

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER DELEGATED DECISION
January 2015**

REPORT AUTHOR: Ken Yorston, Senior Manager Regulatory Services

**SUBJECT: Development Management Improvement Implementation
Programme – Closure Report**

REPORT FOR: Decision

Summary

This paper advises Members of the outcome of the Development Management Improvement Implementation Programme, implemented following a review of the Service by the Hay Group in 2013 and the progress that has been made since the Report.

Proposal

That the Portfolio Holder and Elected Members agree that the Improvement Implementation Programme undertaken by the Development Management Team has been successful and that the Programme can now be terminated.

The attached Project Closure Report (Appendix 1) compiled by Lisa Griffiths/ Ken Yorston contains the details of the findings of the Hay Report, the measures put in place to secure improvements in the service and the improvements in performance identified.

Members should note the improved performance, the restructure of staffing, the increase in positive comments and complements received and the temporary support that has been given to the Development Management team since the process commenced.

Powys Change Plan

The work of the Development Management Team supports the Powys One Plan in two respects: - Stronger, Safer and Economically viable Communities and Financially Balanced and fit for purpose services. The Improvement Plan assists the service to meet both of these criteria.

Options Considered/Available

1. The Development Management Improvement Implementation Programme is considered to have concluded, given the progress that has been made since its implementation and that the Programme Board no longer needs to meet to review the Service.

Preferred Choice and Reasons

Option 1 above – the Improvement Implementation Programme Board will no longer meet due to the progress made by the Development Management Team. The progress of the team is an on-going process that will be monitored through the Service Delivery Plan and the Service Improvement Plan that has been implemented by the Professional Lead for Development Management.

Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder,/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc

No implications

Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing

None

Local Member(s)

All Members in the authority will have an interest in the improved performance of Development Management. Members have been involved in the Development Management Improvement Implementation Programme and further informal training/information sharing sessions are planned for Members of the Planning Committee.

Other Front Line Services

None are affected by this proposal

Support Services (Legal, Finance, HR, ICT, BPU)

Finance – the required budget savings have been achieved through the restructuring of the service

ICT - the development of mobile solutions have not been able to proceed due to equipment inadequacies. Long term solutions are being sought

Legal – there are no legal issues to be considered with this report

HR – we continue to work with Development Management on the Improvement Programme, providing advice and training as outlined in the Report

BSU – we support the service`s improvement and our staff are aware of the on-going need to continue on the improvement path

Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

Feedback from stakeholders is a key element of ensuring continuous improvement and DM will be regularly collecting data from Applicants, Agents and other key stakeholders and assessing these to ensure they are on track.

Communications

No implications

Statutory Officers

S 151 Officer – I note the comments from Finance there are no further implications

Monitoring Officer – I note the comments from legal services - no other implications

Members' Interests

The Monitoring Officer is not aware of any specific interests that may arise in relation to this report. If Members have an interest they should declare it at the start of the meeting and complete the relevant notification form.

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| Recommendation: | Reason for Recommendation: |
| That the Development Management Improvement Implementation Programme Closure Report is accepted and the Improvement Implementation Board is disbanded with immediate effect. | The Service has demonstrated that following the restructuring and the improvement programme it has met the required improvements to performance and there is confidence in its ongoing continuous improvement. |

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| Relevant Policy (ies): | | | |
| Within Policy: | Y | Within Budget: | Y |

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| Relevant Local Member(s): | |
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| Person(s) To Implement Decision: | K M YORSTON |
| Date By When Decision To Be Implemented: | |

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|------------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Contact Officer Name: | Tel: | Fax: | Email: |
| K M YORSTON | 01597 826570 | | Ken.yorston@powys.gov.uk |

Background Papers used to prepare Report:

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| Project Title: | Development Management Workforce Transformation |
| Project Summary: | In response to the findings from the HAY report, implement improvements and efficiency savings during the current financial year. |
| Project Manager: | Lisa Griffiths |
| Sub-Programme: | Regeneration and Regulation |
| Sub-Programme Sponsor: | Paul Griffiths |

| Version Control | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Version Ref | Status | Date | Author / Owner |
| v.3 | Green | 1 st Sept 2014 | Lisa Griffiths/Ken Yorston |

1. Document Library

All documents associated with the Project are available via the Project Office i.e. the PID, Action Plan and Highlight Reports. The HAY report is available on request.

2. Executive Summary

In June 2013 the Hay Group reported on a review it had conducted of the Development Management service. This review was commissioned to identify the root cause of performance issues within the service and as a result a project was initiated based on the need to drive the workforce transformation of the service, focussing on a number of objectives and deliverables which arose from the findings of the review.

The objectives of this project were to -

- Reorganise the structure to achieve the 4% savings for 2013/2014
- Achieve a measured improvement in performance against targets
- Improve customer service and reduce complaints
- Implement a new electronic system to improve communication and performance
- Identify and manage any capacity and capability issues within the service.

Outcomes

The service has been restructured in order to meet the savings required for both 2013/14 and for 2014/15.

Improvements in performance have been achieved. All performance related issues are measured and reported to staff on a monthly basis.

Feedback from stakeholders generally indicates a more customer focussed approach, although demonstrating reducing customer complaints is difficult due to inadequate record keeping prior to the Review. Positive feedback from Agents and developers has been received.

The implementation of an electronic system has not taken place due to difficulties in both the hardware and software of the proposed IT system.

Staff have received training on various issues and have undertaken a 'Strength Deployment Inventory' to assess their individual strengths and weaknesses

Whilst much has been achieved in a relatively short space of time, the service still recognises that they are on a journey and there is some way to go. Monthly meetings of staff will continue and feedback on performance, complaints and future developments by the Professional Lead will form the ongoing improvement programme.

3. Project Background

The Authority accepted the findings of the Hay Group and introduced a Development Management Improvement Implementation Programme and Board to ensure the recommendations in the Report were assessed, implemented and fed back. The Portfolio Holder, Head of Service, Project Leader and Professional Lead formed the basis of the Board and met regularly to ensure progress. The Senior Manager for Regulatory Services joined following his appointment.

The four key areas for improvement were identified as:

1. Customer Focus,
2. Structure and Operating Arrangements,
3. Systems and Work Processes and
4. People.

Recommendations From The Hay Report

1. Customer Focus

- Ensure that staff and members work together to clarify the priorities for Development Management and mutual expectations of each other
- Resume regular collection of customer feedback, developing measures to capture the performance of specific stages of the planning process
- Identify and promote desired behaviours to improve customer satisfaction.

2. Structure and Operating Arrangements

- Develop the operating arrangements to deliver a truly integrated organisation
- Review the organisation structure, ensuring clarity for the role of each management layer and increasing spans of control.

3. Systems and Work Processes

- Establish 'champions' (accountable owners) to drive continuous improvement in processes, looking at the whole customer journey
- Prioritise the development and implementation of a fully electronic system.

4. People

- Ensure that there is greater member/staff engagement
- Address capability issues
- Ensure management acts as a role model and does not tolerate 'off-strategy'

behaviour.

4. Were objectives and deliverables achieved?

Measures:

Reorganise the structure to achieve the 4% savings for 2013/14.

Achieved. The new structure was implemented successfully from 1st December 2013. Four posts were removed from the old structure and some adjustments were made to the grades of some posts for the new structure.

Increase the span of control between the line management and staffing layers. (revised JD/PS agreed and implemented)

Achieved. New Job Descriptions for the Lead Professional role and the Senior Planning Officer roles were evaluated. The new structure is flatter with appropriate spans of control for the Professional Lead role and at the Senior Planning Officer level.

Achieve a measured improvement in performance.

Performance has improved with regard to completion of planning applications for Householders, Minor and Major Applications and any that fall into the 'Other' category - See Appendix 1.

Targets have been introduced to reduce the back log of enforcement cases.

Improved customer service.

Members – engagement with the members of the Planning Committee in an informal training session has resulted in greater understanding of the function and a better working arrangement. A further session occurred on 4th December 2014 and it is proposed to hold further sessions.

A bi-annual Agents Forum has been established and this provides a useful opportunity to share views and concerns and discuss options and future opportunities to improve the working relationship and service delivery. Other organisations are invited to attend (ie NRW)

Computers are now available for the public to access planning applications. The Planning website has been kept up-to-date with regard to any relevant changes to service delivery.

Links continue to be strengthened with colleagues in Building Control and Planning Policy to improve processes and procedures and customer service.

A standard customer feedback form is in the process of being introduced to gather information on their experience of the service. Quarterly reports will be produced and reported to staff.

Reduce the number of complaints. (pre application advice)

Charging for Pre-planning application advice has been introduced. This will:

- assist the customers submit better applications
- Increase the Applications that succeed
- Reduce speculative enquiries

- Free up planning officers to deal with increasing workloads
- Reduce the number of complaints received.

It is difficult to compare the number of complaints received currently with previous years due to changing complaint recording systems. By its very nature Planning will always be subject of complaint and it is anticipated that effective training programmes for officers will reduce these. During 2013, 49 Complaints were registered with `have your say`. To 31st August 2014, some 25 complaints have been registered.

There has been an increasing number of referrals to the Ombudsman service, none of which have been upheld against the authority recently.

Achieve effective and improved service delivery.

The following have been provided/introduced:

- Dual computer screen arrangements for the Planning Officers (enables dual screen arrangement to view planning application documents and inspect various maps at the same time).
- Computer screens at three locations across the County for members of the public to view planning applications. (Reduced of paper work for the Admin team).

Central scanning function at Gwalia operational. Steady reduction in the backlog of documents.

Capacity and capability issues resolved via:

- All Planning Officers and Senior Planning Officers are now responsible for carrying out enforcement
- Affordable housing training session conducted
- Personal Safety Register PSR, Risk Assessments and Violence & Aggression
- Monthly meetings of whole DM team – focus on performance and corporate issues
- Pre Application advice charging – reduced enquiries
- The Professional Lead meets with the Senior Planning Officers on a regular basis
- Line Managers conduct EDR's for their staff.
- Individual performance issues within the team are being resolved. Positive comments have been received from a number of the Agents who have said the Planning officers appear to be much more positive in their approach towards assisting with the applications.

Achievements of the project that fall outside of the key objectives:

Business Support Unit - Review underway to analyse the resource the DM service receives from the BPU. Clarification of the role of Planning Technician vs BPU is being sought.

Single Point of Contact in Call Centre – insufficient level of enquiries received to merit resource shift. DM service is considering having a single telephone number which would field calls, directing them to relevant area offices - ongoing.

Business Forum – being considered in conjunction with other Regulatory Services

and Regeneration. Research is underway.

Town & Community Councils – moving towards supplying electronic versions of documents – currently paper copies sent.

5. How did we perform on Quality, Cost & Schedule?

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| Quality: | There were no quality standards set that needed to be complied with. |
| Cost: | The cost of completing this project has been within budget and as planned. |
| Schedule: | The milestones for this project were achieved to schedule. |

6. How did we perform on the 6 project overview elements?

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| Scope: | The scope was completed in full. |
| Plan: | The plan was completed on schedule. |
| Finance: | The costs were within budget as planned. |
| Resource (Staff): | The original planned resource proved to be sufficient. |
| Stakeholders: | Stakeholder engagement was fully achieved and was maintained throughout the project. Excellent feedback has been received. |
| Dependencies: | All parties worked together well and cooperated throughout the project so areas of dependency were achieved. |

7. What were the key lessons learned? (Include recommendations)

The following are some of the comments from the staff who gave their feedback on the transformation process, how they feel about this experience and what it has achieved:-

- Senior officers have more delegated decision making and are enjoying having more autonomy.
- Fortnightly meetings were intense to start with but now we feel much more involved and communication has improved. Monthly team meetings are very helpful, everyone gets key messages and can contribute.
- There is a high level of confidence in Gwilym that things will get done, things don't drift any more, its noticeably different now.

- Looking forward to implementing pre-application charging, it should improve processes, free up time and improve performance.
- The work that has been going on with Brian Zammit was very good and it is a benefit to have the internet set up to assist the DM service.
- It would be good if Gwilym had a designated deputy.
- Having enough resource and capacity is an ongoing worry.
- PSR training was very helpful especially for the enforcement role.
Enforcement is working better now, we are keeping on top of things, clearing the back log and confidence is growing, we are learning as we go along and there is a more consistent approach.
- Resourcing a single point of contact arrangement would have been an issue for DM.
- The structure is much better and the senior team are working in a more unified way.
- The staff would like to attend the Agents Forum meetings. **This has been agreed**
- In general things have definitely improved!

8. Are there plans for a post project review? (Please provide details if appropriate)
The Head of Service is planning to hold a feedback session with the staff from the Development Management team. This is scheduled for 8th October 2014.

9. Appendices and Supporting Documents (Please List)
 All documents associated with the Project are available via the Project Office i.e. the PID, Action Plan and Highlight Reports. The HAY report is available on request.

Ownership & Sign Off

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| Author / Owner: | Lisa Griffiths/Ken Yorston | Date of Report: | 1 st November 2014 |
| Distribution / Approval: | | | |

