

Appendix A

16th December 2002

Mr F McArdle
Chief Executive
South Derbyshire District Council
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Dear Mr McArdle

Follow-up Inspection of Development Control – December 2002

We have now completed our follow-up inspection of the Development Control service. This letter sets out the findings of the follow-up inspection and of your progress to date.

Summary of Findings

We inspected the Development Control service in October 2001 and judged the Service to be a fair, one star service with no prospects of improvement. We made a number of recommendations which aimed to assist the Council, provide direction and address capacity issues. At the time of our inspection the Council was facing the need to make major change to deal with a financial crisis. We acknowledge that, out of necessity, there has been a focus at the heart of the organisation on securing long term stability and financial security which has meant that progress on some issues has been slow.

Our follow-up inspection has identified that you have made progress on addressing our recommendations and on your improvement plan. Work on the Local Plan Review has demonstrated team working within the Council and a strong attempt to engage the public in the process. In addition the Development Control service has been reorganised and has made progress on performance monitoring and streamlining processes.

However, there is still a lack of focus on understanding what customers want from the Development Control service. At one level this is obvious as the Council is delivering decisions to applicants, working with developers and developing the Local Plan. However, because the service is not actively consulting it's customers it is likely that opportunities for recognition of good practice and suggestions about improvements are being missed. Although local managers think they are providing everything customers need there is no evidence to prove this.

Progress on Recommendations

Our follow-up inspection has shown that the Service has largely addressed the issues raised by our previous inspection. The recommendations about corporate issues are listed below with our comments on each:

Rec: Establish and implement a comprehensive performance management system by April 2001

The framework for performance management is complete including performance development reviews for individual staff but work on corporate priorities is still ongoing. Local people have had limited involvement in identifying corporate priorities but there has been some involvement of the public in ranking priorities through a questionnaire to local Citizens Panel members. The local strategic partnership and community strategy work are at early stages of development and, as yet, have not fed directly into your corporate planning processes. This has meant that the evolving performance management system has not fully identified measures for services from a customer perspective (see Appendix 2.1).

Rec: Produce a robust procurement strategy

The document entitled Procurement Strategy 2003 is a working document identifying procurement issues that the Council needs to think further about, it is not yet a robust procurement strategy. Some of these are important issues connected to your corporate aims; for example, sustainable development and linking procurement to your key aims. You have identified the need for a corporate procurement working group to develop and implement a strategy and set out a timetable for the work that this group will be doing, which runs until April 2004. A procurement strategy is an essential tool that underpins best value processes and helps councils to demonstrate that they are delivering value for money to local people. The strategy document you have developed is a useful stepping stone toward establishing the strategy but it has taken some considerable time to produce and gain committee approval and there is much detail still to work through. (See Appendix 2.2).

Rec: Ensure that the best value review programme is less fragmented and that the implications of each service review are not viewed in isolation or out of context.

Rec: Focus on outcomes of planned actions within service reviews

You have continued with your planned programme of reviews, tackling core organisational activities, such as Human Resources and financial services in year two. The timetable for this work has slipped but these reviews should be completed in March 2003. We understand that you have used your scrutiny committee and external agencies to challenge services and undertake reality checks which should mean that the review outcomes are more robust. However, we believe that there is still room for greater involvement of your policy committee members; particularly at the start of the review process to identify what the organisation wants or needs to achieve through each service review and how any improvement actions could impact on other parts of the organisation. Clarity about specific service improvements that support your corporate aims and have clear monitoring routes should ensure that actions are not taken out of context and that improvements can be clearly measured within your performance management structures (see Appendix 2.3 and 2.4).

Rec: Ensure more joined up approach to development issues across all council Services

You have reorganised your member and organisational structures to reflect the connections between key areas of work. The Environmental and Development Services Committee is now responsible for planning and planning policy, building control, economic development and much of environmental health service and the organisational structure matches the member structure.

We also note that team working is identified as a critical success factor in your corporate plan. Within development control you now adopt a development team approach for large projects. This means that the relevant internal departments are engaged in supporting and shaping new developments. For example, liaison between Leisure, Local Plans and Development Control on public open spaces to ensure that when an area is adopted as an open space the leisure department know what is required from their service. There are also good examples of work with external agencies including Highways, the Environment Agency, other councils (for cross border developments) and the Primary Care Trust (see Appendix 2.5).

Service specific recommendations were made to address service strategy, staffing, processes, outcomes and the added value of the service.

Rec: Develop a comprehensive and challenging improvement plan by the end of 2000/2001 which incorporates a vision, priorities and forward strategy for the service.

Rec: From this (service) strategy produce an annual action plan with clear specific objectives and SMART targets which are linked to the achievement of corporate priorities in a measurable way.

Following our original inspection in October 2001 a new implementation plan was developed and approved by the Councillors in July 2001 which addressed the service issues raised during the inspection. The plan identifies actions, timescales, priorities, indicators, targets and responsible officers and is monitored through the relevant scrutiny committee. Although the corporate vision and priorities were identified in this document links between them and the planned service actions were not clear. Less than half of the actions in the implementation plan are likely to have a direct impact on the public.

The Planning Service Division service plan 2002/03 covering Local Plans, Development Control and Building Control were written in November 2001. A clear purpose is given for the service and the links to corporate aims are identified. The later (draft) service plan for 2003/04 includes critical success factors, key performance indicator targets and departmental objectives. Although these documents set out the planned actions for the relevant year, identify targets to aim for and make important corporate links there is still a lack of focus on improving outcomes for people. None of the performance measures are linked to achievements for local people which makes it difficult to gauge whether the Council is delivering the services in the right way (see Appendix 2.6 and 2.7).

Rec: As part of a performance management system identify staff training needs through personal appraisals and (as planned) investigate a forward training plan and resources by June 2001

The Council has implemented Performance and Development Reviews (PDR) for all staff with this years reviews expected to be completed by Christmas 2002. Staff now have individual training plans with training needs being met through a combination of departmental and centrally organised training. There is a corporate training plan which is linked to needs identified through individual PDRs. In Development Control there is evidence of sharing training with other councils in the area and of making use of government workshops. Staff that we met reported that they had received training opportunities as a result of the PDR system and that they felt supported in their roles within the organisation. (See Appendix 2.8).

Rec: Use the new IT system within the service to improve internal management and monitoring systems, such as the performance of the service against national and local indicators, staff time against different work areas etc.

Rec: Continue with plans to produce and distribute a charter, which sets out targets for service delivery and communicates these with users of the development control service

There has been a great deal of work on the IT systems used within Development Control allowing staff to work more efficiently and information to be shared effectively. For example, all trees and tree preservation orders and listed buildings are now identified on the system. In addition procedures to produce appropriate letters and planning notices are automated once an application is logged within the GIS system. There is the recognised need for continued development of the systems in use to ensure greater sharing of information and more efficient work processes. There is evidence of monitoring using the IT systems including identifying progress on processing planning applications against targets and this information is used to manage workloads and staff performance. There is a plan to produce additional management information in the next quarter to enable reporting against targets.

There is a contrast between the clear service focus on delivering a good service to customers at a day to day level and an apparent lack of engaging with customers to collect and use feedback about the current service in order to make improvements that customers would like. The service has not surveyed customers for the BVPP satisfaction ratings nor engaged in regular and purposeful contact about service development or change.

An example of this is in the use of the Development Control Charter which was created in April 2001 and circulated to Parish Councils. The Charter is also available at the planning reception desk and has recently been put onto the Council website. There was no organised promotion of the Charter and staff were unaware of how it was promoted although some of them reported that they sent it to customers occasionally. The web-based version of the Charter is not easy to read on screen as it is simply a text copy of the original document.

The contents of the Charter could benefit from being promoted and used in more appropriate ways than as a booklet in its entirety. For example:

- ♦ using sections of the document as one page leaflets for applicants or people wishing to make an objection and giving a contact number for the relevant officers; and
- ♦ adding a contents list and hypertext links in the web version to guide people to the section they need.

There is no information about whether the Charter has had any impact on customers, for example no knowledge of whether it has had any effect on the number of calls requesting information on progress of an application or any impact on complaints. Although the Charter clearly identifies the targets for the service it is not clear where performance against these is reported or how the public can find out what the performance is. It would, for example, be easy to do this on the notice board at planning reception or on the planning section of your website (see Appendix 2.9 and 2.10).

Rec: Take a more proactive approach to the preparation and distribution of pre-application advice e.g. by publishing design briefs with the local plan review, and producing more 'user friendly' design guidelines in electronic and paper form.

Rec: As part of the Local Plan review, create a strong design vision for South Derbyshire and communicate this through positive guidelines for new Development.

Work continues on producing and updating materials for the public. Most of this has focused on improving existing Supplementary Planning Guidance, work on guidance for advertisements, the cycling strategy and walking strategy and Swadlincote Town centre has been completed. Work on a further seven documents is still to be completed with guidance on extensions, trees, public open space provision, historic South Derbyshire and section 106 agreements at the consultation phase (with local Agents), parking standards forming part of the Local Plan review and housing layout and design shortly to be adopted. A strong design vision for the area is supported by the development of Planning Guidance and close working between the Local Plan team and other sections within the Environment and Development Services directorate. As part of ensuring the design vision works when applied the Development Control staff make team visits, with staff from outside their area, to look at the impact of planning decisions in the District (see Appendix 2.11 and 2.12).

Rec: Ensure that the Local Plan review actively addresses key corporate objectives and priorities and is responsive to the wider national agenda e.g. on issues such as sustainability, affordable housing, regeneration, designing out crime, social inclusion etc.

There has been good progress on this with evidence of debate and team working within planning and development control to identify key issues and make appropriate responses to them in the plan. Staff reported that they discuss issues such as village sustainability and open spaces and these requirements are translated into guidance or Section 106 requirements which should achieve benefits for local people in terms of infrastructure, affordable housing etc. One of the benefits of this work within the Council is that Development Control staff now feel more confident about defending the Local Plan in their planning decisions in future as they have been so closely involved in the preparatory work and in discussing issues raised from the first deposit stage. (See Appendix 2.13).

Rec: Ensure that the Local Plan review maximises, and takes account of, community and stakeholder involvement.

Rec: Ensure that consultation is used to inform future service delivery e.g. section 106 agreements, design briefs and the level of enforcement activity undertaken by the council.

Rec: Ensure that the resulting local plan policies translate into clear guidelines for

development control activity.

The Local Plan process does seem to be engaging people well. There have been a number of approaches to this including presentations to Parish Councils, community workshops and appearances on, or in, the local media. The use of the Council website has also proved helpful with over 2400 hits on the Local Plan pages in the nine weeks of the first deposit stage. The close cross departmental work on developing the Local Plan (see above) should provide a positive base form which to develop clear guidelines for development control activity at the end of the process.

Consultation with stakeholder bodies is being used to inform work on Section 106 agreements. A strategy for developer contributions is being developed in conjunction with local bodies including health, education and highways; however, consultation with developers, agents and the public to inform wider service delivery is not undertaken regularly (see Appendix 2.14, 2.15 and 2.16).

In summary, the Council has made progress on all the recommendations from the first inspection; 50 per cent have been completed and the other 50 per cent are partially completed. However, there is still important work that has not been fully implemented and the delays created by corporate issues or lack of resources have had an impact on how much has been achieved for local people. Of the eight actions completed only the three relating to the Local Plan are likely to have been noticed by the public as they have been engaged in the consultation. The recommendations that have been partially completed have more potential impact on the public but the production of more user friendly information and the creation of the Customer Charter have not been undertaken in the most inclusive and engaging way for the users of the service and the wider public.

Progress on Improvement Plan

Your revised improvement plan identified 17 actions which are listed in Appendix 2, 14 of these have the potential to have an effect on local people, particularly those relating to the Local Plan review (see 2.27 and 2.28) and the provision of information for the public (see 2.23 plain English versions of SPG and the Customer Charter for comment, 2.24 reviewing documents including application forms and 2.26 developing the use of the internet). In addition actions that should improve the speed, transparency and consistency of decision making on planning applications have been completed (see 2.22 and 2.25).

However, there has been no substantive progress on allowing speaking at Development Control Committee meetings (see 2.25) and the enforcement policy is still under development (see 2.29). Both of these issues are of crucial importance for the public. The enforcement policy work should include consultation with developers as well as identifying the benefits of the policy for local people and including them in the consultation.

Although there has been progress there is still a reactive quality to many of the actions. For example, customer comments do affect the design of forms etc but these comments are not systematically canvassed and customer views are not established through specific, regular contact with users. In addition the website now contains information and forms etc for the public but this has not been actively or widely promoted; service staff simply tell people about it when an enquirer asks for a form or information.

The issue of public speaking at Development Control Committee meetings is still outstanding. Councillors that we spoke to told us that they want this to happen and a visit to another council has been undertaken to look at how they conducted public speaking. However, it appears that any decision to implement this is unlikely before a corporate

consideration of speaking at all decision making committees within the Council's work on democratic renewal. In addition there appears to be a concern that speaking at committee will be expensive in terms of resources and take considerable amounts of time, neither of which is necessarily the case in our experience. Over 75 per cent of planning authorities already extend this opportunity to local people so there are plenty of authorities at which the Council could look to identify the steps to take in making this improvement.

In summary, all but one of the 17 actions in your revised improvement plan has been partially or completely implemented with a minimal increase in resources. Of these six could have a direct effect on the public but there is no evidence of the council engaging with customers to gauge any impact on service users of these actions.

Movement in performance indicators

As part of our follow-up inspection we carried out an assessment of your Best Value Performance Indicators relating to the Development Control Service to assess progress towards delivering services consistent with the top 25 per cent of councils.

The council has decreased the planning cost per head of population between 2000/1 (£7.69) and 2001/2 (£7.48) largely due to an increase in planning application income which is likely to place the service in the lowest cost quartile.

Performance in terms of the percentage of planning applications determined within eight weeks has fluctuated, but generally improved with 79 per cent of applications have being determined within eight weeks in the year to date (unaudited figure) compared with 78 per cent at the time of the original inspection and a government target of 80 per cent. Figures for the last reported quarter to June 2002 indicated a drop in performance on the determination of applications within eight weeks. This reflects the difficulties that the service has in sustaining performance when posts become vacant or staff are moved between roles. Although a temporary worker was brought in during this time of change there was a reduction in service capacity. Historically this service has had slim resources and the service needs to develop a failsafe solution to guarantee performance in the future.

The percentage of applications determined by officers through delegation is now at 90 per cent compared with 84 per cent at the time of our initial inspection and a national target of 90 per cent.

Conclusion

Our follow up inspection has shown that the Service has made progress on 14 of the 15 actions in your improvement plan and all 16 of the recommendations from our previous inspection. In particular the Council has shown good team work and public engagement with the Local Plan review and Development Control has made progress on performance monitoring and streamlining processes.

However, the progress on some key issues such as your procurement strategy has been slow. In addition the lack of focus on understanding what customers want from the Development Control service and engaging with them to identify areas of potential service improvement is of continuing concern.

Further Recommendations

We recommend that Development Control focuses service monitoring and development on customers by:

- ◆ Establishing procedures for public speaking at Development Control Committee meetings, drawing upon the experiences of other Councils and of customers. If necessary this could be a pilot for wider work on speaking at other council committees, by June 2003.
- ◆ Establishing ways of regularly capturing and evaluating customer comments about the service and building this into 'day to day' service delivery, by June 2003.
- ◆ Working with customers to identify potential improvements to the service and ways of implementing these.
- ◆ Making the Development Control Charter more accessible to the public through using the content in a more tailored way. Promoting the Charter and monitoring the effect that this may have on the service. Reporting performance against charter targets to the public by April 2003.

We recommend that the Council ensures that it can demonstrate the delivery of value for money to local people through the procurement strategy. Particular attention should be paid to:

- ◆ Completing the work the council is undertaking on procurement by September 2003.
- ◆ Identifying the desired outcomes for the public to be achieved through the strategy.

Next steps

You are not required to respond in writing to this letter. However, if there any factual inaccuracies you wish to correct the Inspection team will be happy to receive your response.

Yours sincerely

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Summary of Progress. South Derbyshire Development Control

Recommendation/Improvement		Action completed?	Summary of action taken/ Reason for no action	Benefit to local people
Recommendations				
1	Establish and implement a comprehensive performance management system by April 2001	Yes	Implemented March 2002. BVPP, Corporate Plan, service plans and Employee Performance and Development Review scheme all in place and linked together. Guidance notes produced for Employee Performance and Development Review scheme. Public consultation on corporate priorities limited and work with the Local Strategic Partnership is at an early stage.	Council services and staff should all now be working in clear support of the Councils objectives etc. Public accountability through BVPP.
2	Produce a robust procurement strategy	Partially	2003 Procurement Strategy produced in June 2001 and agreed by Finance and Management Committee in October 2001. Identifies key issues about procurement and includes objectives for procurement in support of Council aims. However, corporate procurement working group still to be established (Jan '03) to develop and implement the strategy. Training planned for staff and Councillors Jan 2003 onward. Intending to undertake a Best Value Review of procurement structures and processes Dec 2002 to Dec 2003.	None at present
3	Ensure that the best value review programme is less fragmented and that the implications of each service review are not viewed in isolation or out of context	Partially	BVR programme revised. Environmental Planning and Control BVR planned to start in January 2003	Unknown, but the broader review focus gives the opportunity for more ambitious improvements.
4	Focus on outcomes of planned actions within service reviews	Partially	Best Value Framework contains guidance for review teams to focus on outcomes. Training given to staff.	Unknown.

Recommendation/ Improvement	Action completed?	Summary of action taken/ Reason for no action	Benefit to local people
5 Ensure more joined up approach to development issues across all council services	Yes	Structures in place to ensure this happens. Environmental and Development Services Committee now responsible for planning and planning policy, building control, economic development and much of environmental health service. Organisational structure matches the member structure. Team working identified as a critical success factor in Corporate plan. Work across internal departments includes collaboration with Leisure, Local plans and development Control on open spaces in the District. Development team approach now applied for projects.	More coherent approach to individual developments through development teams working across Council departments and with external agencies.
6 Develop a comprehensive and challenging improvement plan by the end of 2000/2001 which incorporates a vision, priorities and forward strategy for the service	Yes	Developed implementation plan – July 2001 which addressed the service issues raised at the time of the first inspection. Corporate vision and priorities identified but not clear how the planned actions relate to them.	Some actions in the Improvement plan will have a direct impact on the public; allowing greater access to information and clarity about service standards
7 From this (service) strategy produce an annual action plan with clear specific objectives and SMART targets which are linked to the achievement of corporate priorities in a measurable way	Yes	Planning service division service plan 2002/03 covering Local Plans, Development Control and Building Control written November 2001. Clear purpose stated for the division. Links to corporate aims and service related opportunities/challenges. Draft plan for 2003/04 includes critical success factors, key performance indicator targets and departmental objectives. No performance measures linked to achievements for local people. Some performance measures not yet monitored.	Services that support the Council in meeting local people's needs and priorities for the area.

Recommendation/ Improvement	Action completed?	Summary of action taken/ Reason for no action	Benefit to local people
8 As part of a performance management system identify staff training needs through personal appraisals and (as planned) investigate a forward training plan and resources by June 2001	Partially	Employee review development scheme now in place. Some reviews to be completed with staff in January 2003. No corporate forward training plan linked to resources, however, no apparent problem in providing appropriate training for people.	Staff should understand the contribution they should make to delivering high quality services.
9 Use the new IT system within the service to improve internal management and monitoring systems, such as the performance of the service against national and local indicators, staff time against different work areas etc.	Partially	System developing to meet requirements for performance monitoring. Funding for further development in place and other development ongoing. Customer Charter performance targets will be monitored from January 2003	Information shared through systems makes dealing with applications more streamlined and informs reception staff and planning officers about progress.
10 Continue with plans to produce and distribute a charter, which sets out targets for service delivery and communicates these with users of the development control service	Partially	Development Control Charter produced in April 2001 to explain standards of performance and services the public can expect. Clear explanations of processes and contact details given for complaints. Distributed to Parish Councils and available for the public at Planning department and a text copy of the Charter is on the Council web site.	Clearer idea of what to expect, what the processes are and what to do if there are problems that lead to customers needing to make a complaint. However, no contact details for the Development Control department in the document and distribution of the document has not been targeted or monitored.

Recommendation/ Improvement	Action completed?	Summary of action taken/ Reason for no action	Benefit to local people
11 Take a more proactive approach to the preparation and distribution of pre-application advice e.g. by publishing design briefs with the local plan review, and producing more 'user friendly' design guidelines in electronic and paper form	Partially	Local Plan review well advanced 2 nd deposit out Dec 2002. Supplementary Planning Guidance produced (since inspection) for three areas of work. Revisions of a further five documents are in progress to update them and make them more user friendly. Range or written advice not based on research into customer needs. There is evidence of responding to customer comments about specific documents such as the householder planning application form.	Clearer information and advice available on subjects identified by the Council.
12 As part of the Local Plan review, create a strong design vision for South Derbyshire and communicate this through positive guidelines for new development	Yes	Planning and development control have worked together to create the design vision on key issues such as sustainable villages, housing and open spaces.	Long term design vision clear
13 Ensure that the Local Plan review actively addresses key corporate objectives and priorities and is responsive to the wider national agenda e.g. on issues such as sustainability, affordable housing, regeneration, designing out crime, social inclusion etc.	Yes	See 12 and 14	See above
14 Ensure that the Local Plan review maximises, and takes account of, community and stakeholder involvement	Yes	Comprehensive programme undertaken, exceeding statutory requirements, will continue through 2 nd deposit stage. Undertaken community workshops, meetings with Parish Councils, used the media, put Local Plan draft on the website, seminars for members.	Opportunity to influence the Local Plan.

Recommendation/ Improvement	Action completed?	Summary of action taken/ Reason for no action	Benefit to local people
15 Ensure that consultation is used to inform future service delivery e.g. section 106 agreements, design briefs and the level of enforcement activity undertaken by the council	Yes	Section 106 agreements subject to policy based on Local Plan. Developing a strategy for developer contributions, in conjunction with key stakeholders such as NHS, education, highways and the National Forest. Not clear how local communities have been involved in this. Design brief produced following consultation. Enforcement policy will be subject to consultation in 2003.	Some opportunities to influence the design brief. Ultimately the strategy for developer contributions should mean that the local infrastructure is improved to meet the needs of local people.
16 Ensure that the resulting local plan policies translate into clear guidelines for development control activity	Partially	Noted. These considerations are being reflected in Local Plan policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance. Development Control staff involved closely in Local Plan development, more likely to be confident in interpreting the Local Plan in future.	Development Control activity should be consistent.
Improvement/Action Plan Actions (taken from revised Implementation Plan produced July 2001)			
17 Integrate service delivery with Corporate and Community Plans	Partially	Reshaped Implementation Plan is now part of annual Service Plan for development control. Community Strategy being formulated therefore no progress with integration. Local Strategic Partnership also in process of forming, should contribute to Corporate Plans in future.	None at present
18 Apply performance management to resources and outputs	Partially	Government and local targets specified in B V Performance Plan. All Government PI's reported as required Local PI's roll out in progress – 50% complete. IT systems in development control still being developed; at present key PIs being monitored include turnaround on planning applications and monitoring this in relation to team member's performance.	Service managers more aware of how the service is delivering current levels of performance and focussed on generating improvements that will positively affect the service to local people.

Recommendation/ Improvement	Action completed?	Summary of action taken/ Reason for no action	Benefit to local people
19 Prioritise staff deployment in core delivery areas	Yes	Resources devoted to Development Control maintained at present level with agreement for one additional support post. ½ time Enforcement Officer recruited ½ time Support worker recruited till 31/03/03 Complete but ongoing	Service resources targeted to make the service as responsive as possible.
20 Employ additional BCO to improve access, security, energy consumption and waste recycling in buildings	No	Not achieved. Service Development not agreed	None
21 Complete and maintain staff reviews and implement training	Yes	Performance and development review structures in place. Most members of staff in development control have had one to one meetings with their manager. Training available to those that need it including shared courses with neighbouring authorities.	Staff focussed on service aims and able to deliver good services to the public.
22 Review Delegation Agreement	Yes	Achieved April 2002. Should facilitate Government target of 90% delegated decisions	Delegation and community protection in better balance
23 Disseminate Customer Charter and plain English versions of all Supplementary Planning Guidance for comment	Partially	Charter disseminated to Parish Council's and available on the counter at planning reception. Wider distribution not planned. No monitoring of what impact the Charter has had. Recently put a text version of the charter on the Council web site. Revision of Supplementary Planning Guidance in progress 50% complete	Some customers have a clearer idea of what to expect from development control and how to complain if they don't get a good service.

Recommendation/ Improvement	Action completed?	Summary of action taken/ Reason for no action	Benefit to local people
24 Review all documents in the light of feedback from stakeholders	Partially	Development Control documentation reviewed including application forms. Staff respond to customer's comments about documents at a departmental level, making revisions and amendments where necessary. Documents not systematically reviewed, no overt process for recording and monitoring customer feedback about documents.	Some paperwork more user friendly and written in clearer language.
25 Produce policy for public to address Committee site visits	Yes	Site visit policy and protocol revised to ensure that Councillors act appropriately and applicants or objectors understand the status of the site visit in the application process. Limited progress made on Public speaking at development Control Committee. Some visits to councils that allow public speaking have been undertaken but the Council believes that this will require additional resources and very careful implementation.	Applicants and objectors have written information about what to expect from a site visit. Councillors able to concentrate on the facts of the application, relevant Planning Guidance, Local Plan issues etc. during site visits.
26 Develop Council's web page/internet access and advertise it	Partially	Local Plan, application forms, information and current applications/decisions on Web page. Web site promoted generally to the public through a leaflet in 2001. Web site not actively promoted by development control beyond telling enquirers/customers to look there for forms etc. Recently placed web address at the bottom of standard planning letters and added the customer charter to the web site.	Development control information available on the web site although many of the documents are direct text versions of the originals and it can be difficult to find key information within such long text documents. Staff all have personal e-mail addresses which is valued by customers.
27 Prepare and implement a project plan for the Local Plan review	Yes	Timetable published and being largely adhered to. Second draft deposit slightly delayed.	Clarity about stages of Local Plan review.

Recommendation/ Improvement	Action completed?	Summary of action taken/ Reason for no action	Benefit to local people
28 Implement consultation on Local Plan	Partially	Underway. See 14 above. First draft generated approx 1500 representations which have been collated in a database to aid analysis. Second draft going on deposit shortly.	Opportunity to influence the Local Plan.
29 Prepare an Enforcement priority policy	Partially	In course of preparation. Draft document exists identifying priorities for enforcement work which will go to Committee in December for approval. Parish Councils will then be consulted.	None at present.
30 Produce and negotiate policy with Parish Councils for them to monitor breaches of Planning Control	Partially	In course of preparation, see above. Invitation to undertake monitoring on behalf of the Council will be circulated with the draft document once agreed by Committee.	None at present.
31 Active involvement in review of financial and accountancy services	Partially	New FIS being procured with better accessibility by managers Managers on working parties for reviews allowing some learning/cross fertilisation from other parts of the Council.	None