

Scrutiny Standing Panel Agenda



Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel Tuesday, 5th January, 2010

Place: Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: Mark Jenkins - Office of the Chief Executive
Email mjenkins@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel: 01992 564607

Members:

Councillors Mrs L Wagland (Chairman), K Chana (Vice-Chairman), A Boyce, M Colling, Mrs A Cooper, R Frankel, Mrs A Haigh, J Hart, Mrs C Pond, W Pryor, Mrs P Richardson and H Ulkun

A BRIEFING FOR THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PANEL WILL BE HELD AT
7.00 PM PRIOR TO THE MEETING

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). To declare interests in any items of the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview and Scrutiny members are asked to pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an Overview and Scrutiny Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub-Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an Overview and Scrutiny meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

4. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING (Pages 5 - 12)

To agree the notes of the last meeting held on 10 November 2009 (attached).

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE (Pages 13 - 14)

The Terms of Reference are attached.

6. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 15 - 18)

The Work Programme is attached.

7. BEST VALUE REVIEW (Pages 19 - 28)

(Director of Planning and Economic Development). To consider the attached Best Value Review.

8. LEE VALLEY PARK DRAFT DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT

(Director of Planning and Economic Development) The Lee Valley Regional Park Authority are conducting a consultation on the Regional Park Development Framework. The Park Development Framework sets out a draft vision and proposals for the future of the Regional Park. The park authority is consulting on the draft document until 31 January 2010. The Park Development Framework document can be downloaded from the link below:

www.leevalleypark.org.uk/pdfconsultation

9. COMMENTS FROM LOCAL COUNCILS (Pages 29 - 32)

(Director of Planning and Economic Development). This item had been requested by the Panel Chairman, Councillor Mrs L Wagland, for discussion. The item had been discussed at the Constitution and Member Services Panel on 29 June 2009. The attached report and minute are from that meeting.

10. PLANNING SERVICES STAFF STRUCTURE (Pages 33 - 42)

(Director of Planning and Economic Development). To note the attached "Family Tree" staffing structure of Planning Services.

11. IMPROVEMENT PLAN (Pages 43 - 50)

(Director of Planning and Economic Development). To receive a verbal update on the Improvement Plan, the plan attached was put before the last meeting of the panel on 2 November 2009.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next programmed meeting of the Panel is on 11 February 2010 and thereafter on:

27 March

This page is intentionally left blank

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY STANDING PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2009
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 9.30 PM**

Members Present: Mrs L Wagland (Chairman), K Chana (Vice-Chairman), A Boyce, M Colling, Mrs A Cooper, R Frankel, Mrs C Pond, Mrs P Richardson and H Ulkun

Other members present: Mrs A Grigg, Mrs M Sartin and Mrs P Smith

Apologies for Absence: Mrs A Haigh and J Hart

Officers Present D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development), K Polyzoides (Assistant Director (Forward Planning)) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

28. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members present.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs A Cooper declared a personal interest in Item 8 Essex County Council Consultation – “Minerals Development Document: Site Allocations – Issues and Options Paper,” as she had taken part in the consultation herself.

30. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last meeting held on 8 September 2009 be agreed.

31. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Director of Planning and Economic Development, Mr J Preston, advised that the Terms of Reference would require some amending and would be ready for the 10 January 2010 meeting of the Panel.

32. WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of Planning and Economic Development, Mr J Preston, advised that the Panel's Work Programme had been revised, items which took priority should be first on the programme. Regular updating items would appear later in the programme.

Item 1 New Local Development Scheme and East of England Plan

The Panel was advised that the Local Development Framework (LDF) Cabinet Committee had received a report concluding that LDF expenditure was within budget.

Item 3 Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Area Planning Committees

The Chairman advised that the minutes for the last meeting of the Development Control Committee Chair and Vice Chair in October were awaiting completion.

Item 5 Comments from Planning Agents and Amenity Groups required matching

The Panel was advised that Mr N Richardson, Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development, would collate statistics from past Planning Agents and Amenity Groups' meetings.

Item 7 Route of Planning Enforcement Investigation.

A report was being put before the January 2010 meeting.

Item 8 Comments from local councils.

A report was being put before the January 2010 meeting.

Item 12 Update on Current Staffing Situation

The Panel was advised that there were interviews taking place for the Principal Officer (Enforcement) position held by S Solon who was taking over N Richardson's previous post as Principle Planning Officer (Development Control). The position of Environmental Co-Ordinator was being filled by Ms S Knightsman.

Councillor M Colling advised J Preston that he would like a "Family Tree" of all the personal within Planning Services.

ACTION: That a "Family Tree" of Planning Services personnel be presented to the Panel.

Item 14 Update on Gypsy and Traveller Consultation

The Panel was advised that counsel had been appointed familiar with Gypsy and Traveller issues. Counsel had commented on the Draft Delivery Strategy. Members at the LDF Cabinet Committee were concerned at the timescale involved, cost, sense of unfairness, dogma and diversion of staff resources involved in the process. There had been a suggestion of requesting a meeting with the Minister of State explaining the District Council's problems. There had been 10,000 responses to the consultation.

LDF

The Chairman advised that there was a new LDF scheme forthcoming, the District Council needed to ensure that they would make full use of any S106 agreements. The Community Infrastructure Levy was not a substitute for S106 agreements. Planning Services needed a policy fir dealing with developers.

ACTION:

That a report on a draft policy for financial incentives for developers be brought to the Panel.

33. PLANNING STAFFING RESOURCES

The Director of Planning and Economic Development, Mr J Preston, presented a report to the Panel regarding proposals seeking, within existing CSB budgets, making changes to staffing within Planning, particularly enhancing the Enforcement Team, and making provision to preserving protected trees.

Mr J Preston reminded the Panel that they had considered replacing the Compliance Officer post within the Enforcement Team and the various options for this, in particular an option for a new Senior Officer post within Enforcement.

The two posts proposed for deletion were Compliance Officer (PEF06) and Admin Supervisor (PST02). The Technical Officer (Landscape) (PPC16F) would be funded for extra hours by a CSB Addition of £4,990. This proposal should help facilitate the reversion of Tree Preservation Orders in advance of Essex County Council rescinding such orders, which would occur in March 2010. The new post was Senior Enforcement Officer with a CSB Addition of £38,930.

It was advised that the recommendations from the panel would be put before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 November 2009 before seeking final Cabinet approval on 16 November 2009.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the following recommendations be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (1) That posts PEF06 and PST02 be deleted from the Establishment;
- (2) That the hours for post PPC16F be increased from 0.8 FTE to 1.0 FTE; and
- (3) That a new Senior Enforcement Officer post be added to the Establishment.

34. ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION - "MINERALS DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT: SITE ALLOCATIONS - ISSUES & OPTIONS PAPER"

The Director of Planning and Economic Development, Mr J Preston, presented a report regarding an Essex County Council consultation document which formed part of a process for considering further sites for mineral extraction across the county. Two potential sites had been identified. They were Shellow Cross, Willingale and Patch Park Farm, Abridge. The sites had been considered unsuitable by planning committees and the LDF Cabinet Committee for a number of reasons including impact on the Green Belt, local landscape, local road network and flooding implications.

Officers were unclear as to the location of the deposits from the proposed sites as no full geological survey had taken place in the district. Members were concerned about the road haulage congestion that the two projects would cause in the area. There was particular concern regarding the Patch Park Farm, Abridge proposal as a high pressure gas pipeline ran into a small part of the potential site. There had been no acknowledgement of the pipeline in the consultation. Of equal concern was that the site was entirely within Flood Zone 3 with only brief acknowledgement of this given in the consultation.

The report from the Panel was being put before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 November 2009 and then Cabinet on 16 November 2009.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the following recommendations be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

(1) That the Essex County Council Consultation – “Minerals Development Document: Site Allocations – Issues and Options Paper” be responded to by stating that the sites for mineral extraction identified at Shellow Cross, Willingale and Patch Park Farm, Abridge be considered unsuitable for sand and gravel extraction for the following reasons:

- (a) impact on the Green Belt;
- (b) impact on the local landscape;
- (c) impact on the local road network;
- (d) potential risk of flooding at both sites;
- (e) the existence of a gas main in close proximity to the Abridge site; and
- (f) the sites involved only assumed deposits.

35. EERA CONSULTATION - 2031 SCENARIOS FOR HOUSING AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Assistant Director of Planning Services, Ms K Polyzoides, presented a report to the Panel regarding the EERA Consultation 2031 Scenarios for Housing and Economic Growth.

The Government had asked the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) to carry out an immediate review of the East of England Plan (EEP) addressing development needs for the period 2011 to 2031. Growth in the range of 30,000 to 40,000 new homes every year in the region was being tested.

A consultation exercise was prepared by the Regional Assembly with 4 growth scenarios covering 2011 to 2031. There were 3 questions about these scenarios and on their regional impacts. The results would enable the Regional Assembly to prepare a draft plan in 2010 for full public consultation.

It was acknowledged that Harlow had a significant existing infrastructure deficit, however none of the four growth scenarios addressed this in a meaningful sense. Officers believed that a “fifth scenario” should be tested and examined, it should have provision of major infrastructure and include a new Junction 7A of the M11 north east of Harlow with direct link to the town, a northern bypass to Harlow from the A414 to the new motorway junction, capacity improvements to the West Anglia Main Line and the Central Line, and addressing commuter parking problems at the London Underground stations in the district.

Additionally there was disappointment at the lack of detail in the consultation document, key aspects of this being the lack of information about the proposed

growth in Harlow and no assessment of a housing/jobs balance. The EEP indicated that larger term growth should be concentrated to the north of Harlow. However the growth scenarios did not address this.

Essex Local Authorities' Joint Policy Response

It was noted that the County Council had proposed that, in addition to the individual responses from Essex authorities to the EERA consultation, a joint response from the Greater Essex authorities should be sent. While a final Joint Policy Response had not yet been prepared, officers believed that the District Council should sign such a statement as it would reinforce the recommendations of this report.

The report from the Panel was being put before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 November 2009 and then the Cabinet on 16 November 2009.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the following recommendations be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (1) That a fifth scenario should be considered which deals with the realistic assessment of infrastructure provision in terms of the implications for deliverable housing and economic growth;
- (2) That the information on Harlow's future growth is misleading. The consultation document should give far more detail about how the figures for the 4 scenarios are going to be split between Harlow, East Herts and this district. This authority also believes that the growth totals proposed in scenarios 3 and 4 are unrealistic and undeliverable in this district;
- (3) That scenario 1 of the four in the consultation is preferred, but the fifth scenario (in (a) above) is likely to be the most realistic;
- (4) That the regional impact assessment should include Green Belt, as a significant important issue within the district;
- (5) That the vision and objectives of the Plan remain suitable;
- (6) That Policies H3 and H4 (from the Single Issue Review) should be included in the next review of the Plan as they concentrate on provision only up to 2021;
- (7) That the evidence base and technical information presented is not satisfactory; and
- (8) That agreement is made to be a signatory to the proposed Essex Local Authorities' Joint Response to the consultation, subject to the document being made available to EFDC Members for review. Members will retain the right to make additional comments should the current draft be updated and changes made.

36. IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Panel received the updated Planning and Economic Development Improvement Plan.

Item 2 Develop and promote a set of service standards for Planning and Economic Development, outlining the minimum levels of service that external and internal customers will receive.

The Panel were advised that a new Business manager was in post to help facilitate better service provision.

Item 3 Check the effectiveness of the channels of communication used to ensure that all staff were aware of service priorities and quality standards.

Staff were involved in the Development of the Service Business Plan. However a staff survey was not done and the staff PDRs were only partially completed.

Item 4 Improve the mechanisms for regular on-going feedback from users on the quality of service they had received.

The analysis from the responses received had not yet been completed. The refresher training on Customer Complaint handling was being undertaken.

Item 5 Improve ownership of problems and accountability amongst the Senior Management Team within Planning and Economic Development

These had now been fully achieved.

Item 7 Develop a systematic approach to workforce planning to address recurring recruitment and retention difficulties.

The Panel was informed that they were recruiting for the Assistant Director and Business Manager's posts internally.

Item 8 Improve the standard, content, presentation and consistency of reports to Development Control, Planning Standing Panel and Area Sub-Committees.

The notes for the Chairman and Vice Chairman's meeting of Development Control from 15 October 2009 was awaiting completion.

Item 9 Review the Corporate Planning protocol with respect to dealing with applicants, agents, developers and the local business community ensuring that the highest standards of probity and governance were achieved.

The Corporate Planning Portal was reviewed by the Standards Committee. It's findings were being put before the Planning Services Scrutiny Panel.

AGREED:

That the consultation from the Standards Committee will be put before the Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel.

Item 10 Implement practical measures to improve the public perception and reputation of the Council's Planning Service, particularly with respect to high profile/controversial applications and enforcement action.

A report on enforcement statistics was due for this Panel.

Iplan

The Panel was informed that the Iplan system, despite problems, worked well. There was a meeting on 12 November 2009 involving local council representatives which had discussed some of the problems with the Iplan. The new Business Manager would be resolving these issues.

Planning Records

Councillor Mrs A Cooper asked about historic planning records being put on-line. Mr J Preston advised that the Cabinet backed putting older plans on-line, and most of these had been scanned. However there was related material which was not currently electronically available.

37. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that there had been concern regarding some District Council members calling-in planning applications in wards other than their own. This had sometimes taken place without consulting the relevant ward member. It was recommended that these issues should be put before the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Standing Panel.

AGREED:

That a report regarding call-in of planning applications be put before the Constitution and Member Services Scrutiny Standing Panel.

38. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next programmed meeting of the Panel was scheduled for:

Tuesday 5 January 2010 at 7.30p.m.; and then on
Thursday 11 February 2010 at 7.00p.m.; and
Tuesday 27 April 2010 at 7.30p.m.

This page is intentionally left blank

TERMS OF REFERENCE - STANDING PANEL

Title: Planning Services

Status: Standing Panel

Terms of Reference:

1. To consider matters which arise through the process that the Government is driving to bring in an East Of England Plan as issued in May 2008; these may range from how to respond to the initiatives or views of those who support or oppose us, and how we may support or oppose the views taken by others, and how to work in partnership with others to secure delivery of the plan with adequate infrastructure. In particular, those Portfolio Holders with planning and economic development responsibilities to remain tuned in to local views.
2. In association with 1, to keep an overview of work associated with securing a sound New Local Development Framework; in particular how the core strategy will cater for the adequate delivery of infrastructure of all types, the limited rolling back of the Metropolitan Green Belt to allow the regeneration and expansion of Harlow, the increased provision of affordable housing, and the maintenance of the existing settlement pattern elsewhere in the District.
3. To consider what changes are practical and desirable to Council policies concerning the Metropolitan Green Belt; including those concerning the extension of existing dwellings, and the reuse of redundant and other buildings; in particular, are further restrictions necessary (changes in policy required) to ensure that such developments are truly sustainable.
4. To consider in detail the provision of Value for Money within the following Planning Services focusing specifically on:
 - Development Control (including Appeals)
 - Forward Planning
 - Building Control
 - Enforcement
 - Administration and Customer Support
 - Economic Development
 - Environment Team
5. To gather evidence and information in relation to these functions through the receipt of:
 - performance monitoring documents,
 - Best Value Review of Planning Services (updated version)
 - benchmarking exercises,
 - consultation with Planning Committee Members, customers and IT Suppliers.
6. To identify problems, possible solutions, barriers to success;
7. To review the measures introduced since 2004 to improve performance within Development Control namely the success of

- the 'Hit Squad',
- the Service restructure(s),
- the new IT system
- the application of the Planning Delivery Grant.

8. To review a selection of controversial planning decisions to see if lessons can be learnt from their consideration.
9. To consider whether the reporting arrangements for all of the above matters and those for the Section 106s (including how they are negotiated agreed and implemented strategically to secure community benefit), and appeals are sufficient (including how new legislation impacts on these) and to recommend accordingly.
10. To evaluate all relevant facts in relation to the topics under review in an objective way and to produce recommendations for future action accordingly;
11. To establish whether there are any resource implications arising out of the topics under review and advise Cabinet for inclusion in the Budget Process 2009/10;
12. To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at appropriate intervals and to submit an interim report on Development Control in the June 2008 cycle, and a final report on all matters by March 2009. To report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Council and the Cabinet with recommendations on matters allocated to the Panel as appropriate.

Chairman: Cllr Mrs Wagland

Planning Services Standing Panel

Item	Report Deadline/Priority	Progress/Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) Regular Updating Reports on: (a) Regional Plan (b) Local Development Framework (c) Gypsy & Traveller Development Plan Document (d) Current Staffing (e) Improvement Plan	Regular updating reports	Final version of the East of England Plan to 2021 complete. Report on new LDF Scheme & implications for S106 agreements, new draft policy required. LDF timeline to be presented. Essex County Council Consultation – Minerals Development Document Site Allocations Issues and Options Paper. EERA Consultation – 2031 Scenarios for Housing & Economic Growth.	18th June 2009 8th September 40th November 5 th January 2010 11 th February 27 th March

(4) Report from legal on performance at Planning appeals.	June 2009	Separate meeting to be arranged involving Chairman of Panel, Director of Planning & legal officers on yearly cycle.	
(5) Comments from the planning agents and amenity groups required matching.		New meetings with planning agents and amenity groups can be organised separately or together.	
(6) That a report be produced setting out the benefits of creating an additional Senior Officer post, replacing the Compliance Officer post with reference to outcomes, options for funding the new post with consideration given to alternative options for securing the same benefits.	Considered at June and November 2009 meetings.	COMPLETED	
(7) That a report be produced for the Panel setting out the possible route any planning enforcement investigation could take		Deferred to September 2009 panel meeting, report to include financial implications.	
(8) Comments from local councils	January 2010	Referred from Constitution & Member Services Panel at request of Chairman of Planning Scrutiny Panel.	
(9) (i) Re use of buildings in the Green Belt/Traffic Issues in the Roydon and Nazeing Areas. (ii) To keep an overview on transport matters that were the subject of a focus day in Nazeing in March 2007, and the action plan.	Local Highways Panel	On going – VOSA attended meeting of the old Environment and Planning Standing Panel on 28 Feb 2008. Awaiting Essex C.C. transport freight strategy for the Nazeing area.	

(10) Review the Corporate Planning protocol with respect to dealing with applicants, agents, developers and the local business community to ensure that the highest standards of probity and governance are achieved.	February 2010 meeting		
---	-----------------------	--	--

**Development
Control
Best Value
Review:**

Summary 2009

This document follows on from a 2001 Best Value exercise which was fully updated in July 2008. The format of this document is deliberately brief for ease of clarity and comparison. For more information, the reader is referred to the 2008 document which is available at:

[http://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Published/C00000610/M00005563/AI00016133/\\$DevControlinBVReviewReport.docA.ps.pdf?ku=30353527\\$RTW](http://rds.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/Published/C00000610/M00005563/AI00016133/$DevControlinBVReviewReport.docA.ps.pdf?ku=30353527$RTW)

The tables in this document mirror those in the earlier exercise, but include information for the last five years. For the complete time series, this document can be added to the earlier ones.

The earlier documents provided a great deal of background information which is not repeated here.

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
<i>Planning applications received:</i>	2086	1962	2033	2302	1972
<i>Planning & enforcement appeals received:</i>	94	105	143	132	153
<i>Enforcement complaints received</i>	855	653	783	757	708 investigations

Over the last five years we have seen more volatility of total numbers received. 07/08 figures were the highest ever and last year, the figure falling was due to the economic downturn part way through 2008/09. Inclusive of application for the discharge of planning conditions, a new format introduced this year, and the total would have been 2099. Appeals received were however, the highest on record at 153. Enforcement complaints were at an average level.

The overall sense is that we have coped with a slight increase in workload given other resources later on.

Best Value Performance Indicators & National Performance Indicators

Over the last 5 years, there has been improvement in performance, but figures are just still under the top quartile target. Improvement plans are in place to make more improvement. The previous Best Value Performance Indicators have been replaced with a new suite of National Indicators. The table sets out which Best Value Indicator number refers to which new National Indicator.

Best Value Performance Indicator	Equivalent National Indicator
109	157 a, b, c
204	145

--	--

Performance Overview

Applications

	2004/ 05	2005/ 06	2006/ 07	2007/ 08	2008/ 09
<i>Applications received</i>	2,086	1,962	2,033	2,302	1972
<i>% decided in target – BV109 returns</i>					
<i>‘major’</i>	41%	54%	67%	79%	59.38%
<i>‘minor’</i>	57%	71%	73%	78%	79.64%
<i>‘other’</i>	77%	85%	90%	89%	89.88%
<i>% decided under delegated powers</i>	86%	82%	89%	88%	85%
<i>Establishment case officers</i>	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5

Enforcement

	2004/ 05	2005/ 06	2006/ 07	2007/ 08	2008/ 09
<i>Complaints received</i>	855	653	783	757	708
<i>Complaints resolved</i>	751	739	848	723	709
<i>Enforcement notices served</i>	33	21	18	23	22
<i>PCNs served</i>	7	32	26	45	15-20
<i>BOCNs served</i>	2	1	0	1	0
<i>Injunctions sought</i>	2	0	0	0	1
<i>Establishment officers</i>	5	5	5	5	5

Appeals

	2004/ 05	2005/ 06	2006/ 07	2007/ 08	2008-2009
<i>Planning Application Appeals received</i>	94	105	143	132	134
<i>% of appeals allowed (BV204)</i>	29%	22%	30%	29	40.3%
<i>Staff numbers</i>	<i>There are no staff solely dedicated to appeals</i>				

	2000/01	2003/04	2006/07
Overall satisfaction with the service	75%	71%	82%

Current Staffing (Dec 2009)

PDC/01	ASST DIRECTOR OF PLANNING	N. RICHARDSON	1.00
PDC/02	PRINC PLANNING OFFICER	S.SOLON	1.00
PDC/03	PRINC PLANNING OFFICER	J.SHINGLER	1.00
PDC/04	SENIOR PLANNING OFFICER	VACANT DEC 2009	1.00
PDC/05	SENIOR PLANNING OFFICER	J. CORDELL	1.00
PDC/06	SENIOR PLANNING OFFICER	K.SMITH	1.00
PDC/07	SENIOR PLANNING OFFICER	G.COURTNEY	1.00
PDC/08	PLANNING OFFICER	P. ONYIA SECONDED 2009	1.00
PDC/09	PLANNING OFFICER	D DUFFIN	1.00
PDC/10	PLANNING OFFICER	M.TOVEY	1.00
PDC/11	PLANNING OFFICER	D.BAKER	1.00
PEF/01	PRINC PLANNING OFFICER	J. GODDEN	1.00
PEF/02	SENIOR ENFORCEMENT OFFICER	C.MUNDAY	1.00
PEF/03	ENFORCEMENT OFFICER	S HART	1.00
PEF/04	ENFORCEMENT OFFICER	D.H.THOMPSON	1.00
PEF/05	ENFORCEMENT OFFICER	D ANDREW	1.00
PEF/06	COMPLIANCE OFFICER	VACANT FEB 2009	0.56
PEF/07	ADMIN ASSISTANT	T.FORECAST	1.00

17.56

4. Further Detail

a) Workloads: The 2009 Update:

6.1 *The planning application workload has continued to increase – 20.6% increase over the 2000/01 total and altogether a 59% increase over the base (1,450) used in the 2001 review. However, it can be seen that the workload was increasing in 2003/04 and then fell slightly in 2004/05 and again in 2005/06, rising again in 2006-7, before reaching a peak in 2007/08. The economic downturn saw an unsurprising fall in application submissions in 2008-09.*

6.2 *The means of measuring application performance changed in 2002/03 when the returns were split into the 3 separate categories identified in the table above. This coincided with the Government publishing targets for authorities to achieve of 'Major'– 60%, 'Minor'– 65%, and 'Other'– 80% of planning applications dealt within 8 weeks of being made valid (13 in the case of Majors). These were very challenging targets in the first instance coinciding with the significant increase in the workloads. However, by the fourth year (2005/06) two of the three government targets were being met and by the fifth year (2006/07) all three were met.*

- 6.3 However, the Council aspires to be within the top quartile of performing authorities, and since then the target levels has been set higher by the Council. This has been hard to achieve with existing resources and a Last year, and we fell short in two of the three categories: Minor- 78.06% rather than 80.39% and Other – 89.27 rather than 91.61%. The five year journey from 2002/03 to the present performance is however noteworthy, though the top quartile levels have been rising all the time.
- 6.4 The enforcement workload has also risen. Significant increases in the number of alleged breaches of control reported occurred in 2003/04 and 2004/05, falling the following year but since 2006/07, complaints have been 700+, both in terms of received and resolved. This level of workload is likely to be repeated for the current year.
- 6.5 The appeal workload has remained fairly constant since the time of the last review, with the exception of the two years of lower activity generally. Up to 2007/08, performance, though variable for reasons well known to members, had remained better than the national average (still at about 31%). However, last year, not only was there a higher number of appeals received than previous, but those allowed were also at its highest. Officers have assessed the appeal decisions, concluding that not only were the no. of appeals higher, but so were the appeals allowed against officer recommendations at committee level. The conclusion was that the Planning Inspectorate in recent years was keen to maximise the use of urban land in sustainable locations, rather than member concerns over the infrastructure in place to cope with increased housing.

	Length of Service at EFDC: April 1 2009
Officer A	10 years
Officer B	5 years
Officer C	17 years
Officer D	VACANT
Officer E	<1 year
Officer F	2 years
Officer G	4 years
Officer H	2 years
Officer I	<1 year
Officer J	3 years
Officer K	9 years
Officer L	9 years
Officer M	2.5 years
Officer N	6.5 years
Officer O	4 years
Officer P	6 years
Officer Q	VACANT

- 6.14 The following table is similar to that appearing in the 2001 Review paragraph 4.18 above, and provides an average number of applications per establishment post case officers in recent years.

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Staff	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5
Applications	2,086	1,962	2,033	2,302	1972
Average	199	187	194	219	188

This is against a background where the Government advises, as a result of various studies, that the targets for handling all applications cannot be

satisfactorily achieved **unless the average number of cases per case officer is in the order of 150.**

- 6.15 The experience of this authority is that the averages displayed in the above table are too high if the Governments targets are to be consistently met and far too high if the top quartile targets are to be achieved. The Panel will recall that it was in 2005/06 budget, after years of continuous rises in application numbers and of average cases per officer well over 200, that the Council provided £100,000 to spend on additional staff resources (known as the 'Hit Squad') to deal with a backlog of applications that had built up and to significantly improve the performance figures. The first member of the squad was appointed in August 2005 with the view to employing 4 members for about 9 months. However, since members came and went with regularity and it was rare that 4 people were in post at any one time, the budget lasted until late 2006 when the final member, Subash Jain, left.
- 6.16 It is difficult to define 'backlog' in development control terms, but the measure we have been using is to record the proportion of applications outstanding at the end of any given period that are already beyond their target date. The following table records the effectiveness of the team during the 'Hit Squad' period:

Quarter beginning:	Total on hand at end of month	Total already past target date	Proportion
October 2005	322	106	33%
January 2006	270	83	31%
April 2006	271	42	15%
July 2006	333	47	14%
October 2006	269	47	17%
January 2007	276	47	17%
April 2007	352	47	13%
July 2007	309	38	12%
October 2007	321	33	10%
January 2008	344	51	15%
April 2008	307	46	15%
July 2008	377	31	8%
October 2008	298	42	14%
January 2009	259	33	13%
April 2009	333	31	9%
July 2009	301	42	14%

These figures, together with the significant improvement in performance, illustrate the considerable impact the budget provision made at that time.

- 6.17 **However, this has only been possible with the further contribution to the budget of Planning Delivery Grant, which has enabled further agency and consultant resource to be bought in to further improve performance.**
- 6.18 Since the last of the Hit Squad members left the Council at the end of 2006, we have been able to secure the employment of a local, qualified, senior planner to handle a planning application caseload who had been with the authority since early summer 2006 paid for out of Planning Delivery Grant allocation, which has now finished. Since July 2009, this officer has been covering succession of job vacancies, that has helped to maintain performance. However, this staff resource costs the Council about £50,000 in 2008/09, which is more than the full cost of a senior planner on the establishment.

6.19 Even should the establishment be increased by this senior planner to 11.5 case officers, this would still represent an average caseload of over 170 cases per officer at last year's total – still significantly above the Government's recommendation and yet at a level at which Officers consider performance can be successfully managed. For 2009/10, a planning officer has been seconded to the Forward Plan section, leaving the team one post down (9.5). However, this has coincided with a fall of about 100 planning applications and a reduction in appeals compared with the 2008/09. Staff issues were a major factor in 2008/09, with Principal Planning Officers acting up to cover Assistant Director (P&C) and long term illness of Assistant Director (Development), as well as the Development Control team being a Senior Officer down until Dec 08. The reliance of staff in all posts for the year can not be under estimated if top quartile performance is to be achieved. Officers continue to strive to hit top-quartile performance and share Members disappointment that the high targets are proving difficult to achieve, but it should be recognised that not only was 2008/09 another high workload year, staff numbers were down as a result of the illness of the Assistant Director (Development) and a Senior Planner for 6 months.

5. Cost Analysis for Development Control

The 2009 Update:

The Key Information table has been updated and projected, plus adding information specifically about staff costs.

This is followed by an updated Evaluation Table. It will be noted however that the first 3 rows have been deleted since the analysis is not regarded as meaningful.

Key Information:

The cost analysis below shows only Development Control data and does not include financial information relating to Enforcement and Planning Appeals

	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010 Estimated Outturn
DC net budget £	620898	506356	598459	532331	347910
DC total expenditure for year £	1233611	1089652	1171181	1191379	911660
Expenditure on third party payments £	658285	740760	781570	738440	741880
Support Services contribution to DC £	128535	136557	126105	49905	38210
Managerial & Professional contribution to DC £	43040	50382	70260	47288	37960
Supplies &	146751	196979	287523	104433	73570

Services contribution to DC £					
DC Income	546713	535171	528999	616417	544000
Staff FTE	14.8	10	10.6	11.7	10.9
Staff costs inc Super & NI	488370	437670	462570	399320	409150
Average Staff cost inc	32997	43767	43640	34129	37537

Evaluation of Information

	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010 Estimated Outturn		
Staff costs as % of DC total cost	39	40	39	33	44	Staff costs divided by total Gross cost as %	
Staff costs per application for DC £	249	215	201	207	207	Staff costs divided by Planning Applications received	Applications rec`d based on 2008/09
% increase of DC income	44	-2	-1	17	-12	Increase or decrease in income over previous year as %	
DC income to total cost percentage	44	49	45	52	60	Income divided by Gross cost As %	
Application to income charges £	279	263	260	312	275	Total Income divided by planning applications rec`d	Applications rec`d based on 2006/07
Average gross cost of application £	629	536	509	604	462	Total Gross costs divided by planning applications received	Applications rec`d based on 2006/07

During the period prior to 2008/09 Planning Services introduced a new computer system (Northgate M3), as a result expenditure on Supplies and Services and Support Service recharges were unnaturally high and distort the statistics so that few comprehensive conclusions can be drawn. As a result, although staffing has remained at similar levels, these costs make up a smaller percentage of the total.

The percentage of income to gross cost will vary from year to year and is driven to a degree by the number and complexity of applications. The fee structure is such that the income from a particular application does not necessarily reflect the time spent on that application, however staff costs per application have remained fairly constant since 2006/07.

DEFINITIONS OF APPLICATIONS

*Major - any scheme on any site of over 1 hectare;
a residential scheme on any site over 0.5 hectares or
a residential scheme providing more than 10 dwelling units; and
a commercial scheme of over 1000 square metres floorspace.*

Minor - any other commercial development or new dwellings

Other - householder applications (extensions to houses, etc), advertisements, listed building applications, and applications for certificates of lawful development.

This page is intentionally left blank

Report to Constitution and Members' Services Standing Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting: 29 June 2009

Subject: Officer Delegation – Planning Applications:
Comments by Town and Parish Councils

Officer contact for further information: I Willett (01992 564243)

Committee Secretary: M Jenkins (01992 564607)

Recommendations:

That no change to the powers of delegation be made.

Report:

1. Following consideration of this matter at the meeting of this Panel on 6 April 2009, there has been a request for further opportunity for discussion in order to clarify the issue and suggest other courses of action.
2. **Councillor J Knapman** wishes the Panel to consider the following proposal:

“Delegated powers should not be used if the Head of Planning and Economic Development intends to refuse a planning application where a local council has indicated a measure of support in its response and that such cases should stand referred to the relevant Area Plans Sub Committee.”

Reason:

Most Parish Councils state “no objection” which appears to be viewed by Planning Officers as a neutral stance on applications, thereby giving authority to make a delegated decision either to grant or refuse consent. Sometimes, the comments of local councils which accompany “no objection” can indicate support for an application. The officer delegation should therefore provide for such comments to be taken into account in deciding whether reference to a Sub Committee should take place.”

Existing Position

3. The issue of comments by local councils is dealt with in 2 clauses of the relevant authority setting out two circumstances where applications would be reported to committee:
P4(g) – Applications recommended for approval contrary to an objection from a local council which is material to the planning merits of the proposal; and
P4(l) – A planning application which would otherwise be refused under delegated powers but where there is support from the relevant local council and no other overriding planning consideration necessitates refusal.

Officers' Comments

4. Members will appreciate, then, that the issue raised by Cllr Knapman is covered in clause P4(l). Determination under delegated powers is not reliant upon whether the

local council has used or not used the term 'Support' or 'No Objection' but whether there are overriding reasons for refusing the application in any event. Whatever terminology is used the issues raised would be taken fully into account when reaching a recommendation and decision.

5. It might be that the request is really for the phrase at the end of clause P4(l) – '.....and no other overriding planning consideration necessitates refusal.' – to be removed. However, this would be returning to a former situation when any expression of support, for whatever reason not necessarily strictly a planning consideration, resulted in an application having to be referred to committee, affecting the 8-week target for determining applications and unnecessarily taking up committee time. Nevertheless, that is an option.
6. Alternatively, the Panel might feel that the issue can be dealt with simply by asking officers to use discretion in handling expressions of support from local councils, by continuing to provide guidance on planning issues to local councils through the Member Training Programme and visits to local council meetings, and by reassuring local councils that their comments are taken fully into account. This can be done either by letter to Clerks or at a meeting of the Local Council Liaison Committee.
7. It is this second option that is recommended.

The Assistant to the Chief Executive, Mr I Willett, presented a report to the Panel regarding Officer Delegation – Planning Applications: Comments by Town and Parish Councils.

This matter had been considered by the Panel on 6 April 2009, there had, since then, been a request by the Council for a further opportunity for discussion to clarify the issue.

Councillor J Knapman had requested that the Panel consider the following proposal:

“Delegated powers should not be used if the Director of Planning and Economic Development intends to refuse a planning application where a local council has indicated a measure of support in its response and that such cases should stand referred to the relevant Area Plans Sub-Committee.”

The reason for this proposal was that local councils stated “no objection” to applications which had appeared to be interpreted by Planning Officers as taking a neutral stance on these applications. This gave authority to make a delegated decision for granting or refusing consent. Officer delegation provided for such comments to be taken into account in deciding whether reference to a Sub-Committee should take place.

Members noted that the issue raised by Councillor J Knapman was already covered in clause P4 (l) of the Planning Protocol. Determination under delegated powers was not reliant upon whether the local council had used or not used the term “Support” or “No Objection” but whether there were overriding reasons for refusing the application in any event.

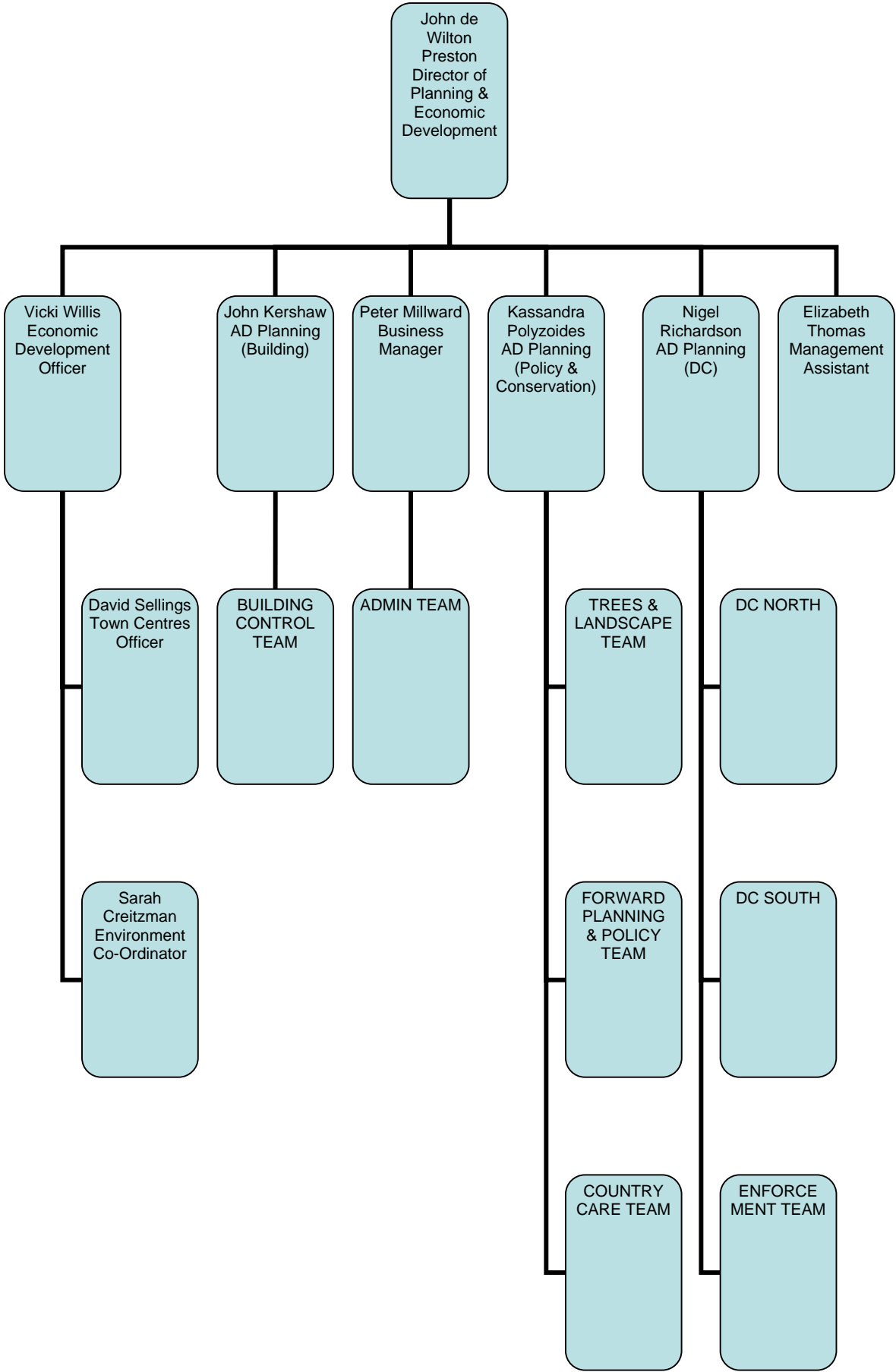
It was recommended that officers use discretion in holding expressions of support from local councils by providing guidance on planning issues to local councils through the Member Training Programme and council meetings. Reassurance on this issue would be passed to parish clerks via letter and at the Local Council Liaison Committee.

Mr N Richardson, Principal Planning Officer, felt that single storey rear extensions were causing concern with some local councils. This had resulted in some applications of this nature being referred to Area Plans Sub-Committees when granting of consent at officer level was the norm. He said that P4 (g) of the Planning Protocol covered this area. Members requested that N Richardson monitor single storey rear extension applications, that came before committee, until March 2010.

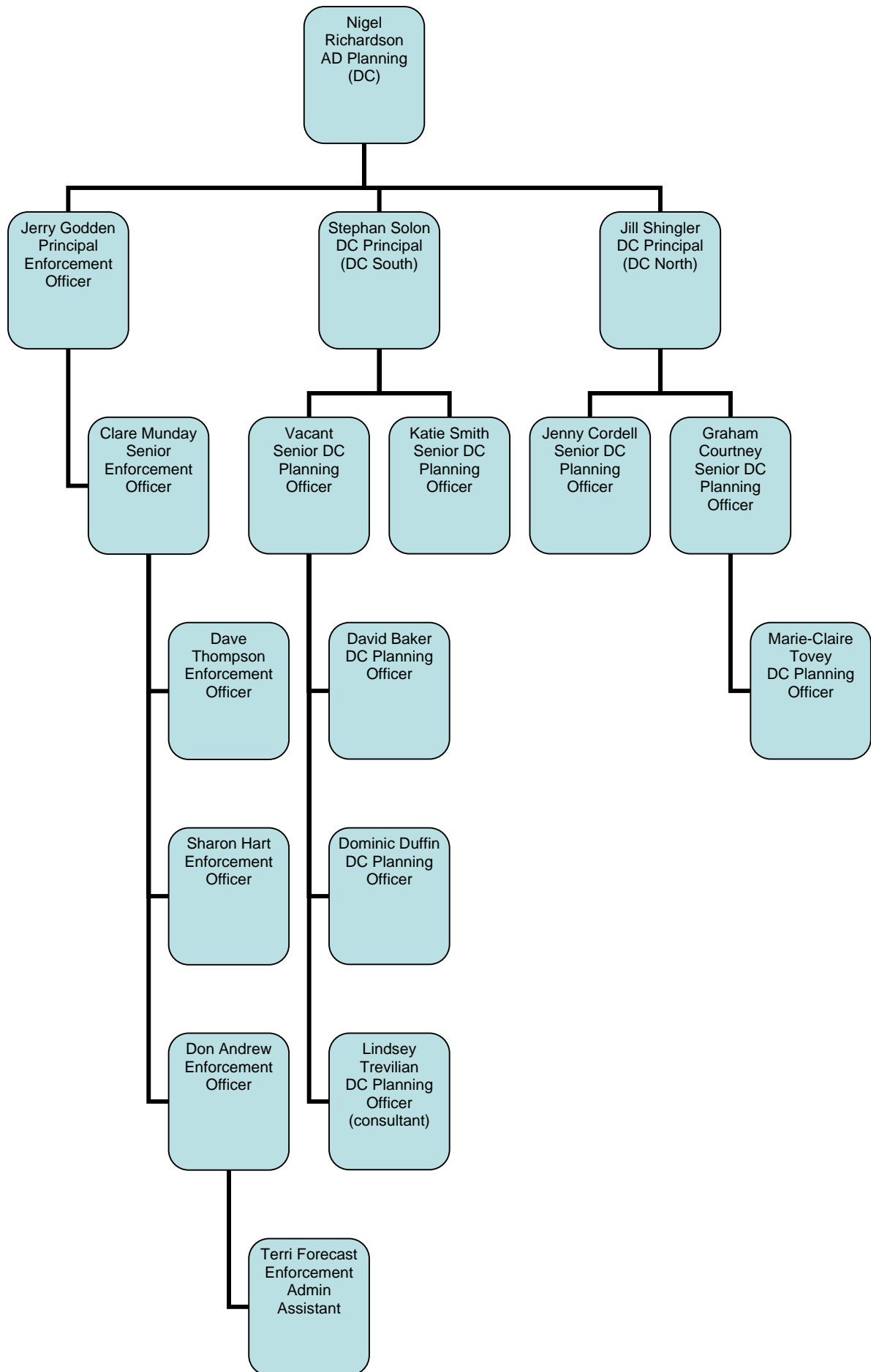
RECOMMENDATIONS:

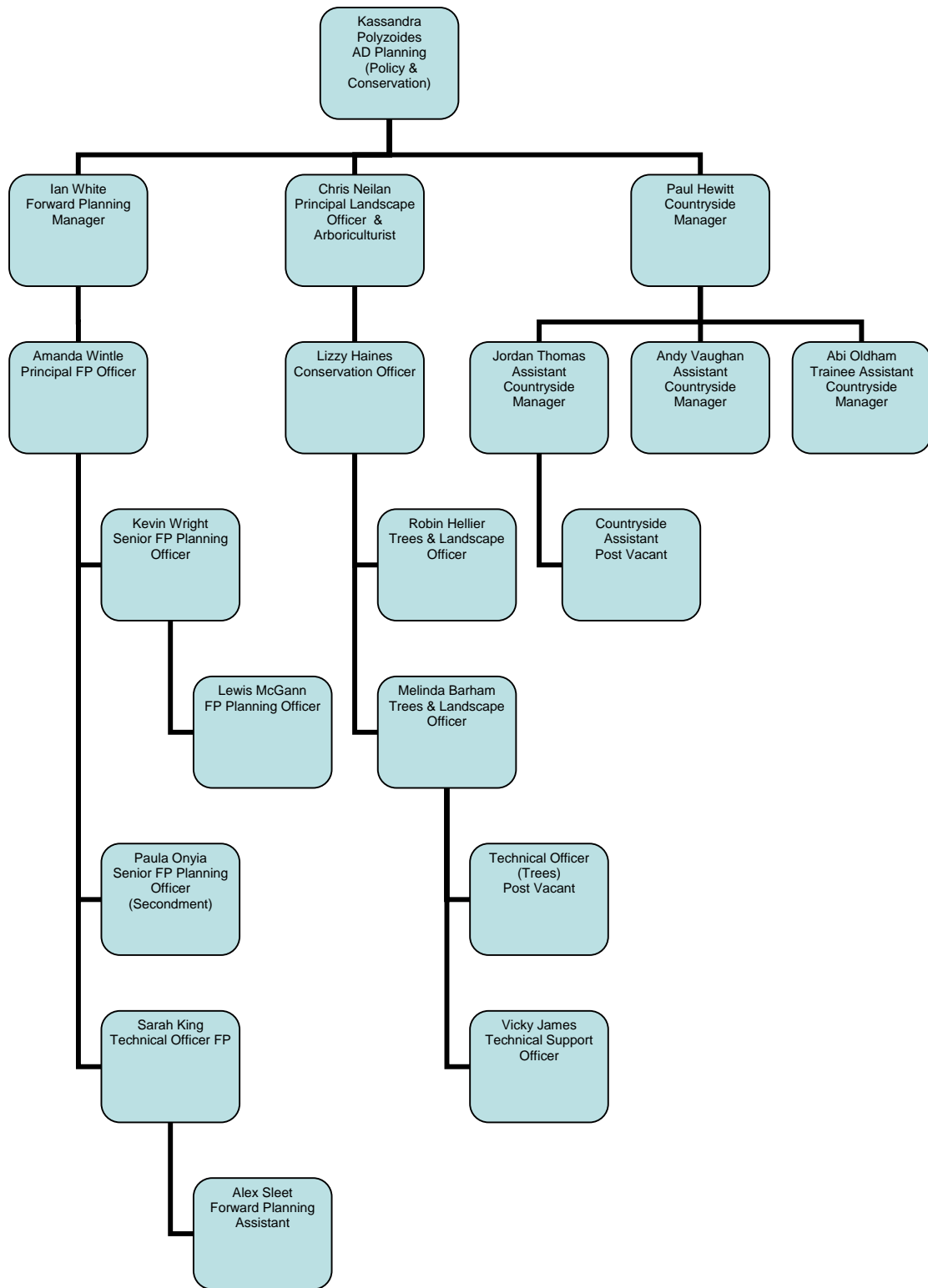
- (1) That no change be made to the terms of delegation to the Director of Planning and Economic Development regarding reference of planning applications to Area Plans Sub Committees;
- (2) That new guidance be given to Parish Councils regarding how to frame their consultation responses and, in particular, the use of the terms ‘support’, ‘oppose’ ‘no objection’ and ‘no comment’ and that if necessary the matter be raised at a meeting of the Local Councils’ Liaison Committee;
- (3) That the Director of Planning and Economic Development be asked to use his discretion on how Parish Council responses are handled and whether any case should be referred to an Area Plans Sub Committee in the light of those responses;
- (4) That the possibility of extending delegation to officers to approve routine applications in respect of single storey rear extensions to residential properties be deferred for consideration at the next review of delegation; and
- (5) That, pursuant to (4) above, the Director of Planning and Economic Development monitor the number of such applications being referred to Area Plans Sub Committees and the decisions made.

This page is intentionally left blank

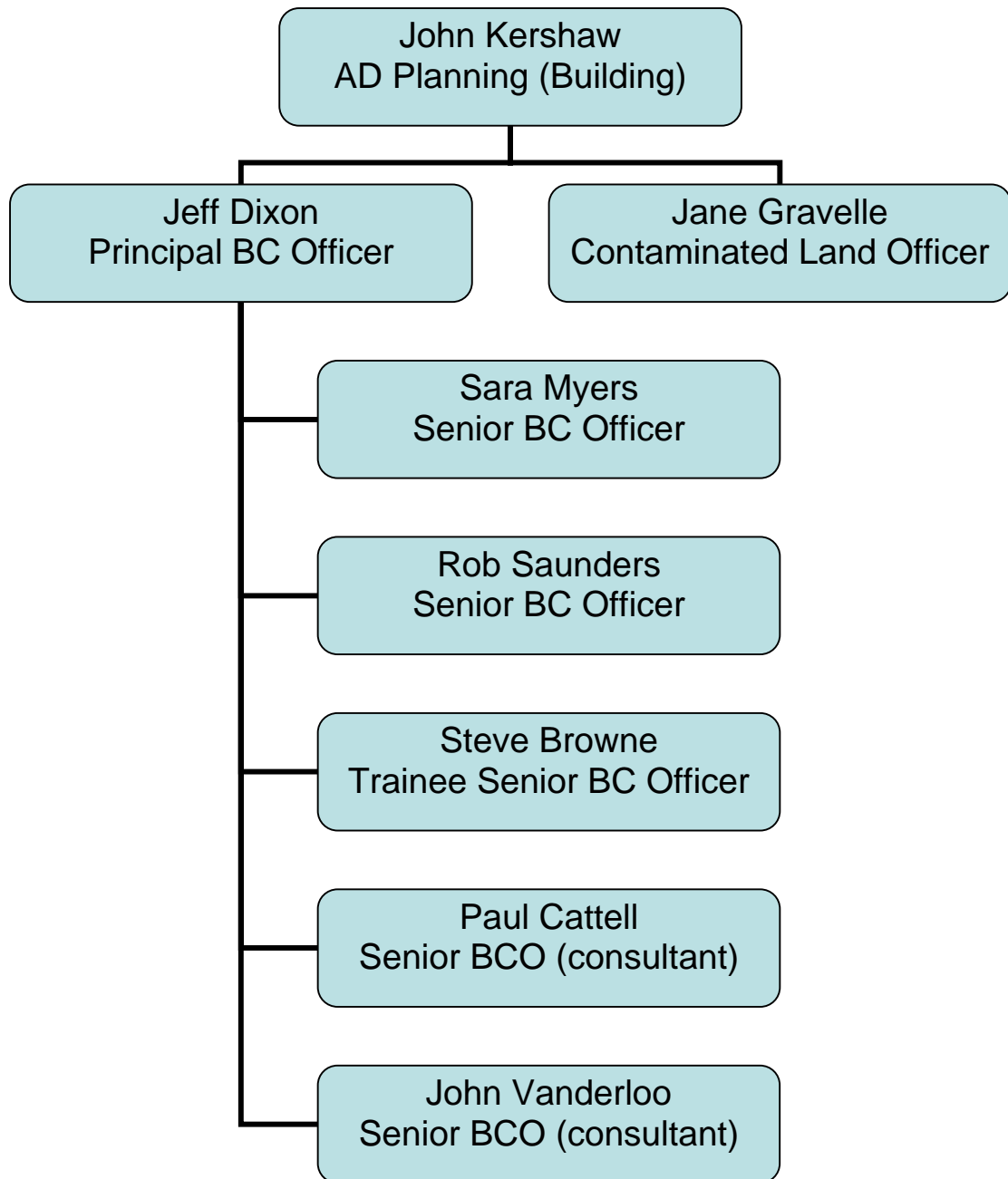


This page is intentionally left blank

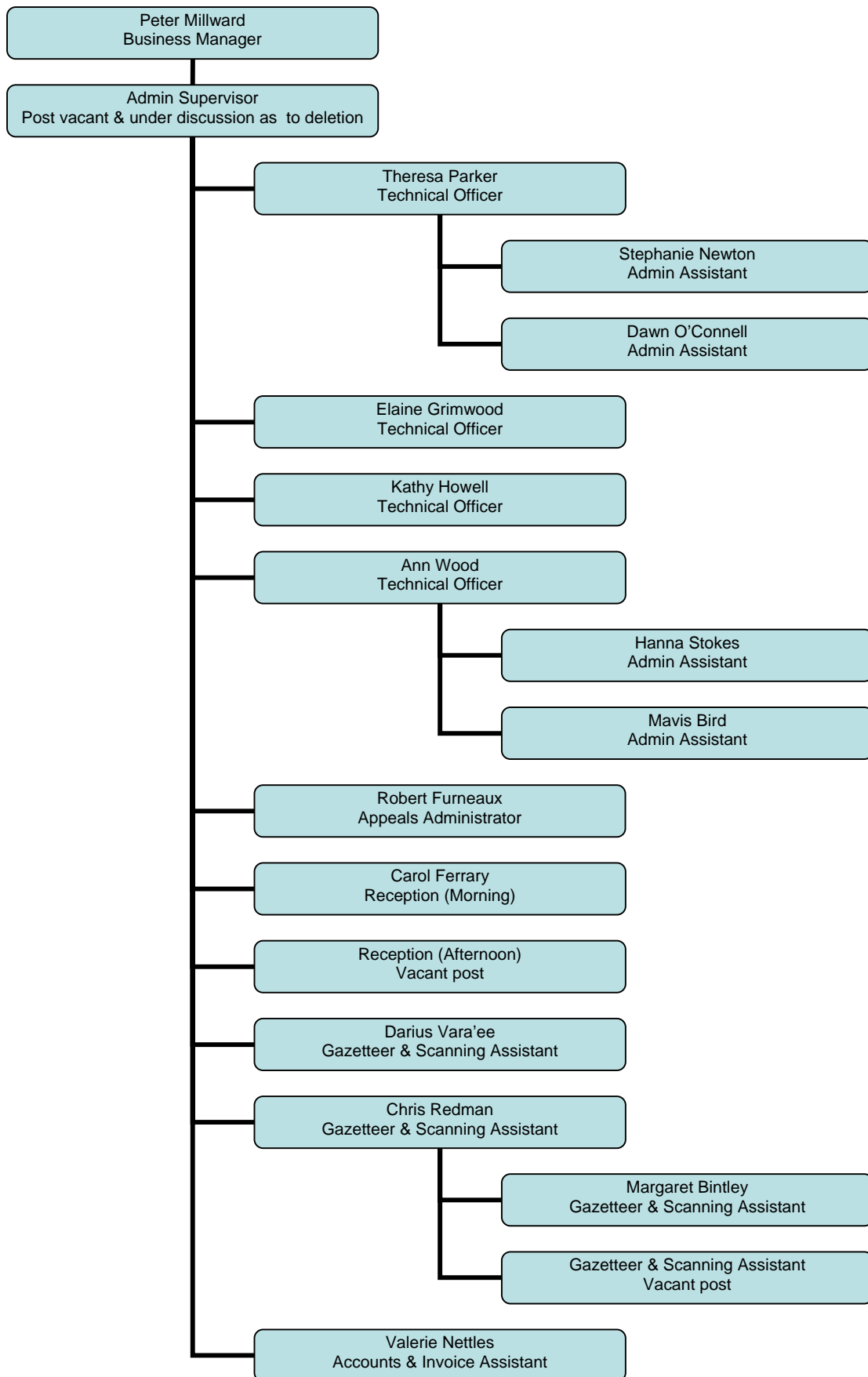




This page is intentionally left blank



This page is intentionally left blank



This page is intentionally left blank

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATED OCT 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS	
					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fully Achieved Partially Achieved Limited Action

<p>1. Review the measures used within Planning and Economic Development to ensure that Staff are maximising the performance of the Directorate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that processes are in place to implement the Corporate Performance Management Framework within Planning and Economic Development to include: • The development of Key Cabinet Objectives for the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio. • To produce a Directorate Business Plan for 2009/2010. • To identify Key Performance Indicators for inclusion in the Council's KPI set for 2009/2010. • To produce Action Plans for Key Performance Indicators. 	Director of Planning and Economic Development	Feb 2009 April 2009 Mid March 2009 April 2009	Within existing resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The action plans were produced to this timetable, or shortly thereafter but as they contain actions for the year ahead this is not yet a fully achieved action.</p>
--	--	---	--	---------------------------	---	--

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATED OCT 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS	
					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Action	
2. Develop and promote a set of service standards for Planning and Economic Development, outlining the minimum levels of service that external and internal customers will receive.	Review previous protocols, (e.g. those re DC and Enforcement)	Directorate Business Manager	End Mar 2009	Within existing resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Postholder left – tasks are for new postholder, who is due to commence in Nov 2009..
	Set new Standards		April 2009		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Report Compliance		Quarterly		<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Check the effectiveness of the channels of communication used to ensure that all staff are aware of service priorities and quality standards.	Include Staff in the Development of Service Business Plan.	Directorate Management Team	Jan-March 09	Within existing resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Undertake Staff Survey to assess effectiveness of current communication channels.		June 2009		<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Raise as part of Staff PDR Process		By end of May 09		<input type="checkbox"/>	

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATED OCT 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS	
					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Action	
4. Improve the mechanisms for regular on-going feedback from users on the quality of service they have received. Ensure officers with the appropriate level of responsibility act upon complaints.	Officer Group within Planning to be established to review Customer Services Issues and recommend areas for improvement.	Directorate Business Manager	End of November 2008	Within existing resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Responses now being received: need to consider reporting framework.
	Refresh Training on Customer Complaint Handling to be undertaken	Director of Planning, Assistant Directors	July 2009		<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Improve ownership of problems and accountability amongst the Senior Management Team within Planning and Economic Development.	Individual Responsibilities to be clearly articulated at appointment. Part of Performance Development Review interviews to be undertaken by Director of Planning.	Director of Planning	At appointment End of May 2009	Within existing resources.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Implement appropriate measures to raise morale and increase staff motivation in achieving service improvements.	Explore the production of a Directorate Newsletter to improve awareness and celebrate success.	Director of Planning	By end Sept 2009	Within existing resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATED OCT 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS	
					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Achieved <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Limited Action	
7. Develop a systematic approach to workforce planning to address recurring recruitment and retention difficulties. Page 46	Update the previous Workforce development plan.	Reconvene previous team.	By end June 2009	Within existing resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Target needs to change because of need to pick up Corporate data which will not be available until July 2009.
	Review recruitment procedures, so that there is an essentially up to date package of information open to all staff that can be used to quickly commence appropriate recruitment campaigns.	Management Assistant	By end Mar 2009		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATED OCT 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS	
					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Action	
8. Improve the standard, content, presentation and consistency of reports to Development Control, Planning Standing Panel and Area Sub Committees. Page 47	Meet regularly with the Chairmen and Chairwomen of these.	Director of Planning and Assistant Directors	1st Meeting February 2009 2 nd meeting 15 October 2009	Within existing resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Requires input from new AD (DC)
	Review the "Standard template" for reports to Committees.		May 2009	Within existing resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Arrange refresher training for all those compiling or agreeing such reports.		End June 2009	Within existing resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATED OCT 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/REQUIRED	PROGRESS	
					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Action	
<p>9. Review the Corporate Planning protocol with respect to dealing with applicants, agents, developers and the local business community to ensure that the highest standards of probity and governance are achieved.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">48</p>	<p>Report to Standing Panel for their consideration, in liaison with Constitutional Affairs Panel.</p>	<p>Director of Planning and Assistant to Chief Executive</p>	<p>February 2009</p>	<p>Within existing resources</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The existing Planning Protocol is already intended to remind staff, and to assure the public that officers, and members, have codes of conduct, professional requirements, financial training and various registers of interests. The protocol is being reviewed/ amended and are being brought to Standing Panel for their consideration.</p> <p>The review went to consultation and was considered by the Standards Committee and the Constitutional & Member Affairs Panel.</p>
<p>10. Implement practical measures to improve the public perception and reputation of the Council's Planning Service, particularly with respect to high profile/controversial applications and enforcement action.</p>	<p>To instigate regular reporting on enforcement performance to Members.</p> <p>To publicise the outcome of enforcement action more widely.</p>	<p>Director of Planning and Economic Development</p>	<p>Quarterly Reporting</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>J Preston/ S Solon</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The direct action in respect of a car wash in Ongar received widespread publicity.</p>

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATED OCT 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS	
					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Action	
11. Take positive action to raise confidence amongst elected Members of the Council with respect to the performance of the service area.	To report planning performance on a regular basis to the Standing Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Performance Management Committee	Director of Planning & Economic Development	Quarterly	Within existing recourse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There needs to be better communication of the successes, such as ICT.
12. Routinely review costs for the different elements of the service, set challenging targets for improved performance and implement effective monitoring arrangements.	To incorporate Value for Money considerations to include Benchmarking and Comparative Data from the Audit Commission within the Service Business Plans	Director of Planning and Principal Accountant	Business Plan completed by 31.3.09	Within existing Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Scrutiny Panel has considered costs; further one off reviews are planned. Challenging targets already exist and the monitoring of these has been audited and found to be acceptable. New Business Manager will need to be significantly involved in these.

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN (UPDATED OCT 2009)

AREA OF IMPROVEMENT	ACTION(S)	LEAD RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET FOR COMPLETION	RESOURCES AVAILABLE/ REQUIRED	PROGRESS	
					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fully Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Partially Achieved <input type="checkbox"/> Limited Action	
13. Ensure that there is a clear focus on the actions contained within the improvement plan by all senior staff within Planning and Economic Development and that priority is given to delivery.	To monitor the Improvement Plan at Directorate Senior Management Team Meetings. Provide updates at the Scrutiny Standing Panel	Director of Planning and Senior staff.	Regular Team Meetings When Standing Panel Meet	Within existing resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	