

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	
1. Review the measures used within Planning and Economic Development to ensure that Staff are maximising the performance of the Directorate.	<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	Within existing resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	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.
			April 2009		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
			Mid March 2009		<input type="checkbox"/>	
			April 2009		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

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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"/>	

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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	Within existing resources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			End of May 2009		<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"/>	

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7. Develop a systematic approach to workforce planning to address recurring recruitment and retention difficulties.	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"/>	

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

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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.	Report to Standing Panel for their consideration, in liaison with Constitutional Affairs Panel.	Director of Planning and Assistant to Chief Executive	February 2009	Within existing resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	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. The review went to consultation and was considered by the Standards Committee and the Constitutional & Member Affairs Panel.
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.	To instigate regular reporting on enforcement performance to Members. To publicise the outcome of enforcement action more widely.	Director of Planning and Economic Development	Quarterly Reporting Ongoing	J Preston/ S Solon	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	The direct action in respect of a car wash in Ongar received widespread publicity.

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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.

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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"/>	