

## Audit Commission – Planning Services Review

### Action Plan

<b>Recommendation R1</b>	Maximise opportunities to engage and learn from existing/new stakeholders.			
<b>Cabinet's Response</b>	Accepted. The recommendation reflects ongoing and planned work, especially on the LDF and the Civica project.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Remodelling of Agent's Forum	DC Manager	Sept 09	Greater understanding. Engagement by agents	
Securing feedback from public attendees at Committee	DC Manager	Oct 09	Greater customer focus to meetings	
Revised arrangements for working with the business community	HOP&T/DC Manager	Oct 09	Swifter processing of applications and tailored pre-application advice	
Workshops with community groups, town and parish councils on delivering an electronic planning information system	HOP&T/DC Manager	Nov 09	Understandable and simple-to-use system	

**APPENDIX 1**

<b>Recommendation R2</b>	Exploit potential for learning from appeals and other challenges in a training and development setting				
<b>Cabinet's Response</b>	Accepted				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Training for all Development Control officers on lessons learnt from appeals/challenges	HOP&T/DC Manager	Sept 09	Understanding of areas where Inspectorate does not support Council decisions		
Training event for all Members on lessons learnt from appeals/challenges	HOP&T/DC Manager	Oct 09	Understanding of Inspectorate decision		
Preparation of detailed notes for affected ward members on cases referred to in the Audit Commission report	DC Manager	Nov 09	Understanding of Inspectorate decision		
Preparation of new protocol for reporting appeal decisions to committee(s)	HOP&T/DC Manager	Dependant on revised committee structures	Informed debate on appeal decisions		
Preparation of and delivery of training event(s) for town/parish councils on the wider system and any changes made	HOP&T/DC Manager	Sept/Oct 09	Wider understanding of the system		

**APPENDIX 1**

<b>Recommendation R3</b>	Develop a full understanding of the impact of external challenges on capacity and reputation				
<b>Cabinet Response</b>	Accepted.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Preparation of detailed protocol with Communications Team	HOP&T	Oct 09	Preparation of appropriate and timely releases of information to the press and public		
<b>Recommendation R4</b>	Review the planning delegation scheme.				
<b>Cabinet Response</b>	Accepted. A new system should reflect good practice and be in an accessible format.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Preparation of revised scheme of delegation on planning matters.	HOP&T/DC Manager	Relates to revised Committee Structures (R5) Oct 09	Clear and transparent system		
Circulation of revised scheme of delegation to all members and clerks of town/parish councils	DC Manager	Relates to revised Committee Structures (R5) Oct 09	Clear and transparent system		

APPENDIX 1

<b>Recommendation R5</b>	Review and amend the planning decision-making process				
<b>Cabinet Response</b>	Accepted.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Detailed meetings with all political groups.	Cabinet Member (E&SH)	July 09	Full debate on the issue	Conservative Group Liberal Democrat Group Independent Group	
Discussion of options with Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member (E&SH)	June 09	Feedback on Group discussions		
Preparation of Report on Options to Full Council	Cabinet Member (E&SH)/ HOP&T	Oct 09	Agreement of revised structures	Referral of options to Constitutional Review working party	
<b>Recommendation R6</b>	Clarify procedures for conduct of planning committee(s)				
<b>Cabinet's Response</b>	Accepted.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Preparation of protocol for officer presentations to Committee	HOP&T	Sept 09	Consistent and clear reporting		
Preparation of protocol for Members role at Committee	HOP&T	Sept 09	Agreed levels of input and comments		
Preparation of revised guidance notes for members of the public attending/speaking at the Committee	HOP&T	Sept 09	Better understanding by the public of Committee proceedings		

**APPENDIX 1**

<b>Recommendation R7</b>	Improved documentation on call-ins, site visits, and amendments/overtuns to proposals				
<b>Cabinet's Response</b>	Accepted				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Preparation of revised protocols and procedures on these matters	DC Manager	Sept 09	Greater clarity and consistency		
Incorporation of these matters into Member training event (see R1)	HOP&T	Oct 09	Member training on revised arrangements		

<b>Recommendation R8</b>	Reinforce the importance of preparedness, impartiality, open-mindedness and policy planning for members.				
<b>Cabinet's Response</b>	Accepted. There are clear links to R4 and R5.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Organisation of training event for Members with an ongoing development control function. (Delivered by external facilitators)	HOP&T	Oct 09	Operation of new committee(s) to national best practice		

**APPENDIX 1**

<b>Recommendation R9</b>	Ensure greater separation between role of local ward Member and the planning decision maker				
<b>Cabinet's Response</b>	Accepted. This overlaps with the action plan on R5.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Organisation of training event for Members without a seat on a development control committee in the new structure.	HOP&T	Sept 09	Understanding of revised roles and flexibilities		
<b>Recommendation R10</b>	Continue to build commitment to and ownership of the UDP and the emerging county-wide planning policy framework.				
<b>Cabinet's Response</b>	Accepted. This reflects ongoing work				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Preparation of detailed timetable for Member engagement in the LDF.	Forward Planning Manager	Sept 09	Member engagement in LDF process		
Preparation of detailed engagement for key stakeholder groups.	Forward Planning Manager	Sept 09	To secure stakeholder engagement in this important document		
<b>Recommendation R11</b>	Reinforce the need for all Councillors to make a balanced and consistent contribution to debates on planning applications at Committee				
<b>Cabinet's Response</b>	Accepted.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
See responses to R7 and R 8					

**APPENDIX 1**

<b>Recommendation R12</b>	Make induction and regular specific training mandatory for all Councillors involved in the planning decision making process.				
<b>Cabinet's Response</b>	Accepted.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Amend constitution to make induction and on-going training mandatory for all members with a development control function.	HOP&T/ Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic)	Sept 09	To ensure full and appropriate training		
<b>Recommendation R13</b>	Set out planning competencies and future training and development opportunities for all councillors involved in the planning decision-making process.				
<b>Cabinet's Response</b>	Accepted.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Establish members planning and skills framework	HOP&T	May 2010	Member competencies to be assessed against national benchmarks		
Preparation of annual training and development package for members with a development control function	HOP&T	Nov 09 (for 2010)	Training geared to ongoing development needs		

**APPENDIX 1**

<b>Recommendation R14</b>	Continue to explore good practice, and share experiences with other planning authorities				
<b>Cabinet's Response</b>	Accepted. This builds on existing practices.				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>	
Benchmarking processes with similar councils	DC Manager	Ongoing	Exposure to national/developing best practice		
Visits to other authorities with similar committee models to those adopted in the County pursuant to R5.	DC Manager	Oct 09 onwards	Learning issues around system operation		