# Development Management Improvement Action Planning

Theme Name : The Political Environment

	Activity Title (Linked into Programme Plan)	Description of Activity	Outcome Expected	Measure of Success	Driver	Who Responsible	Anticipated Timescale
1	Quick Win Communications with Councillors (from Peer Challenge)	Ensuring that councillors are informed of applications in their wards as soon as possible. Notify members by email as soon as new applications in their ward are registered as valid. In respect of major application. Case files to be all electronic so that members can view information relating to planning applications in their wards when it is received.	Better informed councillors leading to earlier input into the planning application process and more locally acceptable development	Fewer complaints from members that there are not aware of applications in their wards	Peer Challenge Para 4.5	Team Manager - Development Management	Completed October 2015
2	Councillor Communication Long Term	Undertake analysis with Councillors to establish their communication and information requirements; and define protocols and methods of communication for the future	Ensure that key milestones and information is communicated to ward members and the wider member community.	Councillor satisfaction with DM information received	Customer First Strategy	Committee Services/ SL Customer First	April 2016
3	Well trained and well informed councillor and planning committee	Programme of training for all members in place for 2016/17 and regular up dates on changes in the planning environment at planning committee meetings.	Better and more effective planning decisions. Fewer complaints from councillors about the outcome of planning applications.	Fewer successful appeals. Fewer complaints	Peer Challenge Para 4.7	COO/Committee services	Programme of member training agreed October 2015. To be completed by February 2017
4	Decisions contrary to officer recommendations	Review the protocol (agreed by the Planning Committee) for dealing with decisions where members refuse planning applications contrary to officer recommendations and any subsequent Appeal process.	Clear process for dealing with decisions which are contrary to officer recommendations and any subsequent appeals. Fewer complaints from members about the process. Officers clearly understand their role in this process and can fully support members to provide the best possible case at appeal	Fewer successful appeals. Fewer awards of costs	Diagnostic Outcome	Team Manager - Development Management	March 2016 protocol reviewed
5	Understanding roles of councillors and officers in the planning process	Officer and member roles in the planning process to be covered in the programme of training for all members of the council.	Better and more effective planning decisions. Fewer complaints about the system operated	Fewer complaints about the operation of the Planning Committee	Diagnostic Outcome	COO/Committee services	Completed October 2015
6	Parish and Town Councils Communications	Parish councils need to be informed about how their comments on planning applications have influenced the decision making process. Parish councils need to be involved in planning training in order to understand the relationship between the local view and District and national priorities (delivery of growth. five year housing land supply etc.). Adopt a protocol for informing PCs of decisions on planning applications and letting them know how their comments have been taken into account. Include PCs in member training on planning.	More informed comments from PCs. Fewer complaints from PCs. Common understanding of the pressures which are on a district council to deliver growth	Fewer complaints from PCs about their views being ignored	Peer Challenge Para 4.8	Team Manager - Development Management	Protocol in place by July 2016. Parishes councils invited to joint training events by January 2016.



7	Involving councillors in pre-application discussions	Improved communications with members by involving ward members at an early stage in pre-application discussions about major applications in their ward. Need to develop a policy/protocol around this which sets out the boundaries and addresses any risks inherent in this approach.	Better decision making, fewer appeals	Number of pre-application discussions where councillors have been involved.	Peer Challenge Para 4.6	COO/Team Manager - Development Management	June 2016 - policy/protocol in place (go live date)
8	Decision Information for Major Apps	Review the content of committee papers for major projects with regard to inclusion of wider economic benefit information	Provide greater clarity on contextual economic figures and benefits of schemes to support the growth agenda to support enhanced decision making	% of applications papers including economic benefit information	Peer Challenge Para 7.6	COO/EFW/Principals	June 2016



## Peer Challenge Recommendations

1.	R1	Ensure planning is at the centre of the delivery of the emerging corporate plan to significantly increase the importance of planning in delivering open for business, local plan, and asset management and residents first element.
2.	R2	Set out a development management service vision with emphasis on developing a culture change, championing the customer, delivery quality outcomes and becoming more commercially minded and focus. Provide opportunities for staff involvement in creating and delivering the vision and service plan and be more outward facing
3.	R3	Refocusing where staff are used and ensuring that the right skills are in place, embracing staff development, as well as keeping 'instep' with changes in development management nationally in relation to speed of decision making and designation. As part of this exercise, examining good practise in Councils thinking the unthinkable to reduce time on smaller less important applications.
4.	R4	All Staff to learn how to use and interrogate statistics and performance data on workloads and time taken to validate and determine applications. Officers should take responsibility for their workload and ensure they play their part in meeting statutory targets.
5.	R5	Ensure that there is a consistent approach to policy interpretation to provide good decision making not open to challenge
6.	R6	Agree priorities for how strategic leads work together and how they jointly own and share responsibility for planning delivery in a way that consistently supports the political priority of growth
7.	R7	Set out a clear ICT specification, with required outcomes, as a first step work with the existing provider as part of agreeing what longer term ICT solutions are needed to support effective decision making
8.	R8	Reduce the rates of invalid applications by looking at the most common reasons and working with regular agents to improve standard and scrutinising of validation if officers are being unnecessarily strict
9.	QW1	Make it easier for people to find what they want on the website – use self-serve to reduce failure.
10.	QW2	All new case files to be electronic – scan paper coming into the officer on arrival. Work with consultees including town and parish councils to respond directly into the planning system so that their comments are live on the website immediately. Stop making paper files.
11.	QW3	Allocate a case officer immediately on validation and redistribute cases where officers have left the council.
12.	QW4	Significantly improve customer care including answering phones and officers going to reception if required.
13.	QW5	Growth Team to deal with the most important investment planning applications – through a development team approach
14.	QW6	Create householder applications team headed by a single principal officer supported by technical and more junior staff and existing short term agency staff.
15.	QW7	Set out a clear action plan to issue more decisions than applications are received per month. Ensure strong performance management to support this.
16.	QW8	Move towards an end to end process by case officer and require case officers to issue notice of decision immediately.
		Ensure that the corporate plan contains reference to the central role of DM in delivering corporate objectives.