

## Recommendations and Action Plan arising from Peer Challenge 13-15 February 2018

Area	Ref	Recommendations	Actions	By Working Group supported by	Change to Constitution	Timescale (from 20 March 2018) A - 1-3 months B - 3-6 months C - 6-12+ months
1. Customer Experience	1.1	Agree a Service Level Agreement with the County Council to improve the consultation process.	To be developed in conjunction with Planning Advisory Service/LGA external support and consider national best practice. This is to be considered at a future meeting of the Development Management Forum and will seek to address issues which currently exist with regard to responses from Highways.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – Officers to scope areas where SLA would be beneficial and technologically possible. Cross-county interest to be gauged as well. WG to be kept informed.	CE/JA	No	C
	1.2	Utilise customer services to deal with standard enquiries to free up professional officer time.	To be developed in conjunction with Planning Advisory Service/LGA external support and consider national best practice. The key objective is ensuring the most efficient use of staff resources to best serve the customer either through a planning support team or corporate customer services. This will be linked to the work on the review of the Customer contact centre. Broader implications of this recommendation need to be considered in line with resourcing of customer services team when the Head of Customer Services post has been filled.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – to be progressed with new Head of Customer Services once in post. WG to be kept informed.	CE/JA/BS	No	C
	1.3	Evaluate the potential for a more comprehensive approach to pre-application advice	To be developed in conjunction with Planning Advisory Service/LGA external support and consider national best practice. Planning officers to review the current approach to pre-application advice and charging. A report to cabinet will be prepared setting out recommendation in 2018/19.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – PAS to circulate best practice document on pre-application advice to WG. In addition, WG to consider how and when to notify ward members of pre-application inquiries.	CE/JA	Yes	C
	1.4	Consider whether a charge for all pre-application advice would improve effectiveness.	Refer to above. This will be reviewed and scoped in accordance with best practice.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – research to be carried out on what neighbouring authorities charge for and cost/benefit analysis to be carried out.	CE/JA	No	C

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2. Local Plan	2.1	Make the Local Plan Advisory Committee a formal decision making body	<p>On 20 March 2018, Council agreed to an increased Committee with more delegated powers. An assessment has been made of the appropriate functions to be delegated to the reformed Committee and this will form the basis of the terms of reference to be considered at the first meeting of the Working Group with a recommendation to Council in May. The Monitoring Officer will make constitutional changes in relation to the Local Plan Advisory Committee with a view to implementation from the new civic year in May 2018. These will form part of the report to Council. An Independent Remuneration Panel meeting is being held on 6 April to determine whether or not an allowance should be paid to the Chairman of the Local Plan Committee. The findings of this meeting will form a recommendation to Council in May.</p> <p><b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> - Working Group's proposals and constitutional changes to be submitted to Council for implementation on 15 May 2018 (paragraph 3 of Council Report).</p> <p>Operation of LPC to be kept under review and reported back to Council after 12 months.</p>	LS/MP/IN	Yes	A  A
	2.2	Make clearer references to the Local Plan policies in all Planning Committee reports	<p>Planning officers to make clearer references to the Local Plan policies in all Planning Committee reports with immediate effect. Review of existing reports in conjunction with Planning Advisory Service/LGA external support and consider national best practice.</p> <p><b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – work being progressed as part of improvements to planning reports (row 6.2 below)</p>	CE	No	B
	2.3	Ensure the content and significance of the Local Plan is addressed in future training for Planning Committee members.	<p>Training programme to be developed in conjunction with Planning Advisory Service/LGA external support and consider national best practice.</p> <p><b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – work being progressed as part of training matters (row 5.14)</p>	CEIN	No	B/C
3. Section 106s, Neighbourhood Plans and CIL	3.1	Consider how a proactive stance on NDPs may help with community engagement and delivering council priorities	<p>Planning officers to consider and evaluate approach to NDPs. To be developed in conjunction with Planning Advisory Service/LGA external support and consider national best practice.</p> <p><b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – officers to progress with PAS. WG to be kept up to date</p>	IN	No	B/C

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	3.2	Understand the need for resources if more NDPs are undertaken	Tbc on completion of above <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – officers to progress with PAS. WG to be kept up to date	IN	No	<b>B/C</b>
	3.3	Publish comprehensive details on website for greater transparency	Advice/external support to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice. <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – officers to progress with PAS. WG to be kept up to date	IN	No	<b>B/C</b>
	3.4	Explore options for further work on S106 processes.	Advice/external support to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice. <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – officers to progress with PAS. WG to be kept up to date	JA/IN	No	<b>B/C</b>
	3.5	Revisit decisions on CIL to assess whether it is desirable and effective.	Planning Officers to revisit decisions on CIL to assess whether it is desirable and effective and incorporate and consider at part of the Local Plan Review. <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – officers to progress with PAS. WG to be kept up to date	JA/IN	No	<b>C</b>
<b>4. Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships</b>	4.1	Ensure that all Members receive immediate training on member and officer/member protocols	Training programme to be developed in conjunction with Planning Advisory Service/LGA external support and consider national best practice. This will be considered at a future meeting of the Cross Party Working Group. <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – PAS to liaise with Group leaders on a Member development programme	EW	No	<b>A</b>
	4.2	Enable more structured engagement with group spokespersons	Advice/external support to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice. This will be considered at a future meeting of the Cross Party Working Group. <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – James A and PAS to meet with group spokespeople.	JA	No	<b>A</b>
	4.3	Senior Members to create a culture of calling out poor behaviour	Group leaders to address member behaviour within their groups with immediate effect. Advice/external support to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice.	GL	No	<b>A</b>

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			<b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – members expressed commitment to culture change			
	4.4	Improve the Committee procedures and operation to support the Chairman in running the Committee well.	Democratic Services, Legal Services and Planning Services to meet and agree a consistent approach in the operation and procedures relating to Planning Committee. Advice/external support to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice. A suggestion has been made of introducing a Chairman’s briefing note.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> - Working Group’s proposals and constitutional changes to be submitted to Council for implementation on 15 May 2018 (paragraph 5 of Council Report)	ML/CE	Yes	<b>A</b>
<b>5. Planning Committee</b>	5.1	Change the timing and nature of the Planning Committee briefing (not necessarily on the same day)	Advice/external support to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – Informal briefing to take place one week before the Planning Committee meeting. The format and processes of the Planning Committee day will continue to be refined by the WG. (paragraph 2 of Council Report)	CE/JA	No	<b>A</b>
	5.2	Consider whether site visits are necessary for every application	Advice/external support to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice.  Improved equipment at committee to enable better presentation on sites and proposals to be put in place Eg. Google map photographs. Advice/external support to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – WG to develop a criteria based protocol for determining when site visits are necessary	CE/JA	No	<b>A/B</b>
	5.3	Encourage group leaders to ensure seating is not on group lines	Group leaders to speak with their members on Planning Committee and Democratic Services to relocate name plates with implementation from the new civic year in May 2018 – Alphabetical seating arrangement will be introduced.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – WG agreed that seating should be done in alphabetical order	GL/ML	No	<b>A</b>

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	5.4	Change seating layout of the meeting and improve the visual presentations	Democratic Services to review the layout of the Planning Committee meeting and liaise with IT about the purchase and positioning of additional screens. Currently looking at options and costs.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – options and costs are being explored by Democratic Services/Asset Management	ML	No	<b>A/B</b>
	5.5	Review officer roles at committee	Advice to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice. Changes have already been adopted with case officers taking on a wider role.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – management to work with officers to generate proposals for WG to review	JA	No	<b>A</b>
	5.6	Officers to be given more opportunity to respond to public and members' comments	Planning Officers to agree to introduce an opportunity in the meeting for responding to public and members' comments for implementation from the new civic year in May 2018. Advice/external support to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> - Working Group's proposals and constitutional changes to be submitted to Council for implementation on 15 May 2018 (paragraph 5 of Council Report)	CE/JA	No – subject to not changing rules of debate	<b>A</b>
	5.7	Increase size and quality of presentations	Planning Officers increase size and quality of presentations with use of technology such as google maps with immediate effect.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – as per row (5.4)	CE	No	<b>A</b>
	5.8	Ensure consistent application of the public speaking rules	Democratic Services, Legal Services and Planning Services to ensure that the public speaking rules are treated with consistency. Advice/external support to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice. Consider the removal of the Chairman's discretion.  <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – WG noted the role of the Chair in this aspect. PAS to provide examples of best practice for WG to consider.	LS/ML/CE	No	<b>A</b>
	5.9	Review the requirement for motions at the start of the debate	It is suggested that the Monitoring Officer will make constitutional changes in relation to motions at Planning Committee with a view to implementation from the new civic year in May 2018.	EW/LS	Yes	<b>A</b>

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			<b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> - Working Group's proposals and constitutional changes to be submitted to Council for implementation on 15 May 2018 (paragraph 5 of Council Report)			
	5.10	Refresh the membership of the Committee	Consideration of leaders and whips ahead of appointments to be made at Council in May. The relevant papers seeking nominations have been sent out to the whips and individuals, as appropriate. <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – appointments to be made at Council on 15 May 2018	GL	No	<b>A</b>
	5.11	Reduce size of the committee and allow a pool of substitutes	On 20 March 2018, Council agreed to the reduction in the size of the Committee from 17 to 11. The Monitoring Officer will review the Substitution Scheme to allow for a pool of substitute members on the Planning Committee with a view to implementation from the start of the new civic year in May 2018. <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> - Working Group's proposals and constitutional changes to be submitted to Council for implementation on 15 May 2018 (paragraph 5 of Council Report)	ES/LS	Yes	<b>A</b>
	5.12	Consider not allowing a ward member to sit on Planning Committee when an application in their ward is being considered.	Planning Services and Legal Services to liaise to enable the Monitoring Officer to make constitutional changes in relation to ward members not sitting on the Planning Committee during consideration of an item in their ward, with a view to implementation from the new civic year in May 2018 <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> - Working Group's proposals and constitutional changes to be submitted to Council for implementation on 15 May 2018 (paragraph 5 of Council Report)	JA/CE/EW	Yes	<b>A</b>
	5.13	Think about how you could be more transparent e.g. webcasting	The Democratic Services Team Manager visited a webcasting and audio event in Birmingham on 8th March after which she passed her contacts on to the Head of Housing and Asset Management for consideration on the future refurbishment of the Chamber. Currently looking at options and costs. <b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – see row 5.4 above	ML	No	<b>A/B</b>
	5.14	Ensure that all members of the Planning Committee receive compulsory up to date training	Planning Officers to ensure that all members of the Planning Committee have received up to date training with the first compulsory training session being held no later than the date of the first Planning Committee (5 June 2018) and following annual council in May 2018. Advice/external support to be sought	JACEIN	Yes	<b>A/B</b>

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			<p>from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice. Training programme to be prepared. To be formally recognized in Council's constitution with compulsory attendance required and members who fail to attend training not permitted to sit on the Committee and having to be replaced by a substitute.</p> <p><b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> - Working Group's proposals reported to Council on 15 May 2018 (paragraph 5 of Council Report). WG to develop detail of compulsory requirement and propose constitutional changes to Council</p>			
<b>6. Reports, Minutes and Updates</b>	6.1	Officers to be more confident in decisions and justifications	<p>Advice/external support to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice.</p> <p><b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – need for officer training to be assessed.</p>	CE	No	<b>B</b>
	6.2	Carry out best practice review of structure and layout of reports and include plans	<p>Planning Officers to look at how other LAs set out their planning reports and adopt best practice with implementation. Advice/external support to be sought from Planning Advisory Service/LGA and consider national best practice and Plain English guidance.</p> <p><b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – officers to carry out review of best practice with PAS support and make proposals to WG</p>	CE	No	<b>B</b>
	6.3	Consider reducing the level of detail in the minutes	<p>Democratic Services to reduce the detail contained in the minutes to capture to decisions and reasons only and to audio record the meetings to capture the detail; with immediate effect.</p> <p><b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> – WG agreed and Democratic Services to put this into effect.</p>	ML	No	<b>A</b>
<b>7. Call-In</b>	7.1	Introduce a single stage process – 28 days following the issue of consultation notices.	<p>Legal Services and Planning Services look at a review of the call in processes for planning applications with a view to any changes, constitutional or otherwise, being implemented from the new civic year in May 2018.</p> <p><b>Update after WG 13.04.2018</b> - Working Group's proposals and constitutional changes (for rows 7.1-7.4) to be submitted to Council for implementation on 15 May 2018 (paragraph 4 of Council Report). WG to keep operation of new call-in process under review and propose constitutional amendments to Council if needed.</p>	JA/CE/EW	Yes	<b>A/B</b>

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	7.2	Members to give strong planning reasons for any call-in	As above. Guidance to be developed with support from Planning Advisory Service/LGA.	JA/CE/EW	Yes	<b>A/B</b>
	7.3	Relatives' applications only go to Committee if officers are minded to approve	As above	JA/CE/EW	Yes	<b>A/B</b>
	7.4	Consider a constitutional trigger only for serving members and officers	As above	JA/CE/EW	Yes	<b>A/B</b>

Abbreviations	
CE	Chris Elston, Planning and Development Team Manager
EW	Elizabeth Warhurst, Monitoring Officer
IN	Ian Nelson, Planning Policy and Business Focus Manager
JA	James Arnold, Strategic Director of Place
ML	Melanie Long, Democratic Services Team Manager
GL	Group Leaders
LS	Louis Sebastian, Legal Services Team Manager