

Recommendation	RAG rating	Current Position	Future Actions with timeframes
Short Term recommendations			
<p>1 Continue to embed the Agile Planning system and recently acquired Power BI system into the DM process, make time to provide (and maintain) a practical guide to the system for case officers. The Power BI system should be used to create a single (and simply laid out) performance management report summarising live cases for the team as well as individual caseloads, for sharing across the team on a weekly basis to enable targeted support and shared commitment to meeting performance thresholds.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports available in Power BI providing details of individual officer performance • Developed and implemented review processes for performance management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to be developed and utilised to provide performance data to senior management and planning committee. (ongoing)
<p>2 Encourage the whole Development Control Team to work together from the office for one day each week. This will mean addressing practical barriers to team working, for example, “block booking” space in the shared office.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Control team are together within the office two days a week. • Monthly team meetings diarised. • Ad hoc team meetings arranged to discuss specific issues e.g. Nutrient Neutrality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to identify a dedicated ‘pod’ for the planning service is part of wider corporate transformational considerations in terms of maximising the most efficient use of corporate buildings (Sept 2024) • Ensuring all staff have access to monitors at work station (Sept 2024)
<p>3 Strengthen management capacity for service transformation across Development Control reducing the load of day-to-day responsibilities on the current DC Manager, allowing more time to focus on the implementing improvements we set out. This may involve existing (or new) staff taking on a team leader or supervisory role for more junior Development Control staff as well as giving greater authority to Principal Planning officers to undertake routine tasks like signing off reports by more junior staff.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals/Seniors have been given the role of mentoring and supporting new officers (3 new officers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms part of wider transformational proposals for the Service, which will include the introduction of a team leader post within the Development Control team. This post will take some of the day to day responsibility of the DC Manager to focus on introducing wider improvements to the team. (Sept 2024) • Wider transformational proposals are looking at how the wider planning function works holistically, including planning policy, conservation, enforcement, and development management (Sept 2024)
<p>4 Case officers should work with their line manager or a more senior officer to review applications at an appropriate stage after the consultation end date, to enable better case management and ensure straightforward decisions are issued as soon as possible.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers aware of roles and responsibilities and who to speak to for advice and guidance. • Fortnightly 1:1s held between case officers and manager to review cases • Ad hoc meetings held as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to review processes and improve/amend as necessary (ongoing)

Implementation of PAS recommendations




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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-introduction of corporate appraisal process to support staff and aid development. 	
<p>5 Identify an officer to make some immediate updates to the website to reduce time spent on queries and complaints, e.g. the standard of applications required; local validation list and protocol for resubmitting invalid applications or amending validated applications; clearer sign-posting to Planning Portal for advice; and availability of the pre application service.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer identified to work on review of web site. Corporate Digital team have been engaged with and are assisting with review of Planning web pages and ensure consistency with corporate identity. Public survey launched to understand how the web site is used and provide feedback on restructuring/ amending web pages to enable a more effective one stop digital offering Regeneration Scrutiny panel currently considering Planning capacity and have focussed on improvements to the Planning web pages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to web to be introduced by Sept 2024 Officer to be made responsible for ensuring web pages are kept under review and updated (ongoing)
<p>6 Take a firm position on the provision of non-key services such as informal telephone advice on permitted development, to minimise the interruptions. The technical team should be able to direct callers to a web page or the pre application service and advise that it is not possible to provide advice over the phone because of potential misunderstandings and resource constraints.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of a paid for pre application service has allowed staff to direct enquiries to web pages, requiring minimum input from staff. Measures have already seen a significant reduction in contact from members of the public/agents/developers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web pages in process of being reviewed (as per recommendation 5) to further reduce the need to contact officers and minimise disruptions (Sept 2024)
<p>Medium Term recommendations</p>			
<p>7 Bring together existing process notes and guidance for case officers into a single DM manual, making the most of current examples as well as completing the work underway.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of individual process notes have been prepared covering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of the Planning IT (Agile) system. Enforcement processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process notes need to be brought together into one manual (Dec 2024)
<p>8 Develop standard wording and templates for reports to ensure they are of an appropriate length and detail for each</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three sets of standard templates have been prepared covering: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These will be monitored and kept updated as needed

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<p>type of development and can be prepared with minimal time spent on more routine applications.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecoms; • Appeals, and; • SPD requirements householder developments. SPD/NPPF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current templates need to be formatted into working document/manual (Dec 2024) • Design SPD to be reviewed and ton wide design code to be introduced
<p>9 Develop and agree a consultation protocol with both internal and external consultees, with agreed standing advice for more straightforward applications (e.g. Highways, drainage and environmental health). This should be regularly reviewed with consultees to ensure it remains fit for purpose.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussed with external consultees to understand requirements. • Meetings arranged with internal consultees to discuss agreed standing advice and which applications they need to be consulted on. • Introduction of standard conditions for use by internal consultees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard wording and procedures/ processes to be finalised (Dec 2024)
<p>10 Take a stronger line on rejecting poorly presented or incomplete applications as well as limiting the number of amendments to a validated application. This means enforcing the Council's current policy and allowing only one opportunity for amendments.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructions and guidance provided to officers. • Manager discusses in 1:1 with officers. • Any issues arising out of implementation of approach are discussed with management and in wider team meetings. • Agents have been contacted to make them aware of the Council's approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce approach with further guidance published on web site. (Sept 2024)
Long Term recommendations			
<p>11 Build on the work already started by the Development Control Manager to improve relationships with local agents and developers including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formally establish an agent's forum, enabling local agents to meet and discuss issues with managers in the team DM. • consider the establishment of an accredited agents' scheme that allows the most trusted agents to be fast tracked through the validation stage. Agree priority work issues to help the speed of decision making – e.g. quality of applications, use of extensions of time, introduction of new technology. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Agents have been contacted setting out changes to working practices. • Select number of local agents were utilised to trial introduction of pre application charges and help inform shape/format of forms and processes. • Developer day held with key developers and agents (Nov 2023) covering number of aspects of bringing Council owned housing sites forward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current priorities are centred on implementing other recommendations. Number need to be in place before setting up forums. • A programme of Developer days/events with local agents to be developed to cover subjects such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working relationships between LPA and agents what works and how can it be improved. Understanding each others expectations • Design – including launch of design code • Other planning matters/issues/topics

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish agents forum (frequency to be determined – either quarterly or bi-annually)
<p>12 Develop a stronger corporate role for planning, with DM officers more closely involved in corporate projects to help shape proposals as they develop and streamline planning application and decision-making stages of regeneration schemes.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DM staff form part of corporate project teams e.g development/regeneration sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further work required to embed planning staff in wider corporate projects at conception stage (ongoing)
<p>13 Using the advice and good practice available on the PAS website, continue to develop and improve the pre-application offer of the service to maximise income and meet customer needs.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise opportunities to attend PAS training events and workshops to improve staff knowledge and skills. North East Heads of Planning event being arranged with PAS to discuss the pre application offer with view of introducing best practice across the region (April 2024). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise PAS services to provide committee training Further explore guidance/advice/good practice available from PAS Continue to work with PAS to seek improvements to service delivery (both for DM and Plan Making)

-  Recommendations fully met
-  Recommendations in process of being implemented
-  Recommendations yet to be actioned.