

Planning Advisory Service (PAS) Recommendations from the Project Initiation Document (PID)

PID Project Scope & Exclusions

The initial scope of the Project includes:

- a) How we deliver services, which may include reconfiguration and changes in some cases (including how we use people, processes and technology);
- b) How we provide training and development opportunities across all of the Service;
- c) How we communicate as a Service.

The scope includes considering the PAS recommendations, as detailed below:

PAS Recommendation	Notes re Improvement Plan
Registration and validation	
R1 Supplement the current practice of one-to-one instruction of registration procedures with simple guidance notes using annotated screen shorts from the relevant sections of the IDOX system. Use best practice from other LPAs to reduce the burden of work.	Covered in Improvement Plan (Appendix 1, Planning Applications)
R2 Review the allocation of responsibilities for validation so that either more responsibility is given to the Planning Support Team to carry out the more procedural aspects of validation or validation is clearly identified as a responsibility for specific officers as part of their work programme. There should be a clear allocation of responsibility to avoid uncertainty and duplication. These responsibilities should be appropriate for the grade and clearly and consistently implemented.	Covered in Improvement Plan (Appendix 1, Planning Applications)
R3 Implement the Enterprise module in Uniform IDOX or a similar project management tool to reduce double handling, excessive use of emails and increase the speed of the decision making process throughout the lifetime of a planning application.	Covered in Improvement Plan (Appendix 1, IT Systems)
R4 Review the current Local Validation List in line with NPPF (para.44) requirements and to improve its access for non Planning specialists. Review the Council website to ensure that older versions of the Local Validation List are removed from view.	Need to include in Improvement Plan

PAS Recommendation	Notes re Improvement Plan
R5 Review the content of the invalid letter to enable it to be more informative and customer friendly for the applicant and enable greater flexibility for self help through website links.	Need to include in Improvement Plan
Team structures and responsibilities	
R6 Review the existing team structure so that the existing Principal Planners have formal line management responsibilities for the Planning Officers, emerging Planning Enforcement Officer post and Assistant Planning Officer posts. To compensate for this additional responsibility it will be important that the Planning Officers have the necessary skills and career progression to manage a more complex caseload.	Covered in Improvement Plan (Appendix 1, Resourcing)
R7 Review the Assistant Planning Officer role so that it can be used more effectively as a career platform for entry level Planners and can make best use of the RTPi apprentice route to professional Planning qualifications.	Covered in Improvement Plan (Appendix 1, Resourcing)
R8 Review the role of Principal Planner (Delivery) to better align the post to the strategic priorities in the Local Plan and to support the promotion of PPAs to fund proactive partnerships with key developers in Torbay.	Covered in Improvement Plan (Appendix 1, Existing Planning Service Action Plan)
R9 Review all the role profiles in the Customer Service and Planning Support Team to better reflect the actual work that the team undertakes and also resolve the current confused roles and responsibilities.	Covered in Improvement Plan (Appendix 1, Resourcing)
R10 Complete the creation of a new Planning Enforcement Officer using one of the existing Planning Officer posts to fund the post. In addition add Planning Enforcement work either as a second Planning Enforcement Officer post or as part of the Planning Officer job description to create a more flexible workforce.	Not applicable. Superseded as covered in Improvement Plan (Appendix 1, Resourcing)
R11 Increase the existing heritage expertise within Development Management by either increasing the skills of existing Planning Officers or employing a separate heritage specialist who can advise on more complex matters and act as the case officer for such applications when appropriate.	Covered in Improvement Plan (Appendix 1, Resourcing)

PAS Recommendation	Notes re Improvement Plan
R12 Consider the direct employment of specialist officers such as Heritage, Urban Design, Ecology, Landscape or Trees based on the basis of a value for money exercise using the current costs of procuring these skills as a reference point. As an alternative give consideration to shared arrangements with neighbouring authorities.	Covered in Improvement Plan (Appendix 1, Existing Planning Service Action Plan)
R13 If as a consequence of recommendation R12 specialist officers are employed directly either create a line management structure through an existing Principal Planner post or create a separate team within the Planning service.	Covered in Improvement Plan (Appendix 1, Existing Planning Service Action Plan)
Customer service	
R14 Undertake a follow up reflective session following the customer services training held on 8th December 2021 and agree a plan of action that will follow the learning points from the training. Communicate the learning points and actions to key consultative forums such as the Neighbourhood Plans forum and Local Agents' Forum.	Covered in Improvement Plan (Appendix 1, Customer Service)

Exclusions

The exclusions for the project include:

- The implementation of the Carbon Neutral Torbay Initial Action Plan for tackling climate change. This is excluded as it is already covered by existing activities. However, the resource requirements within the Climate Emergency Service is in scope as part of 'How we deliver services.'
- Business as usual (BAU) activity identified in the current Action Plan for the Planning Service.