

Appendix 1: Service Review Recommendations (for reference)

Context

A meeting was held with the Councils' CEO on 13th July 2023, to discuss and agree the recommendations set out in the Development Management Service Review report dated June 2023. Amongst other matters, it was recognised that full implementation will take circa 12 months and that prioritisation of the various actions would need to be agreed by the Planning Improvement Board.

The table below proposes a prioritisation programme that will be delivered in accordance with the following phases and timescales:

- Phase 1 – September to December 2023
- Phase 2 – January to March 2024
- Phase 3 – April, May 2024
- Phase 4 – June, July 2024

	Recommendation	Phase	Rationale
R1	The link between the key priorities set out in the councils' corporate strategies and service plans needs to be strengthened. Planning has a crucial role to play in the delivery of a number of those corporate priorities and needs to ensure that it is best placed to deliver. Staff at all levels should be fully engaged in this process, in order to best inform the outcomes and engender buy-in. This should be supported by a more robust approach to appraisals and individual training and development plans.	1	Understanding what the Service's key priorities are in essential to assessing and agreeing resource requirements
R2	Communication and reporting arrangements need to be strengthened in order to ensure a more effective two-way dialogue which supports the delivery of council priorities. This need relates primarily to the management of major development schemes which require wider corporate involvement and to more general approaches to service delivery.	2	This will in part be informed by the completion of R1
R3	There is a need to ensure that financial resources are more effectively utilised. Alongside the identification of key priorities, this should be the starting point for considering new team structures and	1	Need to be carried out in parallel with R1

	joint working arrangements that will provide greater resilience and the necessary range of skills and experience to deliver. In addition, the new service structures should build in the capacity to deliver the recommendations contained in this report (in the short term) and on-going enhancements to service design and delivery.		
R4	There is evidence to illustrate a lack of clarity over the roles and responsibilities of officers and members and the requirements of the councils' constitutions. A desk-top review should be undertaken of the relevant parts of each council's constitutions and related codes of conduct. Aligned to this, on-going training should be provided so that this current lack of clarity can be addressed.	4	The timing will be partly informed by wider reviews of the Council's constitution
R5	A comprehensive review of systems and processes should be carried out (including IT platforms), with a view to improving efficiencies, building capacity and making the services more resilient. Alongside R3, this will help to inform new team structures and the opportunities for effective joint working arrangements.	1	Again, linked to parallel work on R1 (and R3)
R6	There is a need for a communication strategy to promote the work of the services and the outcomes that are delivered. This should be linked to the service planning process and an improvement planning cycle that should continually drive the enhancement of service design and delivery.	4	This can follow when priorities have been agreed and new arrangements have been embedded
R7	An end-to end review of existing s106 procedures is required which should contain a focus on stakeholder engagement, monitoring arrangements and the delivery of outcomes.	2	Important work, which needs to follow the immediate Phase 1 actions
R8	A OneTeam culture needs to be clearly defined and embedded, in order to positively support the delivery of outcomes, the successful implementation of the recommendations contained in this report and a positive on-going approach	4	Need On-going, but needs to be embedded by Phase 4

	to improving service delivery. This should be linked to the councils' emerging work on values and behaviours.		
R9	A strategic approach to addressing current recruitment and retention challenges needs to be developed. This should include revisiting the use of apprenticeships, career grading, remuneration and robust training and development programmes (linked to personal development plans). It should also consider linking with bodies such as EELGA and ASELA in order to explore wider solutions to addressing these challenges.	3	Will require wider preparatory work, but should be targeted for implementation in Phase 3
R10	Building on the emerging work on values and behaviours, a Planning Customer Charter should be put into place, in liaison with key stakeholders, with a view to enhancing the customer experience and providing mechanisms for service users to help inform on-going improvements to service delivery.	3	The timing will be partly informed by wider corporate work on values and behaviours
R11	Linked to the management of finances and the delivery of high-quality outcomes, the approach to dealing with pre-application and planning performance agreements needs to be re-visited. Central to this is the need to ensure that charging schedules are appropriately set and delivery specifications are designed so as to attract the use of these services to ensure that they are deliverable.	2	Need to follow the phase 1 work on financial management
R12	There is a need to enhance engagement with planning agents and major developers. This needs to be centred on creating mechanisms which allow the co-design of on-going improvements to service delivery.	4	Linked to R6
R13	Effective communication channels should be established with Parish Councils, with a focus on developing closer working relationships and informing any on-going requirements for enhancing the way in which services are designed and delivered.	1	Parishes need to help inform a number of elements of the wider phase 1 work

R14	Appropriate channels and mechanisms need to be put into place to ensure that the needs and expectations of members are captured and acted upon as appropriate. This should be coupled with the introduction of robust approaches to the provision of feedback on ward matters, complaints and performance.	1	Members need to help inform a number of elements of the wider phase 1 work
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