

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 19 JULY 1999

SUBJECT: MONITORING OF SERVICE PLAN - PLANNING BUSINESS UNIT

FROM: GROUP SPOKESPERSONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of the progress made to date in respect of the 1998/1999 Service Plan for the Planning Business Unit.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The 1998/1999 Planning Service Plan was presented to Committee in September 1997.

2.2 The Council decided that all Service Plans would be monitored by the Commissioning Team and Spokespersons via the quarterly meetings with the Head of the Business Unit. This has happened and progress is now being reported to Committee.

3. MONITORING OF THE FINAL QUARTER

3.1 Good progress has been made. The Business Unit continues to deliver a good standard of service and has also participated in many corporate initiatives. Such work is clearly over and above general priorities. Group Spokespersons would like to particularly commend the Unit's efforts in relation to the following corporate priorities:

- Town Centre Management
- EMAS
- Better Government for Older People
- Equality and Equal Access: CRE Standards

And the Fundamental Review

3.2 Staff are well trained and the majority of service plan targets have been met:

- * 85% of staff have received equal opportunities training.
- * The Environmental Awareness training target has been met.

3.3 The Unit is committed to continuous improvement and this is borne out by:

- * The outcomes of the Fundamental Review and the continued implementation of the Action Plan;
- * Further work concerning the 8 week planning application target;
- Member Seminars;
- Visits to other Local Authorities;
- The Business Unit continues to monitor complaints and requests for services. Regular reports will be presented to Development Committee.

3.4 The savings targets have been met.

3.5 The Service Plan, in keeping with the principles of Best Value involves a process of continuous improvement. There are opportunities to improve Section 5 of the Service Plan. We suggest that the Commissioning Director and Head of Business work with the Team Leaders to improve the measures. This will eventually feed into the Council's Local Performance Plan. However, we would ask that the following be considered:

With regard to Section 5 of the Service Plan:

1. The issue of awareness of householders in conservation areas of the existence of these areas including their properties has been raised in the light of problems over dormer extensions in Wathen Road, Leamington and elsewhere. There could be an addition to 5.29 on measures to be taken to improve public awareness of the extent of the areas and the need to get advice from planning officers on planning issues.
2. Arising from the same issue, it should be possible for building control officers to be more proactive in assisting to ensure that planning applications are made for developments in conservation areas that would otherwise not require permission.
3. There is some work undertaken by building control officers in assisting with monitoring some developments against the permitted plans and conditions. This should be added to the Service Plan.
4. 5.25, 5.26 and 5.27 might well be updated in the light of decisions so far on progress.
5. 5.32 should be updated in the light of the Interim Transport Plan and the need to ensure the County's Local Transport Plan is compatible with our Local Development Plan.

4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Excellent progress has been made. The Unit continues to support and participate in many corporate initiatives and has made a significant contribution to the Key Issues

Strategies.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Members are asked to:

- (i) Note the good progress to date.
- (ii) Decide whether Section 5 of the Service Plan should be further improved.

**Group Spokespersons
Planning**

Background Papers:
1998/99 Planning Service Plan

For further information about this report please contact:

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**Areas in District
Affected:** All