



Subject:	Development Management Operating Principles
Date:	16 th May 2017
Reporting Officer:	Phil Williams, Director of Planning and Place
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Is this report restricted?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of report or summary of main issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update the Planning Committee on on-going improvements to the Development Management (planning applications) part of the Planning Service. Appended to this report are a series of Operating Principles that have been informed by feedback from the development industry at stakeholder workshops in 2016, feedback from staff and best practice from around the UK. The Planning Service will be working to these Operating Principles to support an enhanced service to customers.
1.2	The Operating Principles will inform the development of Customer Guidance which will set out to customers how the Development Management service operates.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	That the Committee notes the 10 Operating Principles and “Purpose” of the Development Management (planning applications) service at Appendix 2 . These will underpin Customer Guidance on how the Planning Service operates.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<u>Background</u> Members will recall that an Improvement Plan has been prepared for the Development Management (planning applications) part of the Planning Service. An updated copy of the

<p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p>	<p>Improvement Plan is provided at Appendix 1. The purpose of the Improvement Plan is to identify areas of the service that need enhancing to improve the customer experience.</p> <p>Two key actions in the Improvement Plan are to review internal processes in line with best practice and to finalise and publish service standards. The Council does not currently publish how it deals with planning applications and what customers can expect. This needs to be rectified and Customer Guidance is required to set out service standards and how the planning process operates.</p> <p>A series of engagement events were held with the development industry in Spring 2016. Alongside feedback from staff and good practice from the UK, this has informed the creation of 10 “Operating Principles”, which underpin a good planning service. These can be found at Appendix 2.</p> <p>The Operating Principles represent good practice in how a Development Management service should be provided. The Operating Principles will inform the development of Customer Guidance that clearly sets out to customers how the planning service operates, what the service standards are and what they can expect from the service.</p>
<p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p>	<p><u>Key issues</u></p> <p>The Improvement Plan is aimed in part at improving application performance. Unofficial figures for 2016/17 show an average processing time of 62.1 weeks for Major applications (target of 30 weeks) and 15.4 weeks for Local applications (target of 15 weeks). Members should note that these performance returns include Legacy applications and permissions subject to a Section 76 planning agreement. These have the effect of increasing average processing times without the ability to agree an extension of the determination period, unlike in England and Wales. Moreover, it should be noted that recent performance has been strong. During 2016/17 Q4, the average processing time for Major applications was 29.8 weeks (within target). Excluding those applications that required a Section 76 planning agreement, the average processing time was 22 weeks.</p> <p>The statutory targets are set by the Department for Infrastructure (DFI). A new performance framework is expected from the Department which will create a more level playing field with UK local planning authorities and will further assist the achievement of targets. The Department is due to consult councils on the new performance framework and the consultation will be reported to the Committee in the coming months.</p>

3.7	<p>The Operating Principles will support the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A customer focused and business approach to delivery of the service; • Timely and quality decisions by frontloading the application process; • Good communication with customers; • Reducing the amount of conflict between what the customer wants and the type of service that is provided; • Focused decision-making
3.8	<p>The Committee is asked to note the Operating Principles, as well as the suggested “Purpose” of the Development Management service, at Appendix 2. The Operating Principles will then underpin Customer Guidance on how the Planning Service operates and what customers can expect from the service.</p>
3.9	<p>It is essential that the Planning Service is appropriately structured, and has sufficient resource at the right level, if the Operating Principles are to be effectively implemented. This is under review. Further improvements need to be made including lean-management of detailed processes and introduction of fit for purpose replacement back-office computer software, including the ability for customers to submit planning applications online. Evolution of the Planning Service is a continuous process and further actions will be implemented as part of the on-going improvement programme. Members will receive further updates on the implementation of the Improvement Plan at key milestones.</p>
3.10	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Implementation of the Operating Principles will ensure that the Planning Service is efficient in its handling of planning applications, creating capacity to provide a better planning service.</p>
3.11	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None identified.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
4.1	<p>Appendix 1 – Development Management Improvement Plan</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Recommended Operating Principles</p>