

**Appendix 2: Planning communications and customer service action plan**

**Last updated 9 March 2010**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Lead officers</b>	<b>Achieved</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Set up a residents' panel to advise on planning communication issues regarding leaflets, application forms and website.	To gain qualitative feedback from an end users' perspective	Run sessions with members of the public to assess how they use current information	Recruit members by May 2010. Run sessions summer 2010 onwards	Planning liaison officer / Communications service		Views of residents used to develop planning communication leaflets and websites
Introduce a planning specific section to a corporate Customer Charter	To explain to the public what level of customer service they can expect	Customer Service and Planning Service will prepare standards for the service, to be agreed with management team and members, that the public can expect and a system of monitoring.	By December 2010	Planning service /Customer service team		Standard set and monitored.
Continue to develop the dedicated customer service planning advisor role to handle more planning enquiries at first point of contact.	To improve customer service by handling enquiries first time which will reduce unnecessary contacts	Customer service Planning Advisor has the skills development and information needed to handle initial and routine enquiries	Continuing progress so that the evaluation target is achieved by December 2010	Customer Service Planning Advisor/ Planning service		Customer service planning advisor dealing with at least 35% of first point of contact planning enquiries
Introduce a new planning search facility on website	To make it easier to search for planning applications by name of the place or applicant	Introducing new database systems to enable data to be searched	Development of search facility underway. Launch in late autumn 2010.	Website manager/ IT systems and database manager/ Planning admin		New planning search goes live.
Introduce a new design of the authority website	To make it easier to find information on the website for both residents and visitors. This will benefit people looking for planning	New website being designed, built and tested	Design and building underway. Launch in late autumn	Website manager/Design team/Head of Information Management/Head		New website goes live.

	information.		2010	of Communications		
Carry out consultations with core consultees on planning applications electronically.	To speed up the process of consultation and provide key consultees with the ability to comment on amended applications more quickly.	Ensuring the authority has the contact details needed and the agreement of partners to consult this way	Preparatory work underway with view to going live in September 2010	Planning services/ IT		Consultations carried out electronically by September 2010
Review existing planning information and pre-application material to ensure they are written in appropriate language the user can understand.	To make it easier for the public to understand the planning process	Review existing material with the residents' panel to check understanding. Produce new versions of documents in plain English when needed	Summer 2010 onwards	Communications service/planning liaison officer		Existing material reviewed. New leaflets/website copy produced if required.
Review the code of practice about who is notified of planning applications	To ensure the notification process is meeting the needs of communities	Planning service to consider alternative options and success of existing notification scheme	Summer 2010	Head of Planning		Revised system in place and communicated to the public.
Customer service skills development for planning officers	To develop existing skills around providing good customer care	Bring in an external customer service advisor to run training sessions	Throughout 2010/11, with sessions built on the learning and development needs of individual staff	Planning liaison officer / communications service / information management service		Relevant training delivered to planning officers as required.
Provide initial guidance on Tree Preservation Orders and other tree enquiries on the website	To increase the amount of useful reference information available to the public	Collate relevant information from existing paper files and transfer to electronic system. Produce guidance notes for the public about tree care and management.	Launch date dependent on time taken to collate the information from archive paper files.	Environment, Heritage and Recreation Strategy admin team/ Tree Conservation Officer/ website manager		New information pages launched on website

