

# Planning Peer Review: Improvement Plan

High Level Action Plan

## Theme 1 - Trust

Recommendations & Actions		Progress			Accountable		Priority		
Ref	Recommendation	Ref	Actions	Planned Due Date	Comment	Forecast Due Date	Service	Owner	
R1	Agree an internal communications strategy to provide significantly improved customer access and councillor communication.	A1.1	Develop a communications and stakeholder engagement strategy and plan.	March 2015	This will form part of the Service Plan and link to the Planning Charter as well as stakeholder engagement arrangements.	March 2015	P&T Corporate Communications	HoS	Essential
R2	Set up a Ward Councillor hotline answered in person with an agreed call back period if matter cannot be resolved at first point of contact	A2.1	Apply existing corporate customer care standards and monitor compliance.	January 2015	<b>Complete.</b> Monitoring ongoing.	January 2015	P&T	SD	Essential
		A2.2	Launch a ward councillor hotline.	TBC	Reviewing resource implications.	TBC	TBC	TBC	
R3	Complete resolution of complaints on Job Evaluation.	A3.1	Answer outstanding queries from officer colleagues.	December 2014	<b>Complete.</b>	December 2014	P&T HR	HoS	Important
R4	Rebuild trust and confidence between officers and councillors and ensure meeting of minds through greater clarity on roles, responsibilities and expectations including training, briefings, joint task and finish groups and improved communication.	A4.1	Establish member Task & Finish steering group to implement the Improvement Plan.	March 2015	Cabinet approval given January 2015.	March 2015	P&T Democratic Services Cabinet	SD	Essential
R5	Unblock the logjam of councillor and customer access and introduce a Planning Charter setting out responsibilities.	A5.1	Identify resources to remove backlog of work.	March 2015	Recruited to 3 vacancies in January 2015. Two have started and one is to start in March 2015. Recruitment to further 5 vacancies (two on fixed term contract) underway. Overtime permitted to work on backlog of cases.	March 2015	P&T	HoS	Essential

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					Reallocated certain management and casework tasks.				
		A5.2	Develop a customer Planning Charter (to incorporate service level agreements with developers for important strategic applications.)	March 2015	Desk-top exercise underway of examples from elsewhere.	March 2015	P&T	HoS	
R6	Introduce Local Engagement Forum to facilitate pre-application information exchange with local communities, officers, councillors and developers.	A6.1	Review the existing stakeholder groups (e.g. Expansion Area) and consider whether a borough wide forum is also needed.	June 2015	Officers undertaking a review of the administration of the expansion area stakeholder groups.	June 2015	P&T	HoS	Important
R7	Introduce Councillor Engagement Forum to facilitate pre-application information exchange with ward councillors and developers.	A7.1	Consider options for a Councillor Engagement Forum.	June 2015	Options being developed.	June 2015	P&T	HoS	Important

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## Theme 2 - Structure

Ref	Recommendations & Actions				Progress updates			Accountable		Priority
	Recommendation	Ref	Actions	Planned Due Date	Comment	Forecast Due Date	Service	Owner		
R8	Re-examine the provision of planning enquiries and support including reducing time taken to validate planning applications. Increase resources and review provision through MKSP as part of this process.	A8.1	Review service delivery options for Planning Enquiries.	April 2015	Discussions held with MKSP.  Discussions also held with Peer (Peterborough City Council) to advise on best practice.	April 2015	P&T MKSP	SD HoS	<b>Essential</b>	
R9	Relax staff structure to provide flexible resources to allow capacity to match priorities and to create headroom including reviewing existing team structures and team priorities.	A9.1	Compile a skills audit of all staff.	April 2015	On track.	April 2015	P&T	HoS	<b>Important</b>	
R10	Tackle the existing pre application log jam with possibilities including limiting service to strategic pre applications until resources match demand and/or reprioritisation of resources.	A9.2	Update workforce development plan (including structures and terms and conditions.)	April 2015	On track.	April 2015	P&T	HoS	<b>Important</b>	
R11	Review use of IT to provide stronger tools for performance management.	N/A	Actions incorporated into R5 above.	N/A	Actions incorporated into R5 above	N/A	N/A	N/A		
R12	Make it easier for people to find what they want on the Planning web site allow more self-service (for example most up to date plans for planning applications and stronger indexing on planning policies and guidance).	A12.1	Review website and implement improvements.	April 2015	Actions incorporated into R18 below.  Website authoring training undertaken in January 2015.  Customer feedback survey now online.	April 2015	P&T	HoS	<b>Important</b>	
R13	Work with HR to ensure resources are available to ensure effective recruitment when necessary.	A13.1	Agree service standards to assist timely recruitment	April 2015	Future recruitment strategy being developed.	April 2015	P&T, MKSP	HoS	<b>Important</b>	

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## Theme 3 – Strategic

Findings & Actions		Progress updates			Accountable		Priority			
Ref	Recommendation	Ref	Actions	Planned Due Date	Comment	Forecast Due Date	Service	Owner		
R14	Capitalise on the recent new appointments and the new post of Corporate Director for Place to improve the leadership and focus of internal joint working to deliver corporate priorities through increasing the 'corporate glue' at CMT and service head levels to deliver on key planning and infrastructure projects.	A14.1 A14.2 A14.3 A14.4	Recruit Corporate Director for Place Hold stakeholder workshops to identify a 20 year vision for Milton Keynes to inform Plan:MK. Hold "Key Sites" meetings to better coordinate delivery of approved sites. Set up and manage a protocol for engagement in planning issues. Actions incorporated into R9 above.	June 2015. March 2015 February 2015 March 2015	Recruitment process underway. Independent facilitator and scope identified. First meeting scheduled. Under preparation.	June 2015 March 2015 February 2015 March 2015	CMT P&T P&T P&T	CE SD SD HoS	Essential	
R15	Review existing staff structure, job descriptions and terms and conditions to prevent bottlenecks to help deliver vision and create flexibility.	N/A	Actions incorporated into R9 above.	N/A	Actions incorporated into R9 above.	N/A	N/A	N/A		
R16	Refocus committee time and energy to focus on strategic and local issues in the right forum incl: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remodel Development Control Committee and Development Panel committees to include new terms of reference and scheme of delegation;</li> <li>suggest renaming as Local Development Committee and Strategic Development Committee (SDC), with SDC to meet as and when required on high-level strategic applications.</li> </ul>	A16.1 A16.2	Review current committee arrangements to enable councillors to focus on strategic issues and local issues in the right forums. Review scheme of delegation to help improve the level of delegation to reflect best practice in similar councils.	May 2015 May 2015	Proposals being developed by officer colleagues. Proposals being developed by officer colleagues.	May 2015 May 2015.	P&T Legal Democr atic Services DCC P&T Legal Democr atic Services DCC	CE CD SD CE CD SD		Essential

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Theme 4 – Development and Performance Management										
Ref	Recommendation	Findings & Actions			Progress updates			Accountable		Priority
		Ref	Actions	Planned Due Date	Comment	Forecast Due Date	Service	Owner		
R17	Introduce a programme of staff development with particular emphasis on engaging with customers and councillors.	A17.1	All officer colleagues to receive customer service training.	June 2014	Draft proposal prepared and under discussion with Learning & Development.	June 2014	P&T L&D	HoS	Essential	
		A17.2	Develop ways of improving political awareness in staff.	September 2014	Political awareness training for selected staff in Jan and Feb.	September 2014	P&T L&D	HoS		
R18	Improve people and performance management in the planning service.	A18.1	Establish new performance management framework based on timely data and individual, team, and service group objectives.	March 2015	Quarterly work programmes for each HoS agreed. Service Plan 2015-16 drafted	March 2015	P&T Corporate Core	SD HoS		Essential
		A18.2	Review existing IT software tools and develop improvements.	September 2015	Initial scoping work underway working with IT.	September 2015	P&T IT	HoS		
R19	Mandatory training for councillors and officers to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>planning technical training;</li> <li>corporate strategy and planning as an enabler;</li> <li>links between planning and finance; and</li> <li>training for parish councillors.</li> </ul>	A19.1	Develop a training plan for 2015-16 for councillors and officer colleagues.	March 2015	Training plan being developed.	March 2015		HoS DCC	Important	
		A19.2	Confirm councillor training programme and dates for 2015-16 civic year in advance to help councillors attend.	March 2015	Democratic Services are identifying training dates for 2015-16 civic year.	March 2015	P&T Democratic Services	HoS		
		A19.3	Make on-going training for councillors on DCC mandatory.	May 2015	This may need to be formalised in a revised Planning Code of Conduct.	May 2015	P&T Democratic Services	HoS		

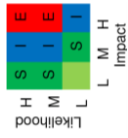
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## Notes

CE	Chief Executive
CD	Corporate Director
CMT	Corporate Management Team
DCC	Development Control Committee
DCP	Development Control Panel
HR	Human Resources
HoS	Head of Service
IT	Information Technology
L&D	Learning & Development
P&T	Planning & Transport
SD	Service Director

The actions are categorised on the following basis (consistent with Internal Audit):



- Essential** - Implementation is required to address a risk that **fundamentally undermines** the control or objective of that system.
- Important** - Implementation is required to address a risk that **seriously undermines** the control or objective of that system.
- Standard** - Implementation is required to address a risk that **undermines** the control or objective of that system.