

PLANNING DIVISION SERVICE PLAN 2004/07

1. SERVICE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

1.1 The division provides a range of statutory and non-statutory services to residents of the district and the development industry as follows:

- **Local Plans** –preparation, monitoring and review of land use planning policies, which in turn comprise the Local Plan, a statutory framework for development in the district. Officers represent the Council on various steering groups involving external organisations dealing with a variety of topics and issues. The section also advises the Council on developments in National and Regional Planning Policy and neighbouring Local Plans and provides specialist advice and support for heritage and conservation of the built environment. This includes 705 Listed Buildings and 22 Conservation Areas to which modest repairs and improvement grant schemes are applied. The Council provides technical support for the Sharpes Arts and Heritage Trust and the Heritage Centre. As part of developing the Council's Heritage Strategy the service publishes 'Heritage News' 3 times a year and runs open days for historic properties. Informal advice is provided to developers and householders on planning policy. The section also provides a corporate graphic design service.
- **Building Control** – appraises schemes and monitors building work that require Building Regulation approval. The section also allocates street names and numbers and deals with dangerous structures. All work is won in competition with the private sector. Market share in all is being maintained in all sectors and the market itself is growing at a rapid rate.. 1100 applications were dealt with in the last calendar year together with 6000 site inspections; 550 houses are currently under construction. Applications have increased by 56% in the past three years. All functions are delegated to officers. There is a strong national network of building control authorities continually developing new initiatives for service delivery. Officers represent the council at county regional and national levels.
- **Development Control** – processing over 1500 planning applications per year of which officers, within a scheme of delegation, determine approximately 90%. Informal advice is provided to developers and householders. Numbers of applications have increased by 54% since 1999. Approximately 30 appeals against decisions are supported per year and over 500 cases per year are investigated with a view to enforcement action. The work load has increased by around 13% year on year since 1999. The Service also covers tree preservation and protection.

1.2 The services are provided to a wide range of, mostly external, customers, comprising residents and businesses within the district as well as individuals, companies and governmental organisations with an interest in development and environmental conservation and enhancement.

- 1.3 Central Government Performance indicators govern the delivery of planning services and performance standards have recently been adopted for Building Control. There is a requirement for the chargeable element of the Building Control service to be financially self supporting. Front line staffing levels are set at or about the minimum necessary to meet statutory requirements. Considerable reliance is placed on computerised systems to maintain effectiveness.

Purpose

- 1.4 To regulate development within the district effectively and efficiently – management of a development and building control service that balances the need for development and the health and safety of individuals with the level of environmental protection required by the community and legislation. Increasing emphasis is being placed upon sustainable development, the protection of the natural environment and increasing bio-diversity. Good outcomes are achieved by developing a sound framework of planning policy, the provision of high quality services supported by formal and informal advice to the community and effective, efficient, consistent and well monitored processes.

The division provides front line services to customers and stakeholders face to face, over the telephone and in writing, with specified expectations of timely, effective customer friendly delivery in a Responsive, Fair, Open/transparent way.

2. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

2.1 Challenges

- **Economic Circumstances** –continuous increases in planning application and Building Control numbers have followed in the wake of the improving national and local economic circumstances over the past five years but these circumstances can change make the forecasting of workloads and income difficult. An economic downturn could lead to reductions of income in Development Control and Building Control in forthcoming years (currently expected to contribute over £700,000 well in excess of budget forecasts) with little opportunity in the short term to reduce expenditure and avoid the impact on the Council's budget. The Building Control Service is required to be self-financing but not to be in substantial profit. Currently there is a very large surplus on the three year rolling trading account. The challenge is to reduce this surplus with the judicious use of resources to improve the quality and efficiency of the service.
- **Community Strategy** –will increasingly shape the development of our services and drive not only our corporate planning but also development planning processes and will influence the course and direction of Planning Services Policy.
- **Resources** – the Council has operated from an extremely limited resource base. This has meant very lean staffing levels. Accordingly, officers have very much higher workloads than are usual in Local Authority Planning and Building Control Services. For instance, ODPM advises that the normal Development Control officer case load should be between 130 –150 cases p.a.

- In 2003/4, ours will work out at about 350, even allowing for a part time/temporary, "retired" recruit to help out. Meeting the needs and aspirations of service users will require creativity, innovation and the application of additional staff.
- **Managing Change** – our external and internal environments require us to change what we do and the way that we do it. Managing those changes will be key to our success. The service has a large number of government related targets and performance indicators that can only be satisfactorily monitored with improved IT capability and additional staff to carry out the required survey work. The Service is ripe for incorporation into the expected roll out of CRM. The Council's Development Control and Building Control software requires updating and a replacement system is on order. The passage of the Planning and Compensation Bill through Parliament will also impose requirements on the Council to revise the Local Plan almost immediately so as to make it conform with the new legal framework. Additional Building Regulation requirements including the control of electrical installations on October 2004 will place additional responsibilities on the division. This new requirement forms part of a stream of legislation being introduced on a yearly basis.
- **Risk Management** – significant change will involve taking risks and sound management of those risks will help to deliver less painful change and successful outcomes. In the face of continuously increasing workloads, the critically slender level of staff resources in times of sickness, resignation/retirement and leave is a major issue for service delivery. The strategy has been to compensate by efficient data processing but this has implications for ongoing costs that can no longer be met from front line staff savings. Dependence on income from fees in a volatile global economic climate has already been mentioned. Replacement software usually requires considerable work to bring it to optimum usefulness.
- **E-Government** – The Division is at the forefront of delivery of services that are ripe for transfer to electronic means of delivery. In particular, the development of a universal land and property gazetteer and the electronic submission of applications, as well as the ability to ascertain the status of applications on the Planning registers have significant ramifications. The existing IT system delivering Planning Development and Building Control and Land Charges has undergone a radical transformation by the software supplier and will be installed soon. A major transfer to another platform has been ruled out. Project managing installation and harmonising with the Government's E agenda will be a challenge. Potentially, this will impact on service delivery considerably. The problem is a continuing one as IT develops.
- **Planning Delivery Grant** – Receipt of the Government grant in recognition of under-resourcing of Planning Services across the country depends on performance. The two criteria currently measured are the speed of decision making, particularly of major applications and the possession of an up to date Local Plan/Local Development Document. Achievement of targets could result in a grant of around £100,000. Failure to do so could result in no grant at all.

- **Rapid Growth in the District** – South Derbyshire is one of the fastest growing districts in the region. Demand for most services within the Division is growing faster than the resources available. This is reflected in the development process particularly.
- **Government** advice increasingly prescribes the shape of Planning Services policy such that there is less scope for local discretion. Consequently there is less scope to deliver local expectations so far as outcomes are concerned. Paradoxically greater flexibility is being afforded to Building Control with devolved fee setting and fewer prescriptive requirements. The new Regional Spatial Strategy required under the new legislation will need to be prepared by the Regional Planning Body before effective delivery of the Council's own Local Development Document can be achieved. The Council's ability to shape this process will be limited by its own slender resources and the presence/influence of 40 other Local Authorities in the Region.
- **Sustainable development** and the need to protect scarce resources as well as the natural environment and countryside for its own sake introduce challenges for the service, which is particularly under-resourced in this area of activity.
- **Strategy delivery and overall work programme** – The Council's Housing, Heritage Interpretation, Cycling, Walking and Town Centre Strategies as well as the Local Plan require to be monitored, reported on and delivered and in some cases extensively reviewed. At the same time the Local Plan has reached a critical stage, leading up to its adoption.
- **Public Access to and Probity in Planning** – The issue of public speaking at Committee (flagged up by the best value review) raises significant issues for the conduct of meetings and for resourcing the arrangements for informing the public of specific opportunities to become involved. The Implementation Plan arising from the District Audit Study into probity requires to be implemented and this also has implications for the devising and monitoring of protocols.

Specific Opportunities

2.2 The key opportunities are as follows:-

- To invest in IT so as to improve access to services via the Internet
- To benefit from the receipt of the Delivery Grant and devote it to improving services to ensure qualification for future grant entitlement.
- To influence the development of CRM, DIP and FMS in a manner that improves the service and also reduces operating overheads
- To use the process of developing a Community Strategy to shape the service towards community priorities
- To use performance and project management to improve efficiency and increase effectiveness
- To make the most effective use of development potential to secure planning gain to improve facilities for local residents and protect and enhance the environment, particularly in the National Forest.

- To develop building control service initiatives in the interests of service users
- To utilise the capital programme supported by partnership funding to enhance the built and natural environment and fulfil the objectives of the Local Plan.

Future budget pressures over the next 3 years

2.3 The greatest challenge is to forecast income and attain targets to secure further grant, as noted above. The means by which this may best be guaranteed is to ensure the service is properly resourced. The planned introduction of CRM also means potential changes to the support service corporately and within Planning. In the short term Planning Delivery Grant should be maximised to meet the costs of any necessary changes.

3. KEY TASKS

Ref. No.	Actions	Timescale
PS1	Provide the planning policy input to developing the South Derbyshire Community Strategy	March 2005
PS2	Adopt new South Derbyshire Local Plan and commence review to convert the policies into a Local Development Document	July 2004 March 2007
PS3	Secure a viable platform on which to continue to provide and develop data systems Research proposals for submitting input to and accessing details of applications, planning advice and process on internet Install replacement D C & B C software	March 2005
PS4	Maintain the performance management framework already in place and monitor and adapt as required	Ongoing
PS5	Maintain level of market penetration for Building Control. Develop innovative means of promoting delivering the service and monitor and report on effectiveness	Ongoing
PS6	Maintain capability to deliver expert advice and decision making via external consultants Focus expenditure so as to secure level of advice that fully informs decision making on where technical expertise is required	Ongoing
PS8	Prepare an action plan for regenerating the area between Swadlincote town centre and Woodville and provide better linkage	Sept 2004

Ref. No.	Actions	Timescale
PS9	Pursue improvements to gateways for Swadlincote town centre and the approaches to it	Sept 2004
PS10	Contribute to development of CRM	Ongoing
PS11	Contribute to development of Housing Strategy and the maintenance of a balanced housing market	Ongoing
PS12	Contribute to development of "greener" public open space	Ongoing
PS13	Prepare Supplementary Planning Guidance for Section 106 agreements to deliver in accord with the Local Plan, community requirements and the need to secure council's priorities for community facilities	December 2004
PS14	Review and update other Supplementary Planning Guidance documents	December 2004
PS15	Prepare for introduction of Part P of Building Regulations	
PS16	Prepare for the introduction of public speaking at the Development Control Committee	March 2005
CORP 1	Crime and Disorder:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit existing services and policies • Implement Action Plan 	September 2004 September 2004 (onwards)
CORP 2	Equal Opportunity and Diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Audit of services and policies in the light of the Race Equality Scheme • Implement Race Equality Scheme Action Plan 	September 2004/5/6 September 2004 (onwards)

4. MANAGING RISKS

Risk	Extent of risk	Likelihood of occurrence	Proposed Action to minimise the risk
Loss of income associated with downturn in the economy with less applications being submitted or loss of market share in Building Control	Potential loss of income up to £x00,000	Low	Careful attention to forecasts in setting budgets. Maintain staffing level and customer service at a level sufficient to deliver the service and continue to promote it
Judicial Review of Planning/Building Control Decisions. Awards of costs on appeal or in maladministration cases	Costs in the order of £x00,000	Low	Maintain quality in professional advice and administrative processing
Inability to maintain performance up to the level required to obtain Planning Delivery Grant	Potential loss of income up to £100,000	Medium	Ensure staff and other resources match demands of workload
Costs of failed court action against breaches of planning/building control or loss of Appeal cases with costs	Up to £x00,000	Extremely low	Employ best advice to avoid risk
Liabilities for non compliance with building regulations including structural failure of property arising from building failures ascribed to building control shortcomings	Up to several £0,000s	Low	Maintain sound procedures and act speedily to recover ground when mistakes are made Insure against risk
Adverse report from Local Plan Inspector resulting in need for further Inquiry or legal challenge	Up to several £0,000s	Low	Employ best advice to avoid risk!

5. EMPLOYEE STRUCTURE AND WORK ORGANISATION

Employee structure

Organisation chart attached.

Development Needs

Service Plan Reference	Key Development Needs
PS3	Training in use of systems
PS4	Training in use of systems
PS10	Training in use of systems
PS15	Training in application of the Regulations

6. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

Best Value Performance Indicators

Best Value Indicator	Estimate 2003/04	Target 2004/05	Target 2005/06	Target 2006/07
106 %New homes on brown field sites	45%	45%	45%	45%
107 Planning cost £/capita	£10.00	£9.14	£9.21	
109a % major Planning apps in 13 weeks	50%	60%	60%	60%
109b % minor Planning apps in 8 weeks	60%	65 %	65%	65%
109c % other Planning apps in 8 weeks	80 %	80 %	80 %	80 %
111 % Applicants satisfied with the service received	80%	85%	85%	85%
188 % Decisions delegated to Officers	90%	90%	90%	90%

Best Value Indicator	Estimate 2003/04	Target 2004/05	Target 2005/06	Target 2006/07
200a Development Plan adopted and under 5 years old? Yes/No	NO	NO	YES	YES
200b Proposals on deposit for alteration or replacement within 3 years Yes/No	YES	YES		

7. USEFUL CONTACTS

Job Title	Name	Tel. No.	E-mail
Planning Services Manager	J. Birkett	(01283) 595742	john.birkett@south-derbys.gov.uk
Development Control Manager	T. Sylvester	(01283) 595743	tony.sylvester@south-derbys.gov.uk
Local Plans Manager	G. Hague	(01283) 595821	gill.hague@south-derbys.gov.uk
Building Control Manager	S. Powell	(01283) 595730	steve.powell@south-derbys.gov.uk
Team Leader	S. Frezza	(01283) 595937	sue.frezza@south-derbys.gov.uk

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

SERVICE PLAN 2004/07

1. SERVICE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

1.1 The Division is responsible for:-

Economic Development and Tourism

- Encouraging the formation and growth of new and existing businesses and ventures, principally through support for Business Link;
- Provision of accommodation on flexible terms designed to assist small businesses (the Council has 68 properties in its investment portfolio, a mixture of industrial units, shops, restaurants and offices);
- Provision of good quality literature, and, where appropriate, advertising, to promote the area's potential for inward investment and tourism (this is now predominantly undertaken in partnership with other bodies). For 2002/03 just over 2030 requests for information were received by the unit and 7760 households were contacted by Direct Mail campaigns; just under 150,000 leaflets were distributed;
- Promoting the availability of sites and premises;
- Working with East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) and other fora to attract inward investment (the Council received approximately 200 enquiries in 2002/03)
- Undertaking initiatives to assist the regeneration of the area e.g the Environmental Improvement Scheme;
- Developing partnerships and working with a wide range of organisations to promote regeneration of the area;
- Maximising the resources available for regeneration initiatives, including preparing funding bids and working with the Derby & Derbyshire Economic Partnership;
- Actioning initiatives developed within the Council's Tourism Strategy;
- Playing an active role in the Derbyshire Tourism Forum and its sub-groups such as the Marketing Group which has replaced the Derbyshire Tourism Officers Group, the National Forest Tourism Working Group, and the newly established National Forest & Beyond partnership with East Staffordshire Borough Council, North West Leicestershire District Council and the National Forest Company;
- Implementation and development of a Destination Management System to promote/enable booking of tourism electronically (including via EnglandNet)

Asset and Estate Management

- Strategic management of the Council's assets, through preparation of an annual Asset Management Plan and implementation of actions arising from the Best Value review to improve Corporate Asset Management;
- Co-ordinating and implementing effective management of the Council's land and non-operational property (this generates income of approximately £450,000 p.a);
- Establishing procedures and systems for all estate management tasks and reviewing these on a regular basis;
- Developing comprehensive records for all land and property which the Council owns or in which it holds an interest;
- Ensuring that, wherever possible, all Council owned land and property is let or sold at open market value and on the most appropriate terms;
- Identifying and efficiently disposing of any surplus assets;
- Assisting other Council Property Managers with the management of the operational portfolio;
- Providing a professional, helpful and efficient service for members, officers, service users and the general public.

Footpath Management

- Providing the Public Footpath service on an agency basis for the County Council, which part funds the service. Some 350 miles of public rights of way are involved in an inspection and maintenance programme. In 2002/03, 266 incidences of obstruction were received and acted upon.

1.2 The service is provided to a wide range of internal and external **customers**.

- Internal customers include Members and most other divisions
- External customers include Tenants, the general public, businesses, community/voluntary organisations, visitors, investors, other partner organisations, interest groups

1.3 The work of the Division contributes to a number of the Council's key aims:

- **Key aim 1** - To strengthen and develop the local economy through support for business development and inward investment - through many of our Economic Development activities
- **Key aim 2** - To safeguard and enhance the natural and built environment - through Environmental Improvement Initiatives
- **Key aim 4** - To promote the health and welfare of all sections of the community, including access to leisure and cultural activities - through various Economic Development activities, particularly those related to Tourism and Footpath Management
- **Key aim 5** - To secure continuous improvements in the quality and efficiency of services provided by the Council - through implementation of actions emanating from the Best Value Review of Asset Management
- **Key aim 6** - To manage resources efficiently and effectively - through effective Asset and Estate Management
- **Key aim 7** - To listen to and represent the people of South Derbyshire in county, regional and national arenas - through our involvement in a number of partnerships
- **Key aim 8** - To support the development of The National Forest and its enjoyment by residents and visitors - primarily through our Tourism activities and Footpath management

2. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

2.1 Most issues which are seen as a challenge can also be viewed as an opportunity. Therefore a single list is provided rather than two separate ones:

- Developing and maintaining co-ordinated service delivery with other partners e.g.
 - Derbyshire County Council in respect of inward investment, tourism, funding opportunities etc
 - Southern Derbyshire Chamber, on a range of business support issues
 - Jobcentre Plus, on employment issues
 - EMDA, in promoting economic development opportunities and developing tourism structures and initiatives
 - Other local authorities, and the National Forest Company, in partnership working for tourism promotion and as a lobbying body for funding through the Derby and Derbyshire Economic Partnership.
 - Groundwork Erewash Valley, on an Environmental Improvement Scheme
- Implementing the Government's 'modernising' agenda
 - Working with the newly formed Derby & Derbyshire Economic Partnership
 - Contributing to the South Derbyshire Local Strategic Partnership and the development of the Community Strategy
 - Outworking the new power to promote the economic well-being of the area

- Development and implementation of the Strategic Asset Management agenda
 - *Preparation of an annual AMP*
 - *Developing the corporate role of the Asset Management & Monitoring Group*
 - *Monitoring performance of the Council's assets*
 - *Ongoing consultation with all asset users*
 - *Implementing the Best Value Improvement Plan*
 - *Developing a better corporate approach to dealing with issues*
 - *Clarifying management responsibilities*
- The regional context for tourism is changing rapidly. Destination East Midlands 2003-2010 was published October 2003 proposing a small regional executive - East Midlands Tourism - and sub-regional Destination Management Organisations/Partnerships. The challenge for Derbyshire & the Peak District is to evolve a delivery structure; and for the National Forest & Beyond partnership to develop relationship/s with the DMOs in the 3 counties. As proposed (by emda) DMOs could require substantial additional funding from local authorities and/or secondment of tourism staff. The main issues are therefore:
 - maintaining the existing excellent partnership working arrangements
 - funding levels required and ensuring new structures are sustainable
 - developing of sub-regional structures to serve Derbyshire/Peak District and the National Forest destination/brands
 - staffing implications
- Continuing to assist in the regeneration of the district through a range of economic development initiatives such as the Environmental Improvement Scheme, and by securing new investment in the District
- Providing a more efficient footpath management service through IT improvements.
- Supporting the National Forest - through tourism, Footpath development and wider partnership initiatives
- Maintaining a base of statistical information on Economic Development and Tourism to provide valuable information for funding bids etc.
- Balancing increasing work pressures with limited staff resources e.g
 - *The addition of strategic asset management work has meant that less time can be devoted to economic development, particularly by the Economic Development Manager. It has also placed further pressure on the Estates Officer who must combine day to day property management duties with consideration of disposals, performance monitoring, consultation etc to assist in developing the AMP and Best Value in Asset Management.*
 - *As the importance of Tourism to the local economy achieves greater recognition, the range of opportunities to assist with its' development is increasing, and therefore the pressure on both staff time and budgets.*

2.2 Future budget pressures over the next 3 years - additional resources will or may be required for the following issues:

- The staffing pressures highlighted above in 2.1
- Developments in the promotion of tourism opportunities, particularly related to footpaths
- Further support for the Derby & Sandiacre Canal Trust
- Improvements to the heating & ventilation systems within the Civic Offices
- Costs associated with making more efficient use of space within the Civic Offices

- Improvement works to ensure that the Council's buildings with public access comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Further reducing the maintenance backlog on the Council's public buildings
- Sustaining and developing the county-wide Destination Management System, requiring the authority to continue funding once Foot & Mouth funding is exhausted (i.e. 2003/4 onwards).
- Identifying and resourcing (with partners) the level of funding required by the proposed Destination Management Organisation/s.
- Continuing to develop the National Forest & Beyond tourism campaign, extending both geographic coverage and market segments / niches targeted.

3. KEY TASKS

Ref. No.	Actions	Timescale
ED1	Crime and disorder - Section 17: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit existing services and policies • Implement action plan 	September 2004 September 2004 (onwards)
ED2	Equal Opportunities and Diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Audit of services and policies in the light of the Race Equality Scheme • Implement the Race Equality Scheme Action plan 	September 2004/05/06 September 2004 (onwards)
ED5	Strategic asset management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement actions arising from the Asset Management Best Value Review Improvement Plan • Produce an annual AMP • Further develop the corporate role of the Asset Management & Monitoring Group • Monitor Property Performance Indicators and local indicators. Benchmark with other authorities • Complete Civic Offices/Depot space review 	Complete Dec 2005 Each July April 2004 Quarterly assessment April 04
ED6	Estate management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all the Council's operational properties are held on appropriate terms - update as required 	Dec 04
ED7	Economic Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run the Environmental Improvement scheme in partnership with Groundwork Erewash Valley • Work with the DDEP and other funding bodies to secure additional support for regeneration initiatives in South Derbyshire 	Complete March 2005 Ongoing
ED8	Tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop wider range of tourism literature (e.g. Food & Drink; Group Travel; additional Walks leaflets; combined Events guide; niche material i.e. Historic Gardens and/or Historic Churches Trails; Educational Group visits) • Develop proposals with appropriate partners to implement the future structure to deliver tourism • Review South Derbyshire Tourism Strategy once new delivery structure agreed 	Start April 04 By April 05 July 05

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop local partnership to consider proposals for developing tourism in and around Melbourne [these may be undertaken by the authority, or in partnerships] 	April 05
ED9	Footpath management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise Countryside Access Management System - a Footpath Management IT system, in liaison with County Council Utilise digitalised Definitive Map, in liaison with County Council Develop additional walks with added tourism / economic benefits 	April 04 April 04 Dec 04

4. MANAGING RISKS

Risk	Extent of risk	Likelihood of occurrence (High/Medium/Low)	Proposed Action to minimise the risk
Economic downturn leading to reduced level of take-up of Council commercial properties	Potential reduction of £x0,000 of income	Low	Dispose of assets where possible
Economic downturn leading to substantial loss of jobs / business failures	Additional staff resources and budget required	Low	Seek to promote a diverse business base, and ensure that good business support is available
Council sued due to properties not meeting DDA legislation	Unknown - no test cases to date	High	Undertake priority improvements and put in place a plan to undertake the others
Formation of Destination Management Organisation/s	Additional budget likely to be required and full or part time staff secondment possible	High	Ensure full participation in negotiations and decision-taking process

5. EMPLOYEE STRUCTURE AND WORK ORGANISATION

Employee structure - see the contacts section at the end of the document

Development Needs

Service Plan Reference	Key Development Needs
ED1 & 2	All staff will require training in Section 17 and Equal Opportunities
Estate Management	Staff (particularly new) need training in MapInfo and Property IT systems