

**REGENERATION SCRUTINY PANEL  
PLANNING CAPACITY**

SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED ACTION	POST TITLE	BUDGET COST	TIMESCALE
<p>1. The Council should ensure that the recommendations of the Planning Advisory Service's Development Management Review are implemented in full to ensure that the Planning Service continues to be able to meet government performance targets in relation to decision-making.</p>	<p>An action plan setting out what has been done to date and how the Service intends to respond to the recommendations is attached.</p> <p>There will be some costs associated with the implementations of this recommendations.</p> <p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creation of team leader post in development control (£5,000 pa)</li> <li>• monitors for dedicated pod for the service (£unknown)</li> <li>• developer days/events (approx. £2000)</li> <li>• staff training programme (approx. £2000)</li> </ul>	<p>Head of Planning</p>	<p>£11,000 (costs can be met from within existing service budget)</p>	<p>See attached plan</p>
<p>2. Implementation of the PAS recommendations in relation to the following should be prioritised and enhanced:</p> <p>- The Development Control Team should work together from the office in Fountains Court for a minimum of one day</p>	<p>See 1 above and 3 below</p>	<p>Head of Planning</p>	<p>Covered above in 1.</p>	<p>See attached plan</p>

<p>each week. Practical barriers to team working, for example, “block booking” space in the shared office should be addressed without delay.</p> <p>- 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.</p>				
<p>3. Dedicated training is provided for staff to enable them to use the relevant specialist IT systems to their full potential.</p>	<p>The key areas where training is required include the development of the Power BI reporting functionality. The service will work with the corporate data team to develop and utilise this capability.</p>	Head of Planning	<p>To be identified, but it is anticipated that can be met from within existing budgets</p>	See attached plan
<p>4. Consideration be given to inviting the Planning Advisory Service to undertake a full review of the Planning Service to include Planning and Development Committee, Planning Enforcement or the Appeals Process.</p>	<p>The initial review undertaken by PAS looked at only one aspect of the Service. A wider review of the Service would be welcomed and would enable it to respond to changes in the Planning environment more efficiently and effectively. Whilst the previous review was free, there will be a cost for a full peer review that could only be met through securing external funding.</p>	Head of Planning	<p>£15,000 This can only progress if external funding can be secured</p>	Subject to funding
<p>5. Create a new Highways Officer post within the Planning Services Structure to provide a dedicated resource and as far as possible, eliminate delay in the planning</p>	<p>Although this would provide significant benefit, there is currently no funding available to enable this. If external funding did become available then this</p>	Head of Planning	£45,000	Will be subject to funding

application process.	would be a priority action. A growth bid for internal resources will be considered, but is more likely to be pursued externally.			
6. Investigate with the other Tees Valley Local Authorities whether there is potential to create a shared pool of statutory consultees who have expertise in the relevant disciplines such as highways, drainage, design, ecology and arboriculture.	<p>Work is ongoing at a North East regional level to explore the options for sharing expert disciplines.</p> <p>This is likely to focus on those disciplines such as ecology, arboriculture, landscape, archaeology and design.</p>	Head of Planning	Cannot be costed at this stage	Will be driven by regional working
7. Explore with the Council's Human Resources Service whether, in addition to current recruitment practice, there are any further opportunities to more widely promote vacant posts, such as the enforcement posts, in the Planning Service.	<p>Avenues to recruit suitable staff have been explored. The Service in terms of Planning Officers is fully staffed at the moment. Going forward the best way to recruit will be via the graduate apprentice and/or via universities to attract staff at the lower points of the career ladder and enable staff to move up as vacancies occur, so that we grow and reward our own talent.</p> <p>The issue of recruiting to the enforcement posts is more complex given the nature of the post. Here the issue is more likely to be around looking at solutions on how we can deliver the enforcement function using available resources and/or roles and duties of existing posts.</p>	Head of Planning	Would be met within existing budgets	Will be driven by recruitment need
8. Give consideration to establishing a pooled enforcement team of specialist officers to work together to address all	The issue here is less a pool of specialist enforcement officers, each discipline will have its own legislative	N/A	Nil	N/A

<p>areas of enforcement that fall within the Council's remit. This could be particularly helpful where multiple issues of non-compliance related to the same individual or property.</p>	<p>requirements to deal with, but more one of better co-ordination centrally. Often enforcement activity regarding properties crosses a number of different disciplines, e.g. planning, environmental health, building control, environment, council tax, highways. If each is pursuing its own enforcement activity separately and uncoordinated this is inefficient use of resources. It is better to send out one letter to a property than five, or place one charge on a property rather than several. Some co-ordinated activity takes place but this tends to be on an ad hoc basis rather than the norm. This is to be considered as part of the 'Customer' strand of the Council's transformation programme.</p>			
<p>9. In conjunction with the Council's Digital Team review whether the information provided on the Council's website in relation to the town's conservation areas can be given a higher profile and/or made more user-friendly, to better inform residents who might be considering alterations to their properties and potentially reduce the numbers of enforcement cases.</p>	<p>This will form part of the wider review of the Planning web pages on the Council's web site.</p>	<p>Head of Planning</p>	<p>Nil</p>	<p>See attached plan</p>