

Planning Services

Service Plan 2013/14

Summary

This year our service plan has a focus on delivering services that meet customer needs against a context of significant reductions in public sector funding.

Last year we introduced flexible and agile solutions to service delivery anticipating a sea change in the way services will be delivered in the future. Although corporate funding was secured to support this transformational work we managed to fund most of this within the service due to efficiency gains, vacancy management and effective budget management.

The aim is to maximise choice for colleagues and customers and deliver a flexible approach to work while reducing overheads and cost to the Council. The Planning Service performance measures are aligned to corporate performance goals but underpinning all our objectives is an approach to make our service straightforward and functional – It should be simple, it should work.

Planning Services provide a range of statutory and front line functions across the county that seek to promote and facilitate the wider economic, social and environmental well-being of Shropshire. As such the service is at the heart of the Governments approach to localised plan making and helps also key to delivering major investment decisions by individuals, businesses and public sector organisations.

Planning Services has embraced a positive approach to shaping, considering and delivering sustainable development proposals. It is undertaken in the spirit of partnership and inclusiveness, and supports the delivery of key priorities and outcomes. In this sense Planning Services are well placed to realise the benefits

Having said that the importance of understanding, and measuring cost of delivery is a key driver that needs to be managed and measured in combination with the the success of the outcome achieved. Too often decisions are taken that involve too many people, and too much time. Our approach will drive down cost and increase efficiency recognising that we what we do needs to be justifiable in a rapidly changing public sector.

With 113 staff in 12 teams in five office locations the Planning Service is effective by deploying resource flexibly when and where it is needed administering time sensitive processes with a large number of customer groups. It is dependent on the functionality of an integrated IT system, the accessibility of data and records and the confirmation and understanding of business processes both for staff and customers. The service provides an integrated approach to planning and development-related services, bringing together Planning Policy, Development Management, Building Control and Systems Support, including Land Charges, Street Naming and Numbering and the Corporate Land and Property Gazetteer.

This plan has been written to provide a summary of aims and objectives of the Planning Service for Shropshire Council and to set targets and priorities for 2013/14. It provides an over-arching context for individual team plans for the teams that sit within Planning Services, these being:-

Planning Policy – Environmental, Economic & Transport

Planning Policy - Communities & Housing Policy

CIL Section 106

Housing Enabling

Area Planning (Development Management)

Planning Enforcement

Minerals & Waste Planning

Building Control

Land Charges

Central Validation

LLPG/Street Naming & Numbering and
Systems Administration.

The fragility of the economy and particularly pressures on public sector funding were key to the shape of a transforming the service throughout 2010/11 and 2012/13. Further funding pressure across the council is anticipated in 13/14 and 14/15 and it is for this reason that understanding and controlling cost is important to shaping future service delivery.

There are different drivers for change across the service including cost reduction and asset management, providing flexible agile solutions and a choice for teams wherever possible to work from multiple locations whilst reducing our overall office accommodation requirements, providing the resources to support agile working including data migration project and behavioural change to ensure that we measure outcomes and customer satisfaction.

The approach is aligned to the Operating Model Principles and the objectives of a commissioning council, we help customers to help themselves, we should not provide services that others can do cheaper/better than we can, deliver locally and provide a focus around business growth & prosperity. For clarity delivering locally does not mean a permanent physical presence in area offices (our current position) – it does mean providing support when it is required across the county – a meeting at a customer service point or on site, a committee meeting or support to Parish/Town Councils.

We want to facilitate “joined-up” working with other teams and partners both within and beyond the Service to provide a true integrated experience for the customer. This will help to ensure that the Council is able to contribute to the recovery from recession and has a transparent and focussed framework for delivering sustainable development.

The Service Plan is a living document and will both evolve and be reviewed with transformation objectives which are set out in more detail under the performance measures below.

Defining our Vision

Planning Services has designed performance measures which support corporate objectives and the Council's operating model. We have identified as a group the issues we believe important to the customer and what needed to change to facilitate this.

These objectives are therefore our objectives, shared and agreed with the Planning Services team. Together they support our vision. The vision provides our guiding principles and provides a context for how the service will deliver in relation to corporate performance measures.

The Vision: Planning Services will provide an efficient, inclusive and transparent framework to promote vibrant, resilient communities and facilitate sustainable development throughout Shropshire

Setting our Performance Measures

The corporate measures are set out below supplemented with service goals identified our colleagues.

Performance Measure 1. Flourishing Shropshire Communities

Objective: Investment in increasing the social and organisational capacity and investment in transfer of facilities management

Service Goal - How will we increase our organisational capacity?

- Cross working and merging of our teams and closer working between functions that deliver DM outcomes
- Close working with key stakeholders including parish & town councils
- Make Shropshire a place of excellence and innovation in building sustainable communities.

- Lone/mobile/flexible working – provide the solutions to facilitate this – provide choice and work environments that positively encourage multidisciplinary working
- Less Regulation – Conditions etc
- Efficient and sustainable decision making
- Managed distribution of Workload
- Playing to Strengths / Specialisms within the team
- Professional accountability – trust and empowerment of staff
- Be more 'business like' i.e. what is our product? Can we sell it?
- Responsible use of our resources
- Deliver value for money and understanding our costs
- Staff empowerment/decision taking with reduced reliance on 'management'
- Consistent interpretation of policy

Performance Measure 2

Greater Public Confidence

Objective: Being open, transparent and democratically accountable to local people

Service Goal - How will we demonstrate an open, transparent and accountable service?

- Work with communities and stakeholders to develop both Community Led and Local Plans that inspire, enable and provide a framework for development to best meet Shropshire's future needs
- Maintain and develop evidence base to provide a rich and detailed understanding of context and future trends at all levels and monitor/analyse this information and communicate it persuasively to influence and shape appropriate policy decisions by the Council and its partners.
- To communicate effectively with all our customers, clear and simple communications with customers.
- Positive, facilitating approach to development.
- Measure performance in terms of what is important to the customer
- Understanding the full range of our customers and their different needs and expectations
- To ensure that the value of increased powers of delegation is understood and appreciated by stakeholders.
- To ensure that reports are sufficiently detailed to allow for transparent decision making in the light of current planning policies and national advice
- Consistency of process / different outcomes. Responding to communities aspirations
- Responding to Localism Agenda
- De-mystify our processes – it should be simple – it should work

- Provide customers with a clearer understanding of the links between the services that make up Development Management as a whole
- More partnership working and less use of consultants
- Developing a range of inclusive stakeholder engagement groups in Ludlow, Shrewsbury & Oswestry
- Review processes and update systems to provide consistency across county
- Break down historic boundaries/working practices

Performance Measure 3

Economic Growth and Prosperity

Objective – Jobs and prosperity for local people

Service Goal - How will we contribute to economic growth and prosperity?

- To work in partnership and provide timely and positive responses leading towards market town regeneration
- Work with partners to ensure delivery and implementation of new development/infrastructure and to ensure maximum benefits for sustainable communities and support economic growth
- More responsive to key business / major applications
- To look towards the enhancement, regeneration and where appropriate the protection of our towns, villages and the countryside and recognising the economic value of maintaining a high quality environment
- To look towards affordable opportunities for adding value to schemes with the potential for increased climate change resilience / energy saving or production
- Improve quality of life
- Take decisions in a time frame agreed with the customer
- Adopt the website as the “shop window” for all Development Management information
- Enhance and develop self-service channels such as on-line payments and on-line application submissions
- Use technology platforms to reduce costs and remove duplication
- Facilitate development to promote growth, improve prosperity & vitality in the county
- Create income – positive marketing through a range of channels
- Consider how to maximise one stop shop and end to end delivery – could include a post decision service

Performance Measure 4

Better Educational Attainment in Workplace Skills

Objective - High quality schools and high levels of attainment

Service Goal – How will we promote training and development both within our teams and for our customers?

- To promote the development of staff skills at all levels ready to adapt to changing circumstances and demands
- Shared skills and knowledge
- Effective Information Management to enable all staff to make more effective and consistent decisions
- Developing specialism / areas of expertise in the team
- Sharing knowledge and talent
- Continued training, support and development for staff

Performance Measure 5
Better Health and Well-being

Objective – Early intervention and enablement. Vulnerable people achieving independent living.

Service Goals – How will we contribute to delivering better health and well being?

- To engage with our partners to ensure the timely and effective provision of social care and local needs housing in those areas with a demand
- To work with all relevant parts of the Council and community with regard to the provision of recreational facilities including public open space arising from the growth of settlements
- Provide a safe and healthy built environment

Putting it into practice – it should be simple, it should work!

Previously performance has been focused on achieving targets which have not always provide an indicator of the quality, customer satisfaction or value for money of the service. It is therefore important that Development Management develops a suite of indicators, linked to corporate priorities, which provide a more accurate measure of the service provided to our customers.

Demonstrating value for money, in the current economic climate, whilst providing choice is essential and it is this which provides the framework for the 2012/13 proposed performance measures. Our key theme this year is providing the tools to maximise our flexibility and options for providing services in the future. Our key performance indicators remain as before under headings below although the overall number of indicators has been revised to include measures for the planning policy function now included as part of the service.

- **Cost / Budget**
- **Quantitative Performance**
- **Quality**
- **Customer Satisfaction**

Cost / Budget

Controlling and understanding service costs is a key priority for Development Management where for three service areas these are offset by income received through fees. Fee income in all these service areas is aligned to the wider economy and the recent downturn has reflected on this. Our focus this year is un understanding and reducing our costs. This will be achieved where possible by reducing our overheads and cost to the Council delivered through a separate transformation project.

Area Planning Cost/Budget Performance Measures 2012/13

1	Description	Purpose	Target	Monthly	Q1 Target	Q2 Target	Q3 Target	Q4 Target	Actual
Value of Planning Application Fees EDSO1 – Group Measure	This will track the applications fees submitted to the authority. It will deduct any refunds	To identify income against budget (Figures reported in performance Plus include pre-app income)							
2	Description	Purpose	Target (£)	Monthly (£)	Q1 Target	Q2 Target	Q3 Target	Q4 Target	Actual
Value of Pre-	This will track pre-	evaluate the	£100,000						

Application Fees	application fees submitted to the authority	success of our new pre-application service							
2	Description	Purpose	Target (£)	Monthly (£)	Q1 Target	Q2 Target	Q3 Target	Q4 Target	Actual
Value of controllable costs across regulatory services	Aim to bring controllable cost across the regulatory parts of the service down to zero by Q4 through service redesign	To demonstrate that regulatory services can be delivered at no controllable cost based on existing budget profile	0						

Building Control Cost/Budget Performance Measures 2012/13

3	Description	Purpose	Target (£)	Monthly (£)	Q1 Target	Q2 Target	Q3 Target	Q4 Target	Actual
Value of Building Regulation Income Fees EDSO2 – Group Measure	This will track income received against budget for the fee earning aspects of the Building Regulations	The fee earning aspects of Building Regulations are designed to be cost neutral – fees are determined in accordance with guidelines produced by CIPFA							
4	Description	Purpose	Target (£)	Monthly (£)	Q1 Target	Q2 Target	Q3 Target	Q4 Target	Actual
Value of Building Control (Other) Income	This will measure income received through the Energy Surveyor role of	To develop the potential for income streams and							

	undertaking Energy Performance Certificates, Code for Sustainable Homes assessments and Standard Assessment Procedure rating	commerciality of the service – these services are chargeable and not limited Shropshires administrative boundaries							
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Systems/Business Support Cost/Budget Performance Measures 2011/12

5	Description	Purpose	Target (£)	Monthly (£)	Q1 Target	Q2 Target	Q3 Target	Q4 Target	Actual
	Value of Land Charges Income EDSO3 – Group Measure	– This will track income received in respect of land charge searches. Income is profiled according to seasonal trends	To monitor the cost of providing the service having regard to income received on a cost recovery basis for land charges.						

Quantitative Performance

It is important that our quantitative measure also have qualitative benefits and the measures retained this year all contribute to customer satisfaction

Area Planning Quantitative Performance Measures 2012/13

6	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual
	% of planning applications validated within 3 to 5 working days – EDSO6 Group Measure	Within the 3 to 5 working day target this will measure the % of applications validated within 5 working days receipt as a proportion of the total.	This is to focus attention on applications that are validated quickly and allocated to officers to ensure determinations targets are met. An efficient validation service is a good measure	75%					

		of a high performing authority.								
7	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual	
% of Pre-Application Enquiries Responded to Within 21 days	This will measure that % of paid for pre-application enquiries which have a written response within 21 days	To ensure that customers receive an efficient service. As this is a discretionary element of the service it is vital we deliver responses within a timely fashion to ensure value for money	90							
8	Description	Purpose	Target %					Q4 %	Actual	Q1 %
% of Planning Applications determined over the 8/13 week period by agreement with applicant/agent EDSO7 – Group and Corporate Measure	This will measure the percentage of decisions taken over the relevant 8/13 week period by agreement. Whilst it is a quantitative measure it is also qualitative in that it measures the relationship between customer and service provider	Often the planning consultation process will raise issues that require negotiations to take place prior to a decision being taken. To allow this to happen an extension to time should be agreed with the applicant / agent	90							
9	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %		92.90
% of inward investment proposals determined within relevant 8/13 week period	This will measures planning applications for commercial / industrial development and decisions taken within the relevant 8/13 week period.	To ensure the service focuses on economic development and prioritising the needs of business / investment in decision making	90							

10	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual
Delegation Rate	A measure of the percentage of applications delegated to officers for consideration. The Government has set a 90% target for Local Planning Authorities. NB: Target re-set to 96% in November 2013 following task and finish group recommendations.	To ensure that straightforward planning applications are dealt with as swiftly as possible and contentious/significant schemes are determined by committee	90%						

11	Description		Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual
Approval Rate	A measure of the percentage of applications that are approved	Provides an indication of the planning authority's approach to application management focussing on successful outcomes	80						

12	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual
Percentage of enforcement cases to which a recommendation is made within 8 weeks	A measure of the percentage of enforcement cases considered within a prescribed time frame	To measure the effectiveness of the councils compliance policy	70						

Building Control Quantitative Performance Measures 2012/13

13	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual
% of building control applications validated within 3 working days	This will measure the % of applications validated within 3 working days receipt	An efficient validation service is a good measure of a high performing authority.	90						

14	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual
% of first response on full plans applications within 21 working days	To ensure an effective and competitive turn around time	To optimise efficiency and reputation of service, to win business from private sector competitors	90						
15	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual
% inspections within 24hrs of notification	To ensure an effective and competitive turn around time	To optimise efficiency and reputation of service, to win business from private sector competitors	90						
16	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual
% of decisions issued within statutory time periods EDSO4 Group measure	This will measure the % of decisions issued within the respective 5 and 8 week period	To optimise efficiency and reputation of service, to win business from private sector competitors	90						

Systems/Business Support Quantitative Performance Measures 2012/13

17	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual
% Land Charges returned in 10 days	To ensure an effective and competitive turn around time for processing land charge searches	To optimise efficiency and reputation of service, to win business from private sector competitors	50						
18	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual
% of planning applications received via the planning portal	This will measure the proportion of planning applications submitted electronically via the planning portal as a percentage of the total	An efficient planning service will seek to maximise online /paperless transactions	60% by Quarter 4						

19	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1%	Q2%	Q3%	Q4%	Actual
% of Parish and Town Council consultations sent out electronically through E Consultation	This will measure the successful adoption of modern technology solutions to deliver timely and consistent planning comments from key stakeholders	Clear, timely and consistent communication to improve the planning process for applicants and stakeholders	40% by Quarter 4						
20	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1%	Q2%	Q3%	Q4%	Actual
% of Parish and Town Council consultation comments received electronically through E Consultation	This will measure the successful adoption of modern technology solutions to deliver timely and consistent planning comments from key stakeholders	Clear, timely and consistent communication to improve the planning process for applicants and stakeholders	50% by Quarter 4						

Policy Team Quantitative Performance Measures 2012/13

21	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
Identification of hubs and clusters	Further discussion and clarification with Parish and Town Councils. Cabinet Report and Schedule in consultation document.		June 2013						
22	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
Consultation on Revised Preferred Site Options and Settlement Policies	Further consultation with communities/stakeholders.	Revised sites and targets for consultation approved by Cabinet, and consultation completed.	July – August 2013						

23	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
Final Plan	Sites and settlement targets and policies approved by LDF Member Group ready for representations and submission reflecting Member views and greater certainty.	Final plan produced.	December 2013						
24	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
Gypsy and Traveller Sites DPD	Draft proposals on identified site options. Potential external provision. Conflict with SAMDev timetable. Highly contentious.	Project Plan and draft issues and Options paper to Cabinet December 2013.	December 2013						
25	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
Preparation of consultation Draft SPD's for Historic Environment and Natural Environment.	Stronger, more Member led defined policy.		December 2013						
26	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
Delivery of suitable, available land for housing, economic and infrastructure	Meeting core strategy requirements: 27,500 homes. 290 ha employment land.	Number of completions . NHB (CIL)? New pitches. 5 year land supply	Ongoing.						

development (recognising critical importance of up to date and robust SHLAA and ELR).	Gypsy and Traveller pitches. Retail floorspace. Officer floorspace..	statement. DM consultations. Pre-app advice given.							
27	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
Affordable housing delivery.	Meet Core Strategy requirements. Meet local housing need. Constructive working with other stakeholders. Deliver to prevailing target rate. Viability site appraisals.	Number of new affordable homes. Number of exception schemes. Amount (£'s) NHB passed to Parish Council's. Amount of S106 money spent.	Ongoing.						
28	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
Maintain S106 monitoring system for financial contributions.	Improved ability to track S106 monies within the Council. Improved ability to monitor S106 spend. Enhanced reputation with stakeholders.	Preparation of monitoring reports and updates. A contribution to the annual Place Plan process to track agreed contributions and trigger points for their release.	Ongoing.						
29	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual

Monitor progress on capital housing projects.	Improved internal linkages. Improved ability to track funding and predict expenditure and income.	Number of affordable units delivered on relevant schemes. Amount spent to ensure delivery.	Ongoing.						
30	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
Extra Care Housing – contribute to delivery of ECH to meet needs of ageing population.	Develop with stakeholders extra care and housing to meet the need of older persons. Reduction in SC future ASC rev budgets.	Number of homes developed. NHB generated. ASC rev budget reduced.	Ongoing.						
31	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
Work with businesses and stakeholders to establish and support implementation of enabling policies to deliver conditions for sustainable economic growth in Shropshire through: Employment land;	Provides greater certainty for investment decisions for the public, private and voluntary sectors SUE Masterplans. Contribute to corporate projects to bring sites forward. DM advice/guidance. CIL contributions.	SAMDev Final Plan. SPD's progress. SUE Masterplans adopted. Employment land. New homes. Number of new	December 2013. Ongoing.						

Infrastructure; Housing; Natural resource management; Town centres (MTRP).		infrastructure projects.							
32	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
Development viability.	Negotiation of scheme viability to enable required development to come forward and proceed..	Number of negotiated schemes. Number of S106 agreements renegotiated.	Ongoing.						

Quality

Performance management continues to reflect qualitative as well as quantitative measures. The following indicators have been designed to provide an indication of service quality to be read in conjunction with other measures

Service Wide Qualitative Performance Measures 2012/13

33	Description	Purpose		Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
The number of complaints referred to the Local Government Ombudsman following consideration by the Council's complaints management process	This will measure the number of complaints that are not resolved by the Council's complaints process.	To assess customer satisfaction and give an indication of the quality of decisions taken by the service and effectiveness of communicating decisions with key customers							Need a report
34	Description	Purpose	Target	Monthly	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual

Number of LGO Complaints upheld	This will measure the number of LGO complaints with planning implications that are upheld by LGO	To assess customer satisfaction and give an indication of the quality of decisions taken and effectiveness of communicating decisions with key customers							
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Area Planning Qualitative Performance Measures 2011/12

35	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual
% of Planning Appeals Dismissed EDSO5 – Group measure	This will measure the % of appeals dismissed as a target against the number submitted	To give an indication of the quality of decision making if decisions are being upheld by the Planning Inspectorate.	75%						
36	Description	Purpose	Target %	Monthly	Q1 %	Q2 %	Q3 %	Q4 %	Actual
% applications determined in accordance with parish/town council view	This will measure the % applications that accord with the recommendation of the parish council and provide an indication of alignment with	To give an indication of the level of decision taking that accords with a local community view	90%						

Systems/Business Support Qualitative Performance Measures 2011/12

37	Description	Purpose	Target		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
To achieve silver standard under the national mapping services agreed (MSA) -	To measure the update frequency	Validated LLPG submission frequency to the NLPG hub (received by NLPG hub after validation)	Weekly						

Satisfaction

The Development Management service engages with all sectors of the community. Key customers include Applicants and Agents, Consultees (Statutory and Non-Statutory), Civic Amenity Groups, Parish and Town Councils and those making representations in respect of planning applications. Development Management consults with agents through the Agents Forum which offers agents the opportunity to raise issues and concerns. Attendance at Local Joint Committees and other meetings on request to enable applicants, stakeholders, residents and businesses to raise issues when planning issues are under consideration. The service also provides an annual awards scheme for Building Control and a training programme for key stakeholders including elected Members and Parish Councils. The department also reviews all comments, complaints and appeals it receives to help inform planning outcomes and customer service.

Building Control Satisfaction Performance Measures 2011/12

38	Description	Purpose	Target %		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Actual
Aim to continually improve upon market share with an aim that at no time market share is less than 80%	This will measure the proportion of business the Building Control service attracts as a proportion of the total	To optimise efficiency and reputation of service, to win business from private sector competitors	80						