

Review recommendations – template for responses

This high-level action plan will be supported by detailed action plans for each stream.

Each action is supported by a response from the project team with a projected timeframe split into:

- Short term (within six months)
- Medium term (within 12 to 18 months)
- Long term (within three years)

Stream: Corporate ambition				
Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	RAG
AP1	Establish objectives / standards for the development management service – to be agreed corporately and by members, which will form the basis for the performance management framework.	Short	Overall objectives/ standards for the service need to be agreed at corporate level with leadership team and members. Must be realistic and reviewed on a regular basis. Links to AP8.	
AP2	Develop a plan for engagement with all staff and other stakeholders as necessary	Short	A communications and engagement plan has been drafted to support this project.	
AP3	Work with staff and stakeholders to develop a coherent and compelling vision for the development management service.	Short	This has been completed and is currently out for consultation with the DM teams.	

AP4	Review the shortcomings of the existing GIS system as a matter of urgency and seek to resolve inconsistencies and omissions.	Short	<p>No current internal skillset and our set up is not fit for purpose.</p> <p>This needs to consider if Enterprise/Uniform offer the best solution.</p> <p>Opportunity to explore a corporate GIS system/resource. This will be a corporate project.</p>	
AP5	Work with staff and stakeholders to identify and improve the customer experience across the planning process including system changes and customer care training.	Medium	<p>While work has already started on this and the number of calls being resolved at the first point of contact (customer services has increased), a detailed project plan will be drawn up to focus on improving customer care.</p> <p>This is a medium-term project due to the requirement for other more fundamental changes needed to ensure customer care is treated as a priority.</p>	

Stream: Performance management

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	RAG
AP6	Take immediate steps to review the longstanding applications and remove those that are no longer 'active'.	Short	<p>Work to remove outstanding pre-applications has already started.</p> <p>Process to continue with planning applications.</p>	
AP7	In the short-term, implement specific and managed actions to reduce the backlog of applications, which may include overtime working and/or using consultants.	Short	<p>Team leaders to initiate more regular 121s with officers to address backlog.</p> <p>Develop better use of Access reports and Enterprise Tasks to improve performance management.</p> <p>Currently in the process of trying to secure a contractor for three months to cover the backlog within existing budget. Explore potential for this to be extended.</p> <p>Explore the use of overtime to assist with backlog clearance.</p> <p>Identify the wider issues at the heart of the backlog.</p>	

Stream: Performance management

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	RAG
AP8	<p>Set performance management criteria to align the MHCLG national criteria for designating underperforming authorities. To also include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing local targets for planning applications and enforcement, which are ambitious but realistic, with the intention to reach the upper quartile within three years 	Short	Explore other authorities and their performance management criteria – particularly the best performing ones.	
AP9	Establish monthly reporting on planning application and enforcement performance to the service management team and quarterly reporting to the corporate management team.	Short	Meetings will be set up and relevant performance data shared and analysed.	
AP10	Ensure that performance monitoring reports are cascaded to all staff.	Short	<p>Weekly performance management reports to be cascaded to DM officers.</p> <p>Overall performance against MHCLG and local KPIs to be included on agenda of monthly DM Team Meeting - cascade to all DM staff.</p> <p>Make this information more readily available via Enterprise/Access reports.</p>	

Stream: Performance management

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	RAG
AP11	Report on enforcement activity annually to the Planning Committee	Medium	Reporting process will be introduced.	
AP12	Institute enforcement management reports for the enforcement team on at least a quarterly basis.	Medium	Work has started on producing enforcement management reports.	
AP13	Set up a procurement framework to draw upon planning consultants for PPAs, planning appeals and significant major applications.	Medium/long	Initial advice has been received from procurement and One Legal. The brief will need to be carefully constructed so that suppliers are clear about requirements.	
AP14	Review the timescales advertised for pre-application engagement by officers to ensure they are realistic. Team leaders to work proactively with case officers to ensure a consistent approach is taken throughout the process.	Short	Timescales are currently being reviewed. Links to AP7.	
AP15	Introduce monthly performance meetings of relevant officers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Monitor progress on major applications. b) Monitor performance against established targets. 	Short	Currently, meetings on performance are happening on a fortnightly basis and these will move to monthly when appropriate. Policy officer will be invited as required.	

Stream: Performance management

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	RAG
	<p>A policy officer should attend the major applications meeting on a regular basis.</p> <p>A case officer should be nominated as liaison with the garden town team.</p>			
AP16	Stop the senior meetings in their current form.	Short	Review the effectiveness of senior meetings and possible alternative support through senior officers.	
AP17	Review the DM team structure to establish clarity and transparency of lines of responsibility and equalisation of workload.	Medium	A full review of the team structure will be required to ensure it is fit for purpose.	
AP18	Make all teams aware, on a weekly basis, of performance targets and how delays at the beginning of the process can exacerbate performance issues.	Medium	This will be reviewed alongside AP10. This may be combined into the same action once reviewed.	

Stream: People and Culture

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	
AP19	Redefine the roles of development manager and area team leader to emphasise the responsibility for performance management with agreed targets, managing down their caseloads.	Short	Current roles to be reviewed.	
AP20	Clarify the role of team leaders and senior planners as providers of advice on individual applications to case officers.	Short	This piece of work will incorporate the proposal to delegate sign-off on delegated applications to team leaders and senior planners, and to case officers for discharge of conditions. Senior officers and planning officers will be empowered to sign off planning conditions.	
AP21	*Review responsibilities and skills expected at different levels of development management, including within support staff, to create clarity in relation to tasks but also to create clear career development pathways.	Medium/long	Will be drafted in consultation with the DM management team.	
AP22	Explore fully the options for appointing a Senior Enforcement Officer.	Short	Completed. We are now recruiting for an enforcement officer.	✓

Stream: People and Culture

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	
AP23	Clarify interim management arrangements pending appointment of Senior Enforcement Office	Short	The senior enforcement officer post has been recruited to.	✓
AP24	<p>Training opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the enforcement team, which would assist them to deal with presenting evidence at what can sometimes be high profile and/or criminal cases. • Identify training and skills gaps and propose solutions, including considering mentoring, action learning sets, buddying as well as formal training. • To enable support services team members to check PD rights for application sites via the Uniform system before duty officer appointments are made. • Review levels of understanding and usage of Uniform throughout the development management team and provide detailed training where required, particularly for new starters. 	Medium	<p>High priority and will link with the AP39 procedure guide work.</p> <p>Explore use of 15-minute briefing sessions and videos for training</p> <p>Will link to People and Culture training and development plans.</p>	

Stream: People and Culture

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response
AP25	Introduce a standard procedure for the use of Extensions of Time	Short	Depending on the agreed procedure, this could be implemented in the short term.

Stream: Business transformation and processes

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response
AP26	Find an effective way to involve elected members in pre-application work for large-scale major applications with clear protocols in place and extensive training provided for all those likely to be involved.	Medium/long	<p>Workshop required with members to explore options.</p> <p>Link with planning advisory service guidance on pre-applications.</p> <p>Training to be provided to prepare elected members for their future involvement in pre-application discussions.</p>
AP27	Introduce a clear and consistent policy for redaction – having regard to the recently published national guidance on redaction from the PAS.	Short	Draft policy on redaction for planning and updated privacy notice reflecting PAS guidance have been completed and signed off by data protection officer.

Stream: Business transformation and processes

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	
			Training for support staff completed, DM case officers to be trained prior to implementation by end of November 2021.	
AP28	Automatically review and scan in the most important documents, whenever a file is retrieved from the offsite storage facility.	Short	This has started and a procedure note has been prepared and circulated.	✓
AP29	Expedite back scanning of all hard copy files as soon as practicable.	Medium/long	High priority will need additional resource. This is a corporate project on hold currently due to potential link with land charge migration project. This will require the existing Project Initiation Form and project plan to be updated.	
AP30	Introduce a new local validation checklist, and provide training to the DM team, to reinforce a consistent departmental approach to validation requirements.	Medium	Priority and timescale will depend on the review of validation, which will be carried out by the performance management stream.	

Stream: Business transformation and processes

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	
AP31	Agree the standard set of conditions as an urgent priority and upload to Uniform.	Short	Completed Web-based alongside procedures: next step.	✓
AP32	Pursue the issue of separate local planning authority and county S106 agreements with the other Gloucestershire authorities.	Medium/long	Countywide issue - technical planning and legal input will be required.	
AP33	Consider the measures that need to be put in place to set up a S106 monitoring system.	Short	S106 monitoring officer recently appointed – set to look at policies and procedures.	
AP34	The temp post of S106 monitoring officer should be part of the DM team and explore funding for a permanent post to be added to the existing establishment.	Short	Temporary post recruited to policy team – set to consider moving to DM team.	

Stream: Business transformation and processes

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	
AP35	<p>Review current systems in place for the issuing of planning decision notices to avoid last-minute decisions and ensure there is adequate officer cover to issue the decision notices during opening hours.</p> <p>This review will ensure our systems are working in a more effective and efficient way.</p>	Short	<p>Cover is now in place to issue decision notices.</p> <p>Signing off officers need to be informed as early as possible when an urgent decision is required.</p>	
AP36 A	Explore the full capability of the Uniform/Enterprise Enforcement module	Short	<p>High priority.</p> <p>Significant work has been completed in relation to the use of uniform for enforcement.</p> <p>Planning enforcement tasks have been completed and are now being used.</p>	
AP36 B	Ensure staff at all levels are involved in defining tasks and setting standard deadlines on the Enterprise system.	Medium	<p>Planning case officers have been involved in defining planning application Enterprise tasks. Work is underway to prepare those tasks. More complex tasks will be prepared after required Idox training in January 2022.</p> <p>Look at best practice for use of Enterprise.</p>	

Stream: Business transformation and processes

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	
AP37	Introduce a clearer 'triage' process for customer queries, where customer services and support services are trained in establishing clearly the nature of the enquiry, and who, where, and when, the answer can be found and how best to access it.	Medium	<p>Work has already started on this.</p> <p>FAQs have been introduced to the planning, landscape, and planning enforcement website pages to improve customer opportunities to self-serve.</p> <p>Training has been provided for customer services and support services - further training will be organised.</p> <p>This links to AP5.</p>	
AP38	Prepare a web-based procedure manual for all internal development management procedures.	Medium	<p>This is a high priority action.</p> <p>Work has commenced. Intranet platform established.</p>	
AP39	*Introduce a call monitoring portal	Long	This option can be picked up as part of the corporate phone system review, set to take place in 2022/23.	

Stream: Business transformation and processes

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	
AP40	*Breach of planning – digital end-to-end process	Medium	A digital form could reduce the number of complaints that are not related to planning enforcement, as well as automatic communications to the customer. APIs to Uniform could enable auto-population to the back-office system.	
AP41	*Develop the planning area of the website as part of the corporate website review to improve customer opportunities to self-serve.	Medium	Some work already completed, see AP38.	
AP42	*Planning application tracker – enable customers to track progress on applications.	Long	Supporting improvements for the customer experience, this could include the option to sign up for ‘push’ notifications for specific events.	

Stream: Planning committee

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	
AP43	Consider reducing the size of the committee to 11 -13 in line with national best practice advice.	Medium	If required, this may need to be done in combination with AP45.	
AP44	Review the Scheme of Delegation to reduce the number of minor applications which go to committee.	Short - Medium	This is a high priority action to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the committee.	
AP45	Advise committee members that they should clarify issues on applications with officers prior to meetings, wherever possible.	Short	A clear message will be circulated to all members to clarify any issues prior to planning committee where possible.	
AP46	Examine options for reducing the length of committee reports.	Short	Training to be organised.	
AP47	*Explore what paperwork goes to planning committee.	Medium	A review of current practice will be undertaken, including consultation with planning committee members.	
AP48	Consider introducing a procedure where members are considering granting an application against officer advice (overturns), to ensure	Medium	This will be explored.	

Stream: Planning committee

Reference	Improvement action	Timeframe	Our response	
	appropriate conditions are fully explored prior to determination.			
AP49	Arrange for regular training for the committee, together with specialist sessions/discussions on specific issues.	Short/ medium	Need to identify a programme of training/specialist sessions - updated every 12 months. In consultation with lead member/chair/vice-chair.	