

The future establishment of Development Control

Item for Decision:	To identify the need to continue to provide a quality planning service.
Contributors:	Chief Executive
Contact Officer:	Michael Hirsh, Head of Planning & Building Control
Financial Implications:	£95,000 long term increase in the Manpower budget
Council Priorities:	ENV1
Recommendations:	It is RECOMMENDED that:- (a) to provide sufficient resources in development control to improve performance and sustain it, the principle be agreed that the staffing levels need to increase by a maximum of three (b) the above be shown as a priority and considered as part of the 2007/08 budgetary process (c) in the short term the planning delivery grant be used to minimise the impact of the increased cost; and (d) the Chief Executive to report further as part of the Manpower Budget for 2007/08

1. Applicable Lead Member Area(s)

1.1 Environment; Performance; Resources

2. Crime and Disorder – Section 17 Implications

2.1 There are no Crime and Disorder implications association with this report.

3. Introduction

3.1 An initiative in the business plan for the Development Control Service this year is to review and agree the resources, and in particular the staffing levels, of the service required to carry out development control functions. The need to review comes from two sources.

3.2 The Council was 'named' as a Planning Standards Authority for failing to maintain the processing of major and minor applications above the minimum targets set nationally. (It also meant no PDG was awarded for development control in 2006/07 based on the performance in the year ending June 2005). The circumstances are set out fully in a letter of the 9th December 2005 from the Government Office for the South West (see Appendix1). It is incumbent upon the Council to prepare a viable strategy to improve performance and then sustain it. This matter has also been referred to in the District Auditor's annual letter where it advised: "The Council has had difficulties with development control. 2004/05 PIs show that its performance against the quality of service checklist for planning was below average at 77 per cent compared with the average of 83 per cent, while speed of determination was below average, variable and slipping, and failed to

meet government targets. Factors contributing to this may have been difficulties in securing Planning Delivery Grant monies and staff sickness.”

- 3.3 Secondly, there is an outstanding minute from the Final Review and Action Plan of the Fundamental Review of the Planning Service 23rd January 2003. It was agreed that such a review should be undertaken once new computer software had been installed and the effects of that had been understood; also once the new arrangements for financial funding support for the planning service nationally had been explained by Government. The Government’s funding plans turned into Planning Delivery Grant (PDG). For each of the last three years grant has been available incentivised for performance, but with the matrix of targets varying year on year. The Government has, however, consistently paid significant grant for application determination performance and this theme, according to a current consultation, is now set to continue for the allocation to be made later this year based on the period ending 30 June 2006 and for at least one further year.

4. The key targets

- 4.1 The targets for processing planning applications which the Council has to meet are more than:
- 60% of major planning applications in 13 weeks
 - 65% of minor planning applications in 8 weeks
 - 80% of other applications in 8 weeks.
- 4.2 The above have specific definitions linked back to categories on the statistical quarterly return made to Government. ‘Major’, for example includes all residential schemes of ten or more dwelling units; whilst ‘other’ includes all householder developments and is by far the largest number of applications by type locally and nationally.
- 4.3 A table showing Council performance by quarters from 1997 to June 2006 is set out at Appendix 2.

5. What happened in 2004/05

- 5.1 In 2003/04, with a settled workforce, the Council improved its overall performance and was awarded PDG. The award for improvement in speed of process and hitting two of the three national targets was £296190 (additional grant was also awarded for an up to date local plan etc.)
- 5.2 There were a number of factors, other than workload, which contributed to the decline in performance in 2004/05. In summary, there was difficulty with staff retention and recruitment; and long term absence due to illness. The senior management in the service had to be re-structured and took time to settle in to a revised work pattern. Delegation arrangements from the planning committee were insufficient and some non-controversial decisions inevitably took too long. Lastly, the Council, having been awarded substantial PDG, had it effectively frozen by the ODPM questioning the data upon which the application performance had been assessed. This led to a major audit exercise and the ODPM did not agree payment until it was too late to resource temporary staff cover.
- 5.3 In addition, workload for the PDG year ending 30 June 2005 was high, with 1638 applications being received (compared with 1302 for the financial year 2000/01 and 1482 for the financial year 2001/02 being the most recent statistics presented to the Fundamental Best Value Review Team) and with other related work areas hitting similar highs.

6. Interim measures and changes in Working Practices

6.1 Without waiting for final solutions the situation has been turned around in the PDG year ending 30 June 2006 so that planning application targets have been hit. The business case being that it made sense to pump prime to win more PDG.

6.2 The essential elements of assistance have been:

- Officers have met Liz Pritchard from the Government Office and have also attended workshops run by the Planning Advisory Service, which has been set up to assist failing authorities. At a meeting on the 17th November 2005 officers had the opportunity to discuss the Council's performance with Lynda Addison of Addison Associates. (It is this firm that has carried out considerable research, on behalf of Government into the problems of failing authorities and has produced a series of nationally published annual reviews of Standards Authorities and evaluations of the effectiveness of Planning Delivery Grant.)
- Increasing the planning officer staff by 0.6 person FTE.
- The employment of a highly experienced planner from an agency (who will not be with the Authority after the end of October 2006).
- Commencing the training of the senior enforcement officer and his assistant to attain planning qualifications to facilitate more decisions and higher level work being done by these staff, rather than it bouncing back on to planning officers for decisions to be made.
- Increased use of a sole practitioner consultant on planning appeals (who dealt with 12 last year, but who retired at the beginning of September 2006.)
- The further revision of delegation arrangements to decrease the number of applications going to Committee and working closely with parish clerks to also try to minimise applications being determined at Committee.
- Staff payments for additional hours and overtime to keep work up to date, where backlogs were threatening to appear.
- The re-appointment of two administrative staff posts using PDG, one in the application processing team and one in support of the two planning technicians.
- Training for the Council's Business Analyst on the CAPS planning software so she can help facilitate upgrades and assist the office generally in improving business performance. Improving work manuals in this respect too has been continuing.
- Training the new intake of planning application administrators, including CAPS training.
- Monitoring the progress and workflow of all major applications.
- Improving officer case handling meetings to ensure both planning officer teams meet regularly to discuss proposals and come to early conclusions on any negotiating stance to try to ensure targets are met.
- Embedding the performance targets deeply into all involved in the process, and reporting performance weekly to all staff, the Lead Member and the Chief Executive.

7. The existing establishment

- 7.1 The establishment set out as a business organisational chart is at Appendix 3.
- 7.2 The administration that deal with initial inquiries at the counter and process applications is supplemented by one temporary full time member of staff and a part-time filing clerk (8 hours a week) using PDG money. Its workforce will be kept under review as working practices change. It is handling more activity generally than in 2001 (the statistical base used for the Best Value Review) both in application processing and at the counter, and there are other increased pressures most notably from planning appeal work. In the financial year 2000/01 there were 26 enforcement appeals, and 25 planning appeals. In 2005/06 there were 39 enforcement appeals and 121 planning appeals. This dramatic increase has completely altered the job of the senior administrative officer who has the primary responsibility for processing this work (it has also radically altered the amount of officer time on appeals generally, even though 10% of these were handled by an outside consultant last year). This is part of a national trend and, for example, has led to publicised problems in the Planning Inspectorate's establishment.
- 7.3 The secretarial support has been radically reduced from 3 FTE's to 1.5 FTE's since the introduction of the CAPS system. This has been achieved by natural wastage. This team also provide support for Building Control and carries out some routine work for the Local Plans Team.
- 7.4 Following the re-organisation of the service with the departure of the District Planning Officer there are two planning officer teams, each under a 'team leader', with the professional work under the day to day control of the Development Control Manager. The Head of Planning and Building Control has overall service responsibility. The Council is fortunate in having long serving, qualified staff in the majority of posts. This is not the norm in many planning departments. Indeed, a recent Audit Commission survey has identified that planning officers are the scarcest skilled workforce in local government after officers in social services. Whilst this length of service profile is a potential strength it is also a weakness in that the collective memory of these staff is in use daily short-cutting research and using their considerable local knowledge and professional experience to provide a service that could not be repeated by less experienced officers. A recent corporate business analysis carried out by MDS, a consultancy company looking at the Council's software compatibility, highlighted this reliance on experienced staff as a weakness.
- 7.5 A further weakness is the preponderance of part-time posts. These vary from one officer on four days a week to another working one day a week (essentially on appeals). In total there are five part-time planners, (50% of the development control team) which in turn means that all staff have to work at understanding when staff are next likely to be in the office to provide a reasonable customer service, and the role of the two technicians in the teams becomes vital in providing a link to absent case officers as well as carrying out their own extensive duties. Planning staff, in the current round of business planning, concluded the number of part-time officers as a weakness, but also accepts that their strength lies in high levels of productivity largely due to their experience and focus. The two technicians provide a valuable contribution by responding to most of the householder "do I need permission" written queries and by supporting the planning officers from within the teams.
- 7.6 At senior levels case load numbers are limited due to the need to provide day to day guidance and to deal with general management issues, the complexity of some of the major cases, and the domination of day to day activity by the need to

determine delegated planning applications effectively and to meet the constraints imposed by the need to hit targets. It is a system recently scrutinised by the Development Control Decisions Working Party of Overview and Scrutiny who looked at the quality of decisions in 2004/05 and concluded that the quality of outcomes could be relied upon at both the Planning Committee and with officers using delegated powers. That Group also identified the need to staff the establishment to ensure the opportunity to win future PDG.

- 7.7 The current establishment, as far as case work is concerned, is ten staff providing 7.09 full time equivalents (FTE's). This meant the average case load in the year ending 30 June 2005 was 230 applications.
- 7.8 To inform the assessment of the number of case officers that might be required, it is worth reviewing the recent national research. The work done by Addison Associates identifies to run a quality planning service the establishment aim should be one officer for every 150 applications, assuming more or less national average mixes in workload type.
- 7.9 For these purposes 'case officer' is defined as someone with the prime responsibility for dealing with applications, i.e. undertakes all the usual case officer duties and did not count team leaders with management responsibilities. (However, the establishment figure of 7.09 FTE's do include 1.3 FTE of team leader time based on time sheets.) In the "key lessons for Development Control. An overview of the Evaluation of Planning Standards Authorities 2005/06" (June 2006)", published by the Department for Communities of Local Government, it advises:
- "The level of staff resources continued to be a critical factor. However, there is evidence of significant improvement; comparing standards authorities this year with the standards authorities from last year, the average caseload for development control staff has decreased by around 10%. Caseloads still remain high and on average above the benchmark of 150 cases per officer per annum. The average annual caseload of the 57 standards authorities was 157 applications. There were 29 authorities with a caseload less than 150, 18 authorities with a caseload of 150 and above but less than 200 and 11 authorities with a caseload above 200. If a quality service, decisions and outcomes are to be delivered at speed and improvements maintained authorities are still under-resourced."
- 7.10 The Council has slightly less major applications than average and slightly more minor applications than average, but it is concluded that this of itself is not significant. It is also clear that the Council's area is complex in terms of statutory and local plan notations. It is concluded that to run a quality planning service, against the workload of around 1500 applications the establishment should be the equivalent of ten full time officers. This is not just to provide a system that is focused solely on decision making on applications and dealing with appeals, but to facilitate a proper customer service that has sufficient capacity to deal with all informal proposals properly and engage in the response to questions generally raised by the public on all related matters. Customer focus is an important corporate matter.
- 7.11 The existing establishment provides for three enforcement staff. As advised above additional training here has been to aim to give the Senior Enforcement Officer, in particular, greater professional planning expertise. The changing nature and increasing complexity of enforcement inevitable is pushing investigative officers in this direction. The number of complaints remains high and 76 formal notices were issued in the last financial year (which is more than any other Dorset Authority).

7.12 Members will know that the existing tree establishment of two staff were fully committed and it was necessary to bring in a further officer to deal with Council owned trees. In 2005/06 the team dealt with 600 applications and during the period when one of the two permanent posts was vacant, work backed up sharply. Between 1 April 2005 and 30 September 2005, of the 264 applications determined only 40 (15%) were dealt with in eight weeks. This was because the officer priority was still to ensure comments on planning applications were promptly made. The establishment of the Trees Section will need to be reviewed in the context of the management of Council owned trees and a further report will be made to this Committee in that respect.

8. Other Check Measures

Finance:

8.1 In 2002, the Fundamental Best Value Review of the Planning Service reviewed comparative financial data. At that time the cost per head of the planning service in East Dorset was the least of its 'CIPFA nearest neighbours'. PDG has made comparisons since problematic. It also has to be remembered that the Government introduced PDG to reverse the resource drought for planning services.

Analysis of time sheets, overtime claims and individual performance and development reviews:

8.2 As was the case when the service was being scrutinised in the Fundamental Review, significant amounts of work are being 'written off' and this shows up as outcomes from the flexi-time system. Some overtime is inevitable to meet peaks in workload or to cover unforeseen absence. The amounts vary, but these are both indicators of pressure in the system.

8.3 One of the outcomes from Performance and Development Reviews, in the last two years, has been uncertainty about future staff levels, (given Government uncertainty at the time concerning PDG). Matching this has been concern about workload and working conditions. There are days when, for example, work allocation is difficult because it is known that there is no spare planning officer capacity.

8.4 Levels of stress among staff seem to be high. In part this is because the job, in itself, can be stressful. However, high workloads clearly increase stress levels too. There is inevitable pressure from applicants and agents, and staff are also all aware of the need to hit targets. The national work done by Addison Associates and published by Government is understood by the planning officer staff and they also understand the key role played, at present, by the agency planning officer and staff funded on temporary contracts.

Complaints:

8.5 The Planning Service attracts more complaints than any other Council service. In part this reflects the very strong emotions roused by planning issues. However, the Council's complaints officer, the Lead Member for the Environment and the Head of Service have reviewed all recent complaints. Apart from those that can be discounted, simply because there was a disenchantment with a decision, the most common form of complaint was essentially about resource allocation and associated delay. It follows that if staff are focused on application decision making and appeal work then other matters take a lower priority.

The Quality Indicator BVPI205

- 8.6 This best value performance indicator is referred to in the Auditor's letter. The Council fails to score highly in relation to the level of advice it is able to offer at the public inquiry counter, the quality of information on the web-site and the inter-activity of the web-site. The Council does not provide a full day service of a planning officer backing up the inquiry counter, it is only an afternoon service and during holidays and periods of sickness the duty roster is difficult to fill. The details of this BVPI are at Appendix 4 and to this extent, quality is measurable.

9. Other Matters

- 9.1 The CAPS software is, on a day to day basis, not the sole operational responsibility of any particular post. Best use is not being made of the system. The provision of a CAPS manager, who would also be able to assist on other ICT was accepted by Members this last year in the budget process. However, the post was not filled due to an absence of available finance. The post will be even more important corporately if, as seems likely, other services purchase CAPS software. It is proposed that the planning service could partly fund a post on an interim basis out of PDG but the post does have a wider corporate implication.
- 9.2 CAPS software is upgraded from time to time and to keep up with the latest version involves expenditure. Two upgrades have been paid for out of PDG. In the future, if PDG does not continue past 2007/08, a more robust form of budgeting will need to take account of likely upgrades.
- 9.3 As part of the corporate electronic management of correspondence (EDRMS) there will be a need to properly incorporate plans larger than A3 in size. This is not part of the project as conceived at present. Scanning of larger plans, the proper integration of these on to the website and their use on a day to day basis will bring with it further revisions to staffing both within and beyond the service. The key here will be an A0 scanner or the use of a scanning service and partnering with adjacent Councils will be explored in this context.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 The Council needs a robust solution to provide a sufficient resource for its development control function to ensure that the efficient processing of applications can be maintained and that customers receive a quality service in all other areas. The current establishment does not reflect a sufficient human resource. The Council has breathing space in relation to existing temporary contracts as it is expected that a new allocation of PDG will enable the existing temporary administrative posts to continue. Alterations in the way office practice occurs will continue to cause these posts to be kept under review, and a further report should be provided in this respect. Substantial reductions have been made in the secretarial services. The agency planner is a temporary arrangement, and a perpetuation of this resource is needed in some form.
- 10.2 If the Addison Associates analysis is followed, a maximum of three additional planning officers are required. It is impractical to expand the service by three staff at the same time. It is proposed that a new senior planning post, for an officer, effectively at a team leader level, but without any management responsibility is created; and that a trainee planner post is also added to the permanent establishment. In this latter respect it will be easier to obtain a graduate to be trained. Once these staff are bedded in, depending on prevailing workload, a further trainee post could be considered.
- 10.3 Future budgets need to have a proper regard to CAPS Software upgrades. A CAPS software manager is required, and this has a further imperative on the assumption that the post holder will have a corporate CAPS role.

- 10.4 There are improvements in technology, to include A0 scanning, electronic interactivity to allow full e-delivery of applications which would also be moved forward with a dedicated CAPS human resource. These issues will, in turn, require a review of the way administrative staff work.
- 10.5 It is understood the Council's budget for the forthcoming year is likely to be over-committed. However, a path forward needs to be found as part of the business process to facilitate an increase in planning officer staff and to fund the post of CAPS manager.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – Letter from Planning Performance Manager at Government Office for the South West dated 9 December 2005.
- 11.2 Appendix 2 – The Council application determination performance by quarters.
- 11.3 Appendix 3 – Current Establishment Chart.
- 11.4 Appendix 4 – BVPI 205.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 None.



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FOR THE SOUTH WEST

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Date: 09 December 2005

Dear Mr Hirsh

Planning Best Value Performance Standards 2006/07: Consultation

As you will know your authority has recently been named in the consultation document *Proposed Planning Best Value Performance Standards for 2006/7 Consultation* as a potential Planning Standards Authority for the forthcoming financial year.

East Dorset District Council has been listed in the consultation because performance on processing major and minor applications to the year ending 30 June 2005 was below the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM's) performance thresholds and projecting forward your current levels of performance, your authority is unlikely to achieve the performance targets by 30 June 2006. These thresholds have been set as stepping stones to achieving the national targets for processing planning applications as set out in ODPM's public service agreement 6 (PSA6). The public service agreement requires all local planning authorities to perform at or above best value targets for development control (BV109) by 2006/07. This requirement is also set out in your own Local Government public service agreement 11.

I attach a copy of the statement made by Keith Hill to the House of Commons on 14 September 2004, which sets out the Government's current strategy for engagement with planning standards authorities. The strategy involves close liaison between ODPM, Government Offices for the Regions and planning standards authorities to ensure there is the necessary direction and support to aid in authorities achieving and sustaining the PSA6 performance targets.

If your authority has not done so already, we recommend that you draw up an improvement plan and map out anticipated progress in terms of a trajectory of your proposed improvement to meet Government targets for planning performance. The





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trajectory should represent the projection on a quarterly basis of your anticipated improvement in development control performance using the statistical information already gathered by your authority under BVPI 109.

To ensure this trajectory is realistic and achievable it needs to be based on an understanding of historical performance and supported by planned improvements. Your authority will have already been invited to the improvement planning workshop provided by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) which took place in November. The PAS are also developing a programme of follow-up support and web-based resources, which should assist in this process. A CD Rom is currently available which includes guidance and a template for drawing up a trajectory. For further details contact IDeA, e-mail: ihelp@idea.gov.uk or telephone: 020 7296 6880.

We have seen examples of good practice from many authorities, including five case studies recently published by PAS, which your authority could draw on as it seeks to improve performance. Summaries of work undertaken by Addison & Associates into the 2003/04 and 2004/05 planning standards authorities also contain examples of good practice as well as practical transferable lessons taken from authorities that have recently made significant improvements in their planning services. These are valuable resources that are available on the ODPM web-site at:

<http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1145394>

Additionally, there are also the Planning Officers' Society (POS) *Moving Towards Excellence* papers available on the IDeA and Planning Officers' Society web sites.

I would very much like to take the opportunity to discuss the contents of this letter with you and explore the implications of standards designation in more detail. If you would also find this useful please contact me on 0117 900 1891 or Katie Jones 0117 900 1975 to arrange a mutually convenient date. We are also likely to be accompanied by Tim McCombe, our Senior Planning Manager covering Dorset & Somerset.

A copy of this letter goes to your Chief Executive.

Yours sincerely,

LIZ PRITCHARD

MRK



**The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill):
Poor Planning Authorities**

In my statement of 17 July 2003, I explained our approach to achieving the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's public service agreement six (PSA6) target. This requires all local planning authorities to complete local development frameworks by 2006 and to perform at or above best value targets for development control (BV109) by 2006 with interim milestones to be agreed in the service delivery agreement. The revised PSA6 target, announced in July as part of the outcome of the spending review, will require all local planning authorities to sustain this level of performance to 2008.

We are now one year nearer to the 2006–07 target date and, whilst local authorities' performance overall has shown encouraging progress, there is still much to be done. I am therefore setting out today ways in which we are working with local planning authorities and strengthening our strategy of engagement with those that are performing poorly in their handling of planning applications.

We will continue to designate poorly performing authorities as planning standards authorities on an annual basis, as described in my statement of last year. Where their performance falls below specified thresholds, in terms of the percentage of applications determined within the target time frame, then they are asked to achieve specific performance standards in the following year. In 2004–05 both the thresholds and the standards were raised by 2–5 percentage points. This was a relatively modest increase to give local authorities further time to make use of the additional resources available through planning delivery grant. We envisage a more significant ratcheting up of both the thresholds and standards for 2005–06 (by up to 10 percentage points) as a necessary step towards meeting the targets in 2006–07, as follows:

Percentage of applications determined within time		2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Major	Threshold	28	30	40	50
	Standard to be met	50	52	57	60
Minor	Threshold	37	40	50	55
	Standard to be met	55	58	63	65
Other	Threshold	55	60	65	70
	Standard to be met	70	73	75	80

Threshold = performance below this level at previous year ending June would qualify authority for standard.
Standard = percentage achievement required within 13 weeks for major and eight weeks for minor and other applications.

We will encourage authorities to draw up trajectories and improvement plans as soon as they are identified as potential standards authorities, and will review their progress against



trajectories shortly after they are designated. Help in this process will be made available, including support from the new planning advisory service that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has invited the Improvement and Development Agency to host. Further support comes in the form of continued funding through the planning delivery grant after 2005–06, as announced in July following the spending review.

In the course of the year for which an authority has been designated as a standards authority, my officials will contact the authority's planning service to collect information on what steps have been taken or will be taken to improve its planning performance. This will be assessed to determine if further action will be needed to support performance improvements. Regard will be given to authorities' progress towards the specific performance standards they were set and, in the longer term, authorities' ability to reach the targets set out in ODPM's public service agreement six (PSA6).

Engagement with an authority will be reviewed at the end of the year for which it has been designated as a standards authority in light of whether it has achieved the standards specified in the best value order and any demonstrable sustained improvement in performance over the period. We will remain engaged with authorities until we are confident that a sustainable level of improvement has been achieved, with the level of engagement proportionate to the risk of failure.

Authorities causing serious concern will be asked to self-assess their performance against trajectories and draw up improvement plans to share with the relevant Government office for the regions, who in turn will report on progress to ODPM on a quarterly basis. If performance continues to deteriorate then we will consider the case for further more direct intervention. In doing so we would adopt the proportionate approach outlined in my earlier statement and would have regard to the authorities' CPA status.

Authorities causing a lesser degree of concern will be asked to self-assess performance against trajectories and share their conclusions with the relevant Government office for the regions on a quarterly basis. Government Offices will report to ODPM by exception, where performance shows significant deterioration.

I will consider the case for relaxing the intensity of engagement or for disengagement with other authorities where the annualised performance in all three categories of application is on or above the relevant planning standard and the authority's own trajectory for two consecutive quarters.

Over the last year 39 planning standards authorities were found to have made significant improvements in performance, and outstanding improvements in a number of cases. I congratulate them all on their success in improving their performance and I expect to see them making further rapid progress towards meeting and exceeding the national targets.

The 39 authorities were:
Bedford District Council
London Borough of Brent



Brighton & Hove Unitary Authority
 Bristol City Council
 Calderdale Met. Borough Council
 Canterbury City Council
 Chichester District Council
 Durham City Council
 London Borough of Ealing
 East Cambridgeshire District Council
 East Hampshire District Council
 Epsom and Ewell District Council
 Fareham District Council
 Forest Heath District Council
 Gloucester District Council
 Havant District Council
 Isle of Wight Unitary Authority
 Kerrier District Council
 London Borough of Lambeth
 Leeds City Council
 Mansfield District Council
 Medway Unitary Authority
 Milton Keynes Unitary Authority
 North Devon District Council
 Oldham Met. Borough Council
 Reading Borough Council
 Reigate and Banstead District Council
 London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
 Rossendale District Council
 Sheffield City Council
 Spelthorne District Council
 Taunton Deane District Council
 Three Rivers District Council
 Vale of White Horse District Council
 Wansbeck District Council
 Wear Valley District Council
 West Lindsey District Council
 Weymouth and Portland District Council
 Worcester District Council

The new planning advisory service (PAS) will play an important role in supporting local planning authorities. This includes through a newly developed improvement planning programme. Already the PAS has held an introductory event on improvement planning which will be followed up with a series of regional workshops and other ongoing support. Also as part of the PAS a new advisory panel on large applications is now gearing up to assist a number of local planning authorities in the high demand regions of London and the wider south east.



SPEED OF DECISION AND LEVEL OF DELEGATION ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS BY QUARTERS

+ FINANCIAL YEAR 1997/98, 98/99, 99/00, 00/01, 01/02, 02/03, 03/04, 04/05, 05/06

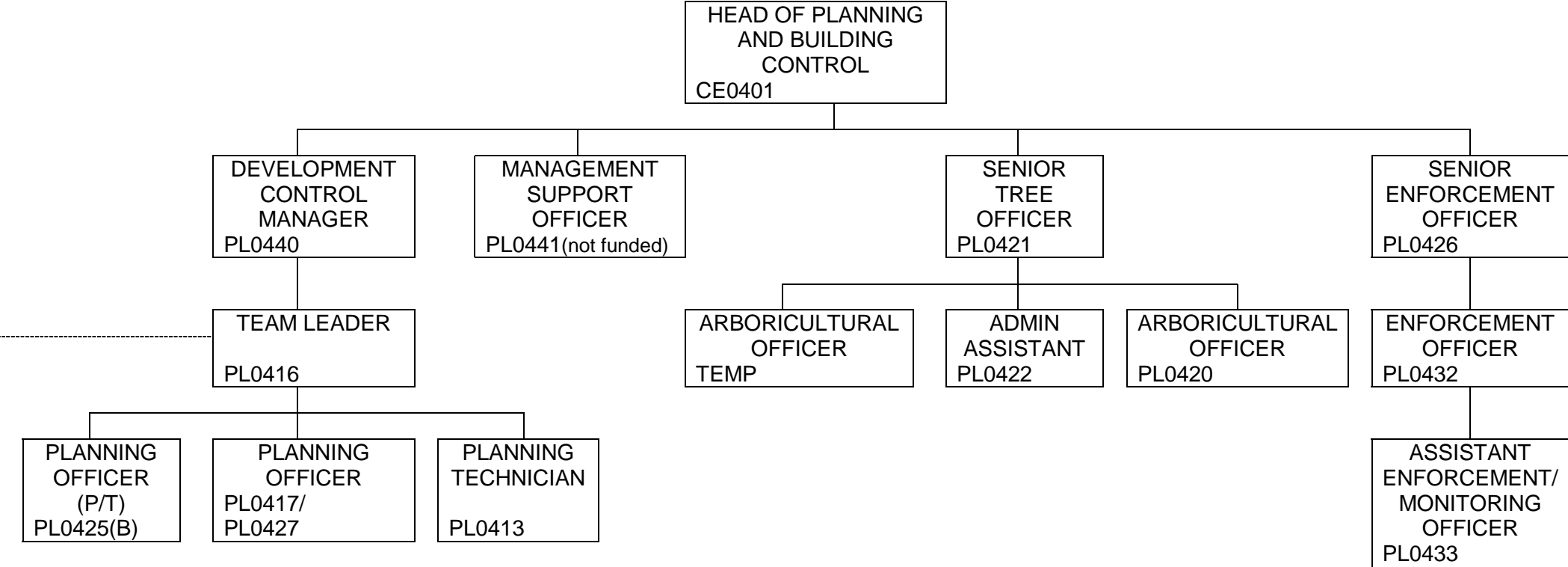
DATE	APPLICATIONS		DELEGATED		IN 8 WEEKS		MAJOR		MINOR		OTHER	
	Quarter Ending	No. Rec'd	No. Determined with % change on previous year in ()	No. Delegated	% Delegated of those Determined	No. of all in 8 weeks	% in 8 weeks of those Determined	No. Determined	% in 13 weeks and number ()	No. Determined	% in 8 weeks	No. Determined
30.6.97	293	265	87	33	138	52	0	0	88	33	177	62
30.9.97	266	283	153	54	150	53	0	0	89	26	194	64
31.12.97	238	222	133	60	129	58	0	0	70	41	152	66
31.3.98	296	224	158	71	110	49	0	0	66	35	158	56
Total												
Yr 97/98	1093	994	531	53	527	53	0	0	313	34	681	62
30.6.98	295	306	192	63	184	60	0	0	91	51	215	65
30.9.98	343	249	154	62	110	44	0	0	72	22	177	53
31.12.98	260	279	175	63	136	48	0	0	100	33	179	57
31.3.99	268	296	184	62	170	57	0	0	101	43	195	65
Total												
Yr 98/99	1166	1130(+14)	705	62	600	53	0	0	364	36	766	60
30.6.99	323	289	198	69	192	66	0	0	92	32	197	78
30.9.99	311	292	217	74	194	66	6	16 (1)	84	50	203	74
31.12.99	331	285	216	76	191	67	1	0	78	50	207	73
31.3.20	378	313	237	78	178	57	3	33 (1)	85	41	225	64
Total												
Yr 99/00	1343	1179(+4%)	868	74	755	64	10	20 (2)	339	48	832	72
30.6.00	368	329	240	73	198	58	6	85 (5)	76	49	247	62
30.9.00	302	348	246	71	216	62	7	57 (4)	95	46	246	69
31.12.00	325	301	190	63	196	65	3	100 (3)	90	56	208	71
31.3.01	307	293	204	70	163	56	5	66 (3)	90	30	198	69
Total												
Yr 00/01	1302	1271(+8%)	880	69	773	61	21	71 (15)	351	44	899	74
30.6.01	406	332	267	80	234	70	1	0	94	48	239	79
30.9.01	336	332	261	79	200	60	9	44 (4)	112	43	211	72
31.12.01	326	347	265	76	219	63	3	66 (2)	112	48	232	70
31.3.02	414	349	268	76	236	67	4	25 (1)	100	53	245	75
Total												
Yr 01/02	1482	1360(+7%)	1061	78	889	65	17	41 (7)	418	47	927	74

SPEED OF DECISION AND LEVEL OF DELEGATION ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS BY QUARTERS + FINANCIAL YEAR 97 - 05

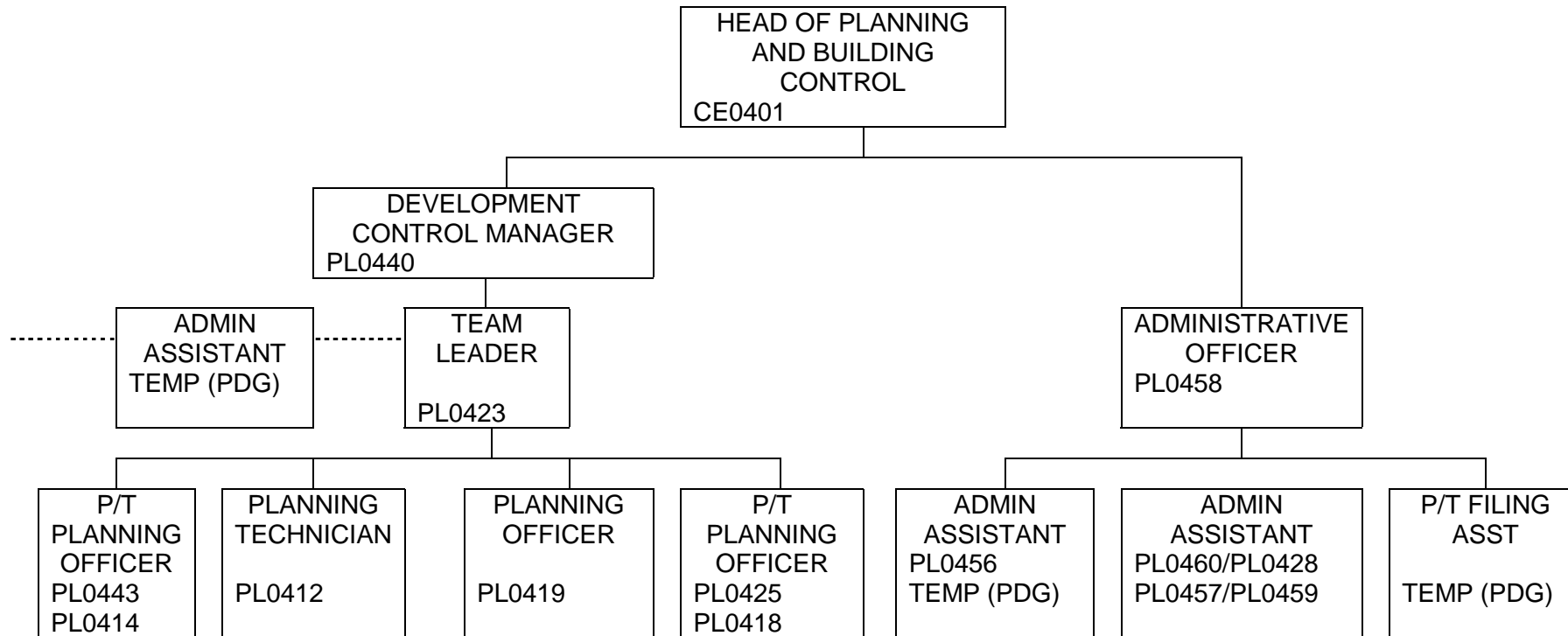
DATE	APPLICATIONS		DELEGATED		IN 8 WEEKS		MAJOR		MINOR		OTHER	
	Quarter Ending	No. Rec'd	No. Determined with % change on previous year in ()	No. Delegated	% Delegated of those Determined	No. of all in 8 weeks	% in 8 weeks of those Determined	No. Determined	% in 13 weeks and number ()	No. Determined	% in 8 weeks	No. Determined
30.6.02	386	411	319	78	261	63	5	60 (3)	115	45	291	71
30.9.02	421	398	252	63	288	72	5	40 (2)	100	46	293	82
31.12.02	363	385	294	76	286	74	1	0 (0)	112	50	272	84
31.3.03	379	344	274	72	266	77	3	100 (2)	93	58	248	84
Total Yr 02/03	<u>1549</u>	<u>1538(+13)</u>	<u>1139</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>1101</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>420</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>1104</u>	<u>80</u>
30.6.03	461	405	340	84	303	75	8	50 (4)	79	47	318	90
30.9.03	406	410	358	88	296	72	6	66 (4)	112	59	292	80
31.12.03	346	346	283	82	268	77	1	100 (1)	89	72	239	85
31.3.04	434	343	244	71	276	80	7	85 (6)	126	69	210	88
Total Yr 03/04	<u>1647</u>	<u>1504</u> <u>(-2.2%)</u>	<u>1225</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>1143</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>62 (15)</u>	<u>406</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>1055</u>	<u>83</u>
30.6.04	411	382	276	73	264	69	6	50 (3)	94	65	282	71
30.9.04	379	426	304	71	270	63	2	100(2)	94	37	330	73
31.12.04	424	344	244	69	251	73	5	40 (2)	55	44	284	80
31.3.05	391	361	301	83	250	69	9	33 (3)	69	39	285	73
Total Yr 04/05	<u>1605</u>	<u>1513</u> <u>(+0.6%)</u>	<u>1125</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>1035</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>312</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>1181</u>	<u>75</u>
30.6.05	457	394	311	80	289	73	4	50 (2)	78	54	312	79
30.9.05	398	366	259	71	288	78	4	75 (3)	99	62	263	86
31.12.05	355	396	300	76	361	92	8	75(6)	125	66	263	82
31.3.06	443	357	294	82	311	87	7	86(6)	110	692	240	88
Total Yr 05/06	<u>1653</u>	<u>1525</u> <u>(+0.7%)</u>	<u>1164</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>1249</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>74(17)</u>	<u>412</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>1078</u>	<u>84</u>
30.06.06	426	399	356	89	349	88	9	89(8)	112	78	278	94

"decisionstatistics"/BestValue /PAScd

PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL (Development Control)



PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL (Development Control cont)



Explanation of measured planning quality.

The 2005/06 Performance Indicator BVPI 205

This BVPI asks a series of questions and then provides a mechanism for a score. The questions followed by the answers follow:

A. Whether the authority provides guidance to applicants on the requirements for submission of applications under the Planning Acts, reflecting the different types of development.

Is the guidance accessible in writing? **YES**

Is the guidance pre-prepared? **YES**

Does the guidance reflect the size and types of the development envisaged in the development plan? **NO - the development plan is self-contained and the guidance is not reproduced separately.**

B. Whether the authority provides pre-application advice.

Is the pre-application advice available for all types of applications under the Planning Acts reflecting the size and type of the development envisaged? **YES**

Does the advice have regard to the history of the site* of the proposed

development where relevant? **YES**

Is the advice accessible through written, electronic media or verbally

during reasonable office opening hours reflecting the needs of different users? **NO (as it is not available in the mornings).**

C. Whether, in addition to what is offered by CABE and English Heritage, the authority has local arrangements to access specialist advice on design* in the preparation of the LDP, planning guidance and in determining all types of applications under the Planning Acts.

Is there specialist advice available in-house, from another authority or

group of authorities, from public bodies, or from the private sector? **YES**

Is the advice used for the preparation of the LDP, planning guidance and the determination of all types of applications under the Planning Acts? **YES**

Are the arrangements for securing the advice permanent and continual? **YES**

D. Whether, in addition to what is offered by CABE and English Heritage, the authority has local arrangements to access specialist advice* on the historic environment in the preparation of the LDP, planning guidance, and in determining all types of applications under the Planning Acts.

Is there specialist advice available in-house, from another authority or

group of authorities, from a public, or from the private sector? **YES**

Is the advice available for the preparation of the local development plan, planning guidance and all types of applications under the Planning Acts? **YES**

Are the arrangements for securing the advice permanent and continual? **YES**

E. Whether there is a multidisciplinary team approach to determining major planning applications.*

Is this an approach which integrates the contribution of different appropriate disciplines in a way which reflects the size, scale and complexity of the development? **YES on an hoc basis (see examples related to Alderholt Brickworks and the Dormy).**

Are lead officer/s available (including at pre-application stage) to manage and co-ordinate development advice and information and subsequent application processing? **YES**

Is there a project management approach to managing activities in relation to the applications? **YES. All major run on a projection spreadsheet**

F. Whether the authority provides the capability for an electronic planning service.

Authorities score points according to the level achieved against the 21

Pendleton Report Survey criteria. e.g, an authority that meets 11/21 criteria gains 1 point. The levels are as follows:

Criteria achieved Points awarded

21	3
15-20	2
11-14	1
0-10	0

An authority which integrates with the Planning Portal to deliver e-planning

services can achieve up to 11 of the Pendleton criteria, which will attract a score of 1 point. The Pendleton self-assessment criteria

and guidance on how to integrate with the Planning Portal can be found at: <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/lpa/bvpi>

The Council's Pendleton score is 15 which is 2 points

The Total score for the Council is therefore 13 +2 = 15 out of 18

As a % the Council BVPI is 83.3%