

BOROUGH OF HARROW

Meeting:	Cabinet Development Control Committee
Date:	20 th April 2004 21 st April 2004/18 th May 2004
Subject:	Planning & Development Improvement Plan 2004/05 – 2006/07
Key decision:	No
Responsible Chief Officer:	Chief Planning Officer
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	Planning, Development, Housing and Best Value
Status:	Part I
Ward:	N/A
Enclosures:	Improvement Plan & Appendices

1. **Summary/ Reason for urgency (if applicable)**

N/A

2. **Recommendations (for decision by Cabinet)**

2.1 For Cabinet

2.1.1 Agrees the Improvement Plan.

2.1.2 Agrees to the use of the 2004/05 PDG allocation of £283,000 and surplus income over budget from planning application fees to support the implementation of the Improvement Plan.

2.1.3 Notes that the report will be considered by the DC Committee on 21st April 2004 and that any comments by that Committee will be considered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Housing to determine.

REASON: To allow the implementation of the Service Improvement Plan in 2004/05 to meet the service objectives as set out in the report.

2.2 For DC Committee

2.2.1 Notes the report and Improvement Plan.

2.2.2 Forwards any comments it may have to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development & Housing for consideration.

3. **Consultation with Ward Councillors**

3.1 N/A

4. **Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)**

- 4.1 The Improvement Plan addresses the need to improve performance within the Planning & Development function to meet Government and Local targets to address ODPM concerns regarding the current levels of performance and to maximise the 2005/06 Planning Delivery Grant allocation and influence the CPA process.

5. **Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 This report addresses the Council's priorities of enhancing the environment and developing a prosperous and sustainable economy.

6. **Background Information and options considered**

See Improvement Plan.

6.1 **Recent History**

The Service Improvement Plan has been developed to address the need to improve performance against targets and indicators. The objectives are to achieve upper quartile performance levels, to meet and exceed Government BVPIs and in so doing to ensure service users can depend upon a quality service. Achievement of these objectives will improve the Council's position for future Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

Funding the Improvement Plan is dependent upon the full use of the 2004/05 Planning Delivery Grant allocation of £283,000, together with the ability to re-invest potential overachievement of Development Control fee income. The details are set out in Section 5 of the report.

7. **Consultation**

- 7.1 All staff within the Planning & Development Service have received a copy of the Improvement Plan and had the opportunity to attend meetings where it has been explained. Responses have where possible been incorporated and/or reported separately.

8. **Finance Observations**

- 8.1 The proposed use of the Planning Development Grant received in 2004-2005 is summarised below and detailed in the Service Improvement Plan.

The use of grant and fee income to support salary expenditure could potentially create a growth pressure in future years if grant were not received and if there were to be a reduction in the level of Planning applications. It is however anticipated that this could be contained if necessary through turnover and by a proportion of the staffing being on a temporary or agency basis.

Cabinet approval will be sought in the Revenue Outturn report to the carry forward of the unspent PDG grant received in 2003-2004 allocated for system developments.

The breakdown of the cost and funding for the Improvement Plan in 2004/05 is as follows:-

Cost		
DC Staffing	£235k	Funded from
FP Staffing	£90k	PDG/excess DC fee
Performance Management	£80k	income over budget, and
Member Training	£5k	increase in base salary
		budget (£340k)
Full Year Cost	<hr/> £410k <hr/>	
2004/05 cost (10 months)	£342k	
IT Improvement	£50k	Capital Programme
BC Staffing	£65k	Excess BC fee income over budget

The 2005/06 position will be reviewed when the PDG position and fee recovery for that year is known.

9. **Legal Observations**

9.1 None.

10. **Conclusion**

10.1 The Service Improvement Plan sets out what is necessary for Planning and Building Control to meet national and local targets for performance and reach upper quartile in respect of performance indicators. This level of performance will support the Council's objective of a 'good' CPA rating in the next review. Meeting targets and performance indicators is not an end in itself and will result in providing better service to all users. Alongside the Service Improvement Plan there are also many corporate and departmental initiatives to improve customer service and develop integrated service delivery, all of which will contribute towards establishing a good Planning and Building Control function within the Authority.

11. **Background Papers**

11.1 None.

12. **Author**

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