

DEVELOPMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

PLANNING SERVICE

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (PIP)

2006 - 2009

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INTRODUCTION

As part of its modernisation and reform of Local Government Planning Service, the Government has introduced minimum standards of performance that all local authorities are required to deliver, with those authorities performing consistently below the minimum levels being designated as 'standards authorities'. In 2004 Stockton was designated as a standards authority and instructed of the need to improve levels of performance or face sanctions.

The Environment & Regeneration Select Committee undertook a detailed scrutiny examination of Planning Services between April and November 2005 and made 14 recommendations to modernise the planning system and improve performance in dealing with planning applications.

The Planning Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) has been developed in response to the recommendations, and also with a wider ambition to deliver an excellent service by 2008-9.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The PIP has been developed primarily through the work of Service Improvement Groups (SIG) and Head of Service and is the high level plan that details the key objectives for the service and the key actions required to achieve those objectives. These are underpinned by detailed actions contained within the business unit plans for Development Control, Development Plans and Building Control.

The PIP is divided into sections using the seven objectives identified by Planning Advisory Service covering:

- Supporting and improving efficient processing of applications
- Providing a quality service
- Involve staff and develop resources
- IT development
- Improve appeals process
- Enhance enforcement process
- Improving performance by monitoring and review

Each objective has a range of standards, performance indicators and management measures and information to ensure the actions are fully delivered. These indicators are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely and have been developed to measure progress towards achievement of the actions and overall objective.

The key actions detail **what** will be undertaken, **when** they are to be completed, **who** is responsible for delivery, any risks and mitigating factors and other relevant additional information.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Any improvement plan is only as good as the performance management framework within which it sits. For the Planning PIP, strong performance management systems have been established to ensure that the key actions are regularly monitored and that the stretching performance targets within the baskets of measures are achieved.

The performance management framework includes:

Strategic Planning Meetings – fortnightly meeting of Director and Heads of Planning, Regeneration and Integrated Transport to discuss policies and issues relating to major planning schemes

SIG's group meetings – monthly reports detailing progress on delivering the PIP, highlighting any overdue actions and graphically presenting the latest performance results against target.

Head of Service Management Team – monthly monitoring of Key Performance Indicators and quarterly report on overall progress

Departmental Management Team – quarterly report on progress and performance against key actions and measures

Corporate Management Team Performance Clinics – the Council's Corporate Management Team will have Planning performance as a standing agenda item on their quarterly performance clinics, which will be informed by the latest reports as above.

In addition each of the three business units will monitor their own progress through their regular team meetings and individual performance appraisal reviews, reporting to the management team and receiving feedback on overall progress.

Amongst the issues to be addressed within the PIP is the development and use of IT systems to automate the processes, which will enable more accurate and timely information to be available in service improvement.