



Walsall
Metropolitan Borough Council

Appendix G

PLANNING PERFORMANCE REVIEW IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2003/4 and 2005/6

Updated: February 2005

IMPLEMENTATION MANAGER:

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PERIOD OF PLAN:

September 2004 to March 2006

CONTEXT

This improvement plan is in respect of the performance review undertaken in 2003/2004 and the final report published on DD Month year. The overall outcome of that review was that insert two or three sentences only encapsulating the outcome and feel of the report. Be as specific as possible.

This plan addresses all the issues for improvement identified within that report as either specific recommendations or comments made indicating where improvement is required or is possible. The mainstream performance improvement agenda for the services covered by this plan are contained within the relevant service plans, team plans, and individual performance targets as part of the IPM scheme. There are also cross cutting issues, which are already being dealt with as part of other improvement plans (for example the annual audit letter). This plan does not seek to replicate those actions, and certain issues are therefore signposted to other plans to ensure the relevant connections are made.

This plan focuses on the improvement agenda, so does not cover the many strengths and good practice identified within the report.

The actions for improvement have been devised using SMART principles to ensure clear focus and the best outcomes, as follows:

| | | |
|----------|------------------------|--|
| S | Specific | What exactly are you going to do/change? Absolute clarity is vital. |
| M | Measurable | How much observable and quantifiable change is planned? What will be different and what will it look like? |
| A | Action-oriented | What action are you going to take that will ensure the change? How will you know when you've succeeded? |
| R | Realistic | Your timescales and targets should be stretching and realistic. Identify the critical path to ensure foundation targets are achieved first. |
| T | Time-based | By when are you going to do it/complete it? |

The actions in this improvement plan are grouped into logical themes. Each theme has a nominated “theme leader” who is responsible and accountable for ensuring all actions within their theme are implemented to the required standard and within the required timescales. There is one overarching generic theme applicable to all improvement plans entitled “Corporate Performance Management”. This is intended to ensure all performance management and improvement activity takes place within the wider improvement agenda, embeds our corporate approach, enables consistency, and promotes sound corporate governance. The theme leader for this is always the relevant Executive Director, with every senior manager ensuring compliance in their service.

Each recommendation/issue raised in the report is shown in this plan; relevant actions are directly linked to it. Improvement actions are prioritised as either ①, ② or ③, with ① being the highest priority. **BLUE** priority ❶ s are of particular/critical importance and/or are foundation actions that need to be done first as other actions are dependent upon them. Each action has a named individual, responsible for implementation. The relevant Cabinet portfolio holder is also shown.

Many issues are crosscutting and/or covered in other plans. Where appropriate, these connections to other plans and/or sections of this plan are signposted. Each theme leader should liaise with the Implementation Manager of the other plans to ensure actions are neither duplicated nor missed. The key for other plans is as follows:

AAL – annual audit letter (formerly known as annual management letter) issued by the Audit Commission.

ACAR – Audit Commission audit report action plan

BMCM – budget management and control manual

CS – communication strategy

EAP - equality action plan

EP – environment improvement plan

HP – housing improvement plan

IAAR – internal audit report action plan

MTFP – medium term financial plan

NRF – neighbourhood renewal fund plan

RMP – risk management policy




RR – risk register




SP – service plan (state which one)

SSP – social services improvement plan

ADD IN YOUR OWN PLANS AS NECESSARY – DON’T FORGET TO TELL CORP PM TEAM SO THEY CAN UPDATE THE TEMPLATE.

The final column shows the current status of each action against target. This enables the original version of the plan to be updated for monitoring and reporting purposes. The traffic light and arrows system in common use throughout the performance management framework, also applies here:

| | |
|---|---|
|  | means on target |
|  | means slightly off target and/or not on target but entirely recoverable |
|  | means off target and at risk |

| | |
|---|--|
|  | Performance improving since previous report |
|  | Performance stable since last report |
|  | Performance declining since last status report |

The final column should indicate when the action is entirely **COMPLETE**.






The themes within this improvement plan are as follows:





Key responsibilities/frequencies are as follows:

| THEME | | | |
|-------|--|-------------|--------|
| No | SHORT TITLE | LEADER | TEL |
| A | | | |
| 1 | Decision making - speed | D Elsworthy | 652409 |
| 2 | Decision making - quality | D Elsworthy | 652409 |
| 3 | Staff resources and development | D Elsworthy | 652409 |
| 4 | Communications and IT links | D Elsworthy | 652409 |
| 5 | Customer service | D Elsworthy | 652409 |
| 6 | Enforcement | T. Upton | 652411 |
| 7 | Cost of services | D Elsworthy | 652409 |
| 8 | Section 106 and corporate working | D Elsworthy | 652409 |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |

| OVERALL PLAN | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Implementation Manager | David Elsworthy |
| Cabinet Portfolio Holder | Cllr Longhi |
| Scrutiny Panel | Regeneration |
| Reporting to Cabinet | Annually |
| Reporting to EMT | Quarterly |

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| A. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT Working within the wider performance improvement agenda | THEME LEADER: Executive Director |
|---|--|

| REF | CORPORATE ISSUE | IMPROVEMENT ACTION | PRIORITY 1 2 3 | BY WHOM? | SIGNPOST PLANS | CURRENT STATUS |
|-----|---------------------|---|-------------------|---|----------------|---|
| A | Service planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% coverage Compliance with corporate template Signed off by 30.04.04 Reviewed quarterly by DMT | 1 | All EDs, ADs and GMS | SPs |  |
| B | Team Plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% coverage Connected to service plans Reviewed quarterly | 1 | All ADs and GMS | Link to SPs |  |
| C | Team Meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% coverage Taking place at least monthly Minutes/action notes taken News and views 100% coverage | 1 | All EDs, ADs, and GMS | |  |
| D | Risk Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directorate risk register in place and reviewed quarterly at DMT Full participation in relevant risk actions arising from strategic risk register Risk assessments in place for every post Risk assessment in place and being used for every project | 1 | All EDs All ADs/GMS All ADs/GMS | RR/RMP |  |
| E | Investors in people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current recognition for whole directorate | 1 | All EDs | |  |

| REF | CORPORATE ISSUE | IMPROVEMENT ACTION | PRIORITY 1 2 3 | BY WHOM? | SIGNPOST PLANS | CURRENT STATUS |
|-----|-------------------|--|-------------------|--|----------------|---|
| F | Equality standard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 2 achieved Level 3 actions being implemented for achievement by 31.03.05 | 1 | All EDs | EAP |  |
| G | Sickness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sickness policy being followed 12 month absences to be reduced to x by 31.03.05 6 month absences to be reduced by y by 31.03.04 Total absence to be reduced by x by 31.03.05 | 1 | All EDs, ADs and GMs | |  |
| H | Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget reported alternate months to mgt teams at various levels. Corrective action taken promptly Savings implemented Investment implemented Delivering targets within budget | 1 | All EDs All EDs All EDs All ADs/GMs | MTFP BMCM |  |
| I | Scrutiny | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant scrutiny panel fully engaged in general performance improvement agenda for this service How the relevant scrutiny panel will be engaged in the implementation of this action plan, the continuous improvement arising from it, and in preparing for the next inspection. | 1 | Exec Direc ADs | |  |

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| 1. Decision making - speed | THEME LEADER: |
| How to improve our performance timescales on decisions | David Elsworthy |

| REF 1 | REPORT RECOMMENDATION OR ISSUE | IMPROVEMENT ACTION | PRIORITY 1 2 3 | BY WHOM? | | BY WHEN? | SIGNPOST TO OTHER PLANS | CURRENT STATUS V TARGET |
|----------|--|---|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | | | MANAGER | PORTFOLIO HOLDER | | | |
| 1a | Balance of speed against quality | Task group to look at a potential duty officer role and limited availability of officers to customers | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Jan 05 | | ● |
| 1b | Finalise structure | All posts filled | ① | Martin Yardley | Councillor Longhi | Dec 04 | | ● |
| 1c | Increase electronic means of consultation to speed up response time | Complete MIS mapping link. Set up service level agreements with consultees | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Apr 05 | | ● |
| 1d | Enable and encourage electronic planning applications | Full integration with the planning portal | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Dec 05 | | ● |
| 1e | Improve performance of the development control committee. Improve the number of decisions made | Review the performance of the Development Control Committee and implement new procedures | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Jan 05 | | Completed |
| 1f | Increase number of applications delegated | Review of delegations to officers as part of the review of the Development Control Committee | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Jan 05 | | Completed |
| 1g | Increase speed of determining major applications | Set up process of close monitoring major applications | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Dec 04 | | Completed |
| 1h | Reduce the number of 106 agreements | Review the threshold set for commuted sum payments under 106 | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Apr 05 | | ● |

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| 2. Decision making - quality | THEME LEADER: |
| How to improve our decisions performance quality on | David Elsworthy |

| REF 2 | REPORT RECOMMENDATION OR ISSUE | IMPROVEMENT ACTION | PRIORITY 1 2 3 | BY WHOM? | | BY WHEN? | SIGNPOST TO OTHER PLANS | CURRENT STATUS V TARGET |
|----------|--|--|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|---|
| | | | | MANAGER | PORTFOLIO HOLDER | | | |
| 2a | Balance of speed against quality | Task group to look at the duty officer role and limited availability of officers to the public | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Jan 05 | | Completed |
| 2b | Improve consistency and availability of information for officers | Electronic means to record pre application advice | ③ | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Mar 06 | | ● |
| 2c | Better information to applicants | Improve information on literature and website | ③ | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Dec 04 | | Completed |
| 2d | Comprehensive procedure mapping to improve performance transparency | Implement new internet based procedure manual | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | April 05 | Service plan | ● |
| 2e | Continual improved knowledge base of members | Develop and deliver a regular comprehensive training for members | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing | | ● |
| 2f | Keeping applicants / third parties informed on the progress of planning applications | Develop an intranet based summary tracking system of applications | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Mar 05 | | ● |
| 2g | Improve officer specialist knowledge base | Develop individual specialist officer knowledge base | ③ | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing | | ● |
| 2h | Increased information to all on applications | Look to improve publication of applications following working group | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Jul 05 | | ● |
| 2i | Improve rates of success at appeal | 1. Member training. 2. Use of consultants 3. Improved delegation | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Apr 05 | | 1. ongoing 2. under Review 3. Completed |

| REF | REPORT RECOMMENDATION OR ISSUE | IMPROVEMENT ACTION | PRIORITY 1 2 3 | BY WHOM? | | BY WHEN? | SIGNPOST TO OTHER PLANS | CURRENT STATUS V TARGET |
|-----|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | | | MANAGER | PORTFOLIO HOLDER | | | |
| 2j | Achieve better designs outcomes | Service level agreement with Environment Regeneration Produce supplementary design guidance | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Apr 05 | | ● |
| 2 k | Improve sustainability of development | Produce checklist and monitor Identify sustainable methods and materials | ③ | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Mar 06 | | ● |
| 2l | Reduce crime through better design | Greater involvement of police through pre application Include the police in development team | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Jan 05 | | Now March 05 |

3. Staff resources and development

How we can improve our retention and training of staff.

THEME LEADER:

David Elsworthy

| REF | REPORT RECOMMENDATION OR ISSUE | IMPROVEMENT ACTION | PRIORITY 1 2 3 | BY WHOM? | | BY WHEN? | SIGNPOST TO OTHER PLANS | CURRENT STATUS V TARGET |
|-----------|--|---|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | | | MANAGER | PORTFOLIO HOLDER | | | |
| 3a | Increase training and development of staff | Developed focused learning strategy linked to IPM / service planning | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Jan 05 | Service plan IIP | Completed |
| 3b | IT training for all staff | Continue training on new systems | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing | Service plan IIP | ● |
| 3c | Increase skill base , knowledge and performance of technical support staff | Set up regular training and development sessions of technical support and professional staff. | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Dec 04 | Service plan IIP | Completed |
| 3d | More efficient use of staff time | Evaluate the use of external consultants to handle appeals and increase both speed and efficiency | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Mar 05 | | ● |
| 3e | Recruitment and retention of staff | Evaluation through ongoing restructure. Improve conditions of service and consider improvements (Golden hello, market supplement etc.) Continue benchmarking with family group. Improve the image of Walsall as an employer. | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing | | ● |
| 3f | Number of professional staff | Continued succession planning. | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing | IIP | ● |

| REF | REPORT RECOMMENDATION OR ISSUE | IMPROVEMENT ACTION | PRIORITY 1 2 3 | BY WHOM? | | BY WHEN? | SIGNPOST TO OTHER PLANS | CURRENT STATUS V TARGET |
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| | | | | MANAGER | PORTFOLIO HOLDER | | | |
| | | Grow your own | | | | | | |
| 3g | Increase accessibility and use of knowledge and legislation through the use of IT | Improve access to IT systems – encyclopaedia - notebook | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Dec 04 | | Completed |

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| 4. Communications and IT links | THEME LEADER: |
| Development of processes and technology | David Elsworthy |

| REF | REPORT RECOMMENDATION OR ISSUE | IMPROVEMENT ACTION | PRIORITY 1 2 3 | BY WHOM? | | BY WHEN? | SIGNPOST TO OTHER PLANS | CURRENT STATUS V TARGET |
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| | | | | MANAGER | PORTFOLIO HOLDER | | | |
| 4a | Increase electronic means of consultation to speed up response time | Complete MIS mapping link. Set up service level agreements with consultees | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Apr 05 | Copy of 1c | ● |
| 4b | Enable and encourage electronic planning applications | Full integration with the planning portal | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Dec 04 | Copy of 1d | ● |
| 4c | Service user groups | Increase attendance by - CPD events - Timing / venues | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing | Service Plan | ● |
| 4d | Communications with staff out of office | Evaluate use of electronic means of communication | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Apr 05 | | ● |
| 4e | Deliver all planning processes by electronic means | Complete 15 of 22 e enabled services by December 2004 | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Dec 05 | Service plan | Completed |
| 4f | Web site development | Improve usability / presentation on front page and behind | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing | | ● |
| 4g | Text service | Research and develop a text service as a means of communication with the public | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | July 05 | | ● |




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| 5. Customer service Availability of officers, satisfaction rates etc | THEME LEADER: David Elsworthy |
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| REF | REPORT RECOMMENDATION OR ISSUE | IMPROVEMENT ACTION | PRIORITY 1 2 3 | BY WHOM? | | BY WHEN? | SIGNPOST TO OTHER PLANS | CURRENT STATUS V TARGET |
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| | | | | MANAGER | PORTFOLIO HOLDER | | | |
| 5a | Equalities | Reach level 3 equalities action plan | ① | D Elsworthy | | | Equalities action plan | ● |
| 5b | Translation service | 1. Introduce telephone translation service. 2. Availability of literature in selected languages | ② | D Elsworthy | | Ongoing Jul 05 | | Completed |
| 5c | Blind customers | RIB audit to improve service | ② | D Elsworthy | | Mar 06 | PTCF | ● |
| 5d | Plain English | Seek crystal mark (or similar) accreditations for literature | ③ | D Elsworthy | | Mar 06 | | ● |
| 5e | Correspondence tracking system | Improve tracking and performance of correspondence | ① | D Elsworthy | | Ongoing | | ● |
| 5f | Letters of notification | 1. Review all methods to improve effectiveness 2. Implement changes | ② | D Elsworthy | | Jan 05 May 05 | PTCF | ● |
| 5g | Customer feedback / satisfaction | Monitor and react to customer phone survey and user group. | ③ | D Elsworthy | | Ongoing | | ● |
| 5h | Service standards | Complete and publish as standard leaflet and on web site | ② | D Elsworthy | | Mar 05 | | Completed |
| 5i | Customer access / contact | Dovetail with PTCF to provide ease of access | ① | D Elsworthy | | Ongoing | PTCF | ● |

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| 6. Section 106 and corporate working | THEME LEADER: David Elsworthy | |
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| REF | REPORT RECOMMENDATION OR ISSUE | IMPROVEMENT ACTION | PRIORITY 1 2 3 | BY WHOM? | | BY WHEN? | SIGNPOST TO OTHER PLANS | CURRENT STATUS V TARGET |
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| | | | | MANAGER | PORTFOLIO HOLDER | | | |
| 6a | Development Team (FSS approach) | Enhance and widen attendance and effectiveness. | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing | Service Plan | ● |
| 6b | Walsall Regeneration Company | Develop better linkages and process improvements | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing | | ● |
| 6c | Cross service working with Building Control, pollution Control and local land charges | Better cross working by shared information and process improvements | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | May 05 | | ● |
| 6d | LNP's | Feedback issues to inform planning policy and SPG. Develop consultation with LNP's | ① | B Pell | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing Mar 05 | | ● |
| 6e | 106 planning obligations | Monitor review and be responsive to Government changes | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing | | ● |
| 6f | Reduce the number of 106 agreements | Review the threshold set for payment under 106 | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Apr 05 | | ● |
| 6g | Help to deliver other service area requirements | Produce SPG on planning obligations | ② | D Elsworthy B Pell | Councillor Longhi | Apr05 | | ● |
| 6h | Use of solicitors for planning obligations | Review solicitors panel and in house capability | ② | D Elsworthy B Gill | Councillor Longhi | Apr05 | | ● |
| 6i | Improved Financial and auditing monitoring of 106 | Review existing procedures and identify improvements | ② | D Elsworthy P Simpson | Councillor Longhi | April 05 | | ● |

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| 7 Enforcement Effectiveness and monitoring | THEME LEADER: David Elsworthy |
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| REF | REPORT RECOMMENDATION OR ISSUE | IMPROVEMENT ACTION | PRIORITY 1 2 3 | BY WHOM? | | BY WHEN? | SIGNPOST TO OTHER PLANS | CURRENT STATUS V TARGET |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|---|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| | | | | MANAGER | PORTFOLIO HOLDER | | | |
| 7a | Service standards / PI's | Review and develop service standards Set new local PI targets | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Mar 05 | |  |
| 7b | Communication and publication | 1. Update series of service literature. 2. Develop a specific website area | ② ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Jan 05 Jul 05 | | Completed |
| 7c | IT Improvements | Move enforcement from MKA to MIS system | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Dec 04 | |  |
| 7d | Delegations to officers | Review delegations available to officers to improve efficiency | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Mar 05 | | Completed |
| 7e | Concordat approach | Take lead on evaluating potential efficiency's on enforcement cross working with other Council services | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Mar 06 | Service plan |  |

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| 8. Cost of services | THEME LEADER: |
| Charges and comparisons | David Elsworthy |

| REF | REPORT RECOMMENDATION OR ISSUE | IMPROVEMENT ACTION | PRIORITY 1 2 3 | BY WHOM? | | BY WHEN? | SIGNPOST TO OTHER PLANS | CURRENT STATUS V TARGET |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | | | MANAGER | PORTFOLIO HOLDER | | | |
| 8a | Measuring costs of the service | Develop local PI (107) | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Mar 05 | | ● |
| 8b | Complete Re-structure | Complete implementation | ① | M. Yardly | Councillor Longhi | Dec 04 | | ● |
| 8c | Consultants | Review costs versus quality and speed | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing | | ● |
| 8d | Planning delivery grant | 1. Achieve highest possible grant. | ① | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Ongoing | | ● |
| | | 2. Review spend of grant with staff consultation - IT | | D Elsworthy | | Ongoing | | ● |
| 8e | Miscellaneous charges | 1. Review all current charges following benchmarking exercise. | ② | D Elsworthy | Councillor Longhi | Mar 05 | | Completed |
| | | 2. Look to develop areas of added value to increase income | ② | D Elsworthy | | Mar 05 | | Completed |