

# PARSOL Better Planning Services Standards

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[www.pas.gov.uk/parsol](http://www.pas.gov.uk/parsol)



## Foreword by Eric Woulds Chair of the Better Planning Steering Group

It has been less than two years since the original e-Planning Service Delivery Standards were published and I'm sure I am not the only person who has wondered why they should be reviewed so soon.

However, chairing the steering group, on behalf of the Planning Officers Society, has given me a real insight into the progress that Local Planning Authorities had achieved nationally since 2004.

The Planning Portal, e-planning Blueprint, and the original e-planning Service Delivery Standards have all raised awareness of what's possible in 'e-service' delivery.

The Pendleton surveys, Performance Indicators and Planning Delivery Grant have all encouraged investment in the means to do more business online.

Many councils are now delivering fully transactional web sites that bear little resemblance to those on offer two years ago, and the time is right to think about what can be done next.

Two national workshops were held in February this year to discuss early drafts of the standards and I was very pleased to see the levels of enthusiasm and engagement from all participants. I would also like to thank all those who contributed to the revision of the standards.

Many excellent suggestions came out the workshops and the open consultation exercise, and these have been incorporated in the final document.

The revised standards provide the foundations, direction and the guidance needed to achieve further improvements to service delivery.

Innovative use of information technology may be the only way to achieve this, but let's not forget that the purpose of the standards is to improve the service we provide, to whoever uses it.

**This is not an 'e-planning agenda'. This is Better Planning.**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Objectives and scope of the Standards

This document defines standards for the delivery of better planning services in an e-enabled environment. These Better Planning Services Standards are one of a number of deliverables from the Planning and Regulatory Services Online (PARSOL) e-Government National Project.

The Standards aim to improve the delivery of planning services through the use of technology, particularly through use of the Internet and online services. The Standards can be thought of as the technology, and technology associated, elements of the wider implementation of better planning services. The place of the Standards in this wider context is set out in section 2.

*The objectives of the Standards are to*

- Assist local authorities in determining how well they are progressing towards the development of better planning services.
- Set out the steps towards the development of excellence in Planning from the technology perspective.

*These standards replace the PARSOL 2004 e-Planning Service Delivery Standards, the main changes being:*

- Alignment with recent legislation.
- Consideration of the findings of the review of the e-Planning Service Delivery Standards for County Councils [www.parsol.gov.uk/documents/e-Planning\\_%20SDS%20Advice%20for%20County%20Councils.pdf](http://www.parsol.gov.uk/documents/e-Planning_%20SDS%20Advice%20for%20County%20Councils.pdf)
- Reassessment of the definition of good services. The Minimum, Progressing and Excellent grades have been dropped. The Standards now point to a range of initiatives that are deemed to be good practice and that might be found in a model local planning authority.
- Measurement of progress through service take-up to more closely align progress to the delivery of benefits.

A revised self assessment toolkit for these Standards will be available at [www.esd.org.uk](http://www.esd.org.uk), the National eService Delivery Standards (NeSDS) toolkit website. Authorities are encouraged to assess themselves against the Standards and apply them in the wider planning assessment and service development context as set out in section 2. Authorities should be incorporating achievement of the Standards into their business plans - setting targets for achievement of the Standards over 2 – 3 years. More detail on the approach to using the Standards is set out in section 4.

The Standards are currently undergoing evaluation by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as a contributory factor in the future evaluation of Planning Delivery Grant (PDG). It is possible that the standards may be referenced as an assessment tool by other bodies e.g. the Audit Commission.

## 1.2 PARSOL

The Planning and Regulatory Services Online (PARSOL) e-Government National Project was set up to assist local authorities with the implementation of e-planning and regulatory services as part of the Government's commitment to the development of local e-Government services. PARSOL is an inclusive organisation formed "by local authorities, for local authorities". Funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (previously the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)), it is a consortium of local authorities and other organisations, the lead being the Wandsworth Borough Council.

PARSOL has developed a range of guidelines, benchmarks, schemas, demonstrator sites, systems and toolkits to assist local authorities in developing effective online planning and regulatory services. The intention is to bring real benefits to citizens and business users alike through faster and more effective service delivery. More information can be found on the PAS website: [www.pas.gov.uk/parsol](http://www.pas.gov.uk/parsol) and the Planning Portal website [www.planningportal.gov.uk/parsol](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/parsol)

## 2 The Standards in the wider implementation of better planning services and definition of a successful planning service

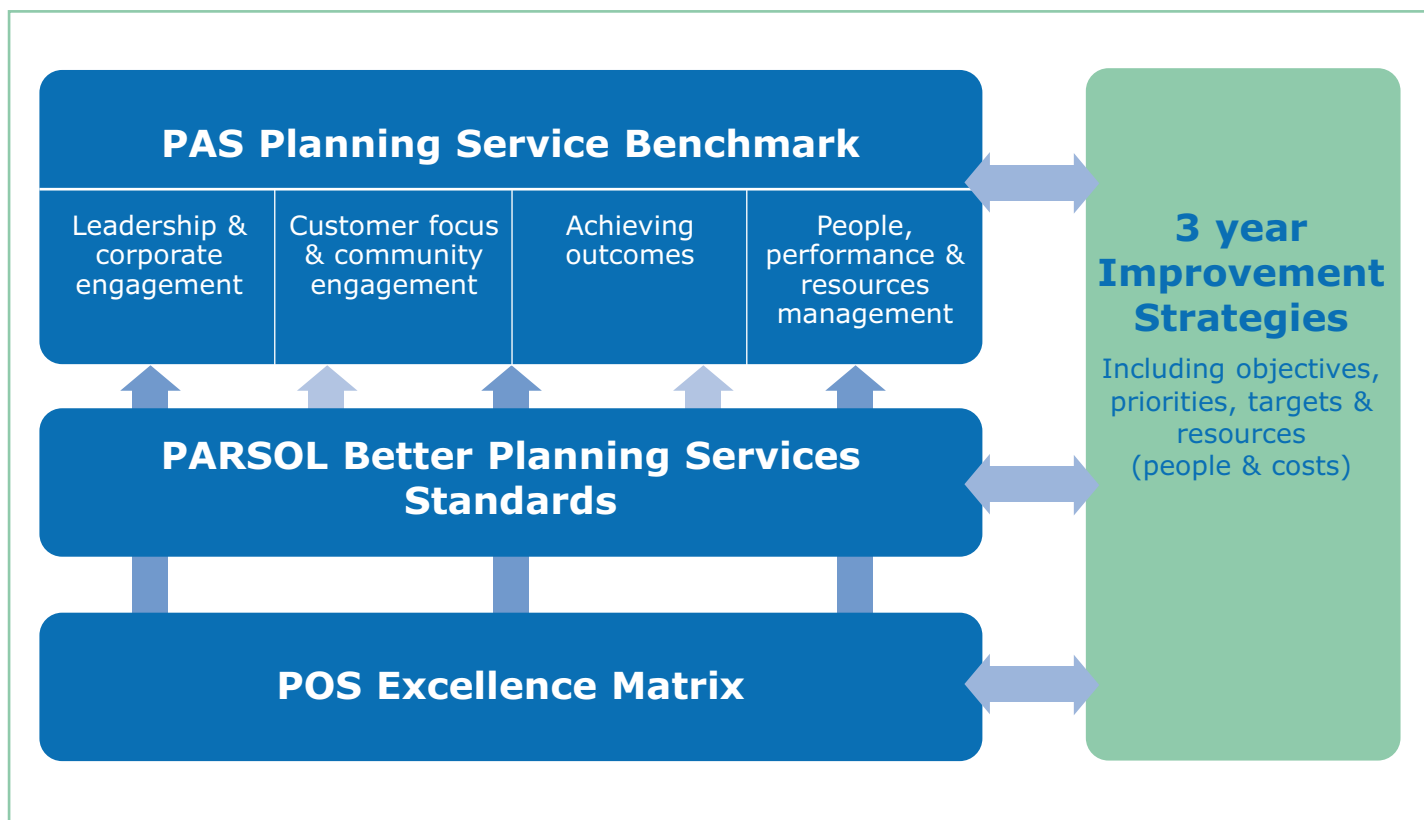
### 2.1 PAS Planning Service Benchmark

The Planning Service Benchmark is a benchmarking tool designed to help planning authorities to improve their services. It sits within a framework of IDeA peer review tools. The benchmark relates directly to both the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) and Service Inspection frameworks. It can be used as a precursor to a CPA or service inspection, and as an assessment and improvement tool. It can be used by authorities either on their own or through a process of peer review.

At the time of producing these Standards the Planning Service Benchmark is undergoing consultation. Further information can be found on the [PAS website at www.pas.gov.uk](http://www.pas.gov.uk). At a strategic, generic level the benchmark will supersede the Planning Officers Society (POS) Moving Towards Excellence in Planning Compendium. However, Moving Towards Excellence in Planning will still serve as a useful guidance note in the context of these Standards, giving as it does supplementary and complementary information to the Planning Service Benchmark.

The Better Planning Services Standards relate to several areas of the Planning Service Benchmark - providing technology related detail to this benchmark. The Standards should be used when applying the Planning Service Benchmark to add additional depth to the use of technology in improving planning services.

The diagram below shows the relationship between the standards and the Planning Service Benchmark. In addition, it shows the link between the benchmark, the Standards and the authority's improvement strategy. This is referred to in more detail in section 4 on how to use the Standards.



The Planning Service Benchmark comprises four themes: leadership and corporate engagement; customer focus and community engagement; achieving outcomes effectively and sustainably; people, performance and resource management. These themes are further divided into a number of elements. The relationship between the Standards and the Planning Service Benchmark themes and elements is shown in the General Guidance box for each of the sets of Standards in section 5.

## 2.2 BVPI and CPA

As detailed in the above section the Standards can be used in conjunction with PAS Planning Service Benchmark as an assessment and improvement tool in the run up to a CPA inspection. Implementation of the Standards is likely, in general, to contribute towards a higher CPA score for the authority.

*Many of the Standards will contribute, directly or indirectly, towards the achievement of Best Value Performance Indicators, in particular:*

- BVPI 106 (New homes on Previously Developed Land)
- BVPI 109 (Planning Applications)
- BVPI 111 (User Satisfaction)
- BVPI 200 (Plan Making)
- BVPI 204 (Planning Appeals)
- BVPI 205 (Quality of Planning Service Checklist)
- BVPI 219 (Conservation Areas)

## 2.3 Other PARSOL and NeSDS Standards

Planning services cannot be delivered in isolation. Therefore, these Standards must be considered in the wider context of corporate services and other regulatory services to ensure that a joined up approach to service delivery is taken and a “silo” approach avoided. Other relevant sets of Standards that should be considered alongside the Better Planning Services Standards are:

- PARSOL e-Building Control Service Delivery Standards
- Relevant Standards developed through the NeSDS programme.  
 This programme set efficiency benchmarks for local authorities based on aggregation of their own professional experience and best practices. The following Standards are relevant here:
  - Customer Services Service Delivery Standards
  - NeSDS ICT Service Delivery Standards
  - NeSDS e-Trees Service Delivery Standards

The Standards can be found on the NeSDS toolkit website [www.nesds.gov.uk](http://www.nesds.gov.uk)

# 3 Structure of the Standards

## 3.1 Outcome statements for key service areas

The Standards have been written to help authorities to deliver better planning services. To reflect this the Standards are based around six outcome statements for key service areas which authorities may want to prioritise in terms of delivering efficient and effective planning services for their authority. It is taken as given that the end outcome of all of the Standards will be the improvement of the environment.

*The outcome statements for the key service areas are:*

1. Engaging stakeholders and the public in the development and understanding of planning policy.
2. Providing accessible, accurate and up-to-date information and advice to customers.
3. Efficiently and effectively managing the receipt and processing of planning applications including appeals.
4. Providing an open and effective planning enforcement service.
5. Producing accurate and timely performance management information.
6. Producing accurate and timely plan and land-use monitoring information.

These outcomes may be of differing importance across authorities due to local differences such as historical track record of service delivery, customer base, geographical differences or type of authority. By structuring the Standards around these outcomes authorities can focus in on those which have most relevance to the planning department’s business plan and the authority’s corporate vision.

## 3.2 Benefit points

Each Standard brings with it benefits which contribute towards the achievement of the priority statement for a key service area. These benefits can be grouped into two distinct types:

- Quality benefits – i.e. improved quality of customer service such as a faster and easier to use service. A quality benefit should result in an improved perception of the level of service that the customer experiences.
- Efficiency benefits – i.e. carrying out a process or action in less time or at a reduced cost. An efficiency benefit should result in the freeing up of resources that may be reinvested to make service improvements in other areas.

Each Standard has been given a score of quality benefit points of between 0 – 5 [Q0 – Q5] and a score of efficiency benefit points of between 0 – 5 [E0 – E5]. These are added together to give a total number of benefit points [C1 – C10] for the combined benefit. This will allow authorities to prioritise Standards in terms of either combined [C] benefits, or quality [Q] or efficiency [E] benefits depending on what the authority perceives to be its priorities. These scores were proposed by the steering group established for the development of the Standards, and were subsequently commented upon by local authorities during the development process through consultation workshops and open consultation.

These benefit points can act as a guide although there will be some circumstances where the benefits for an authority may differ due to local circumstances. They should be considered together with the likely costs of implementing a Standard in order to evaluate the business case for implementation.

## 3.3 Success measures

In order to measure the extent to which an authority is achieving the outcomes statements for the six key service areas some measures of delivery have been suggested in relation to the areas.

Whilst the success measures are by no means the only indicator of improving service delivery, they will be a key indicator for that area. They have been selected as a relevant indicator for that area which is easy to calculate and less likely to be open to varying interpretation. For some areas there will be more than one success measure as delivery cannot be measured by one indicator alone. For some services areas there are no practical success measures.

Varying levels of delivery have been categorised according to a star [☆] system of 1 star [☆] to 3 star [☆☆☆].

The success measures will allow authorities to benchmark themselves over time and against other authorities in order to assess the extent to which implementation of the Standards is improving service delivery. Authorities should continue to use any local performance indicators that they have

devised and where appropriate they should consider these alongside the success measures.

When evaluating your authority's performance against the success measures for reporting in the esd-toolkit/NeSDS Quick Assessment Guide, unless other guidance is given in the success measure, the assessment should be made on the last 6 month period (April - September or October - March).

### **3.4 Toolkits and guidance notes**

As with the 2004 e-Planning Service Delivery Standards, toolkits and guidance notes that can help an authority to implement the Standards have been referenced where applicable. In addition, general guidance for a service area is referenced.

### **3.5 Validation against the Standards**

Almost all of the Standards can be externally validated by checking and testing the available online services. However, there are some which could only be validated through internal checks and tests carried out within the planning department. This is shown in the Standards tables by:

- E - can be externally validated
- I – will require internal validation

### **3.6 Glossary**

For readability many of the terms used in this document have been referred to by their commonly used acronyms. For further details of terms and acronyms please see the comprehensive glossary on the Planning Portal website at [www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/en/1018892037172.html](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/en/1018892037172.html)

## 4 How to use the Standards

No two LPAs are at the same point in the development and implementation of e-Planning services. Each LPA has its own set of local circumstances and drivers that will govern the manner in which it addresses the development and modernisation of planning services. LPAs must take stock of their current service, determine their future vision for planning services and develop/revise their business and improvement plans to achieve this.

The PARSOL toolkit SP06 – e-Planning Service Improvement Planner Toolkit was developed to assist LPAs in making informed, and corporately aligned, decisions about how they plan for and develop future e-Planning services in conjunction with the 2004 e-Planning Service Delivery Standards. It remains a valid tool for use with these revised Better Planning Services Standards.

SP06 helps LPAs to plan for the future and prioritise improvements. It outlines an outcome-focused process for identifying and clarifying the role that e-Planning initiatives can play in improving planning services and has been designed to reflect the specific service delivery environment of individual LPAs.

*SP06 and these Standards can be used to help LPAs develop appropriate business plans using the following four stages:*

- **Stage 1: Understanding the context**

LPAs should develop a greater understanding of the authority's service delivery agenda and the role of e-Planning, using a variety of support tools such as the PAS Planning Services Benchmark. In addition this should be linked with the authority's wider agenda, examining the implementation of corporate development initiatives such as NeSDS ICT Service Delivery Standards and Customer Services Service Delivery Standards as well as other corporate development objectives and plans.

LPAs should also review and catalogue what they are currently doing to develop the e-Planning service delivery agenda, assessing themselves against the PARSOL Better Planning Services Standards in terms of:

- The Standards that have been achieved.
- The extent to which positive outcomes have been achieved through the implementation of e-Planning. This can be done by evaluation of the success measure star ratings for each the outcome statements.

- **Stage 2: Establishing the e-Planning agenda**

The customer should be the focus of the e-Planning agenda and the LPA should clearly identify and define these customers and their needs in terms of: the citizen; agents; businesses; consultees; and other departments in the authority.

LPAs should identify the gaps between current and planned service delivery focusing on developing those areas that align with the wider service delivery agenda for the authority.

The LPA can use the benefits points as a guide to determine where to focus their efforts i.e. those areas where the greatest benefits can be achieved. LPAs should note that the benefits points for each Standard are an estimate of the anticipated benefits of implementing the Standard. These should be evaluated by LPAs to take into consideration local circumstances and drivers that may lead to differences in their authority.

A key outcome from this stage will be to identify which PARSOL (and other) toolkits the LPA should be using to meet the short, medium and long term service delivery agenda objectives.

- **Stage 3: Developing the Business Case for change**

The LPA should develop a sustainable Business Case for moving forward e-Planning in a planned and outcome focused way. In addition, LPAs will need to secure the appropriate Member and senior management buy-in, funding and commitment for the planned way forward.

SP06 gives a template for an e-Planning Business Case that can be used as a starting point for the evaluation of costs and benefits to make a case for the development of e-Planning services.

- **Stage 4: Implementing the e-Planning agenda**

The LPA should develop an appropriate Implementation Plan to implement the e-Planning agenda. This should not be a standalone e-Planning improvement plan, but rather an integral part of existing corporate plans, and planning services business plans and improvement strategies (See Improvement Strategy Guidance for Planning Authorities [www.pas.gov.uk](http://www.pas.gov.uk)).

We recommend that the LPA should put in place a complementary three year financial strategy to set out how implementation will be funded.

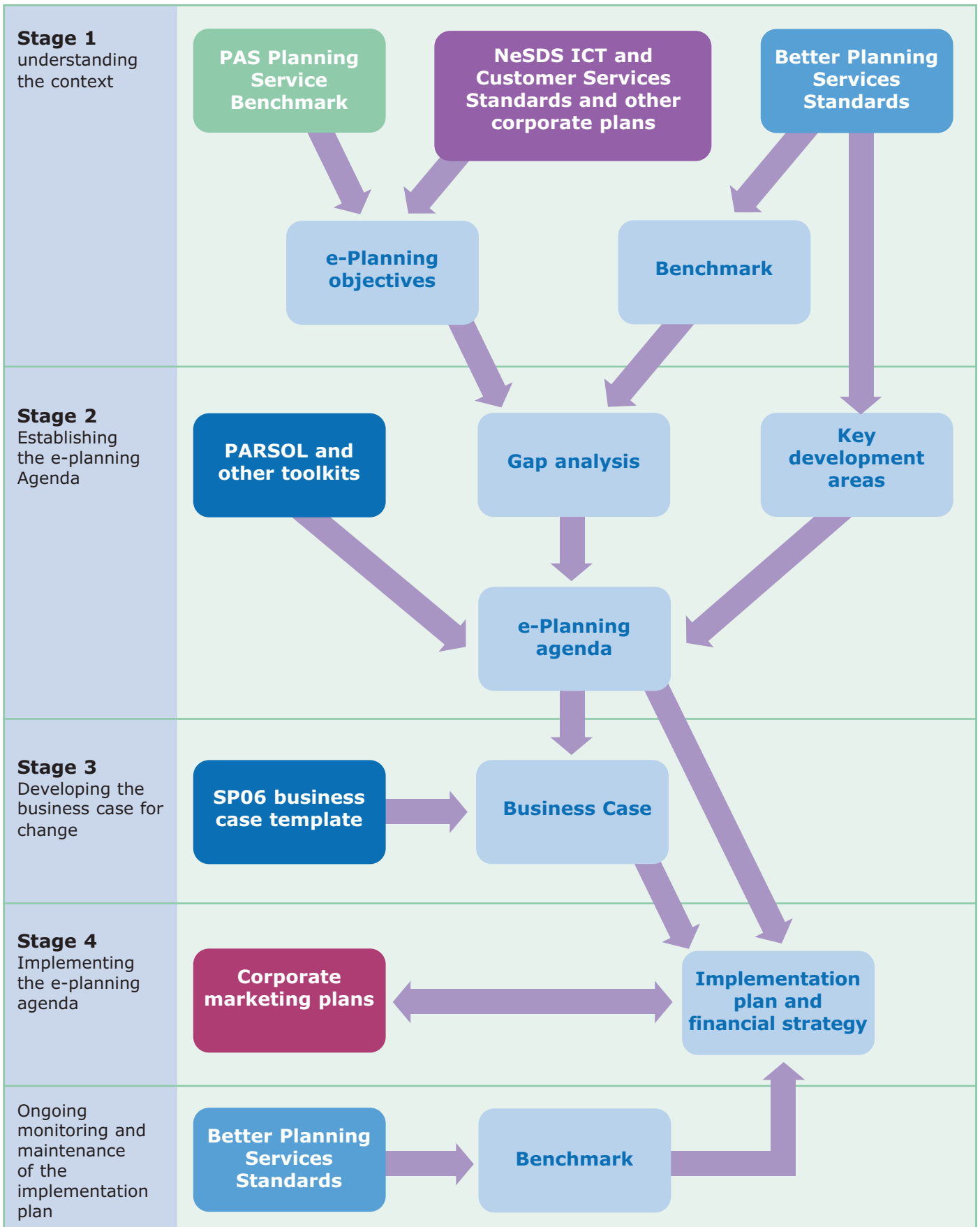
Unless services are promoted the required level take-up will not be achieved and consequently the anticipated benefits will not be realised. The Implementation Plan should link to the authority's marketing plans to ensure that e-Planning services are effectively marketed and promoted to achieve the required outcomes.

Use of the Standards should be seen as an iterative process and LPAs should continue to monitor their progress against the Standards and success measure star ratings over time to determine the extent to which benefits are being realised and where plans may need to be revised. These Standards do not have to be seen as limiting for those authorities that are deemed to be already operating services at the levels set by the Standards. Such authorities should investigate and implement further innovations as appropriate.

Programmes and projects of work to initiate the Standards should be managed according to formal programme and project management methodologies such as MSP and PRINCE2, and adhere to other relevant OGC good practice.

## 4.1 How to use the Standards

The diagram below shows the relation of the Standards to the various support tools they should be listed in conjunction with.



## 5 The Standards

### 1 Engaging stakeholders and the public in the development and understanding of planning policy

#### Quality benefits:

- Increases the transparency of the policy development process.
- Stakeholders are fully involved in plan making processes.
- Promotes on-going dialogue and helps build positive relationships with stakeholders, including the local community.
- Increases access to planning policy information.

#### Efficiency benefits:

- Reduces the number of front office, telephone and email queries.
- Reduces printing of documents.
- Improves the quality and completeness of comments and objections.
- Increases the efficiency of handling comments.

#### General Guidance:

Creating Local Development Frameworks: A Companion Guide to PPS12; Community Involvement in Planning; POS Moving Towards Excellence in Planning; Planning Inspectorate Guidance on the Framework for Assessing Soundness

#### PAS Planning Service Benchmark:

1. Leadership and corporate engagement: (A) Vision and direction  
(B) Integration of policy and service delivery
2. Customer focus and community engagement: (A) Transparency of process,  
(B) Accessibility, (C) Responsiveness to users
3. Achieving outcomes effectively and sustainably: (B) Delivering through partnership working

<b>1 Engaging stakeholders and the public in the development and understanding of planning policy</b>				
	Details of the standard	Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
1.1	The LPA has an approved LDS that is published online and regularly updated.	Q2 E2 C4	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information	E
1.2	The LPA has a fully interactive (i.e. providing links between the areas defined on the map and the full text of the relevant policies and proposals) online Proposals Map. The online Proposals map should indicate the level (two tier authorities) and status of the map.	Q4 E4 C8	SP20 Electronic capture of map based information	E
1.3	The LPA has an IT based system for managing planning policy development and consultation.	Q2 E5 C7	SP10 Consultation and negotiation	I
1.4	Comments on LDDs can be made online or by email in line with the regulations on the format of responses at the appropriate stage.	Q4 E2 C6	SP10 Consultation and negotiation; SP13 Extranet; SP14 XML	E
1.5	Comments on LDDs received online automatically update the back office system.	Q2 E4 C6	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information; SP10 Consultation and Negotiation; SP13 Extranet	I
1.6	Online respondents are sent electronic acknowledgement of receipt of their comments within one working day. This response time is made clear on the website.	Q3 E4 C7		E
1.7	The progress of LDDs can be tracked online e.g. current status, relevant dates regarding publication, consultation and adoption, etc achieved and expected.	Q3 E3 C6	SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information	E

## 1 Engaging stakeholders and the public in the development and understanding of planning policy

	Details of the standard	Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
1.8	Customers can register to receive e-mails (or SMS messages) informing them of progress with the delivery of the LDS, e.g. release of documents for consultation, inquiry dates, adoption, etc. Users should be able to amend/remove their registrations.	Q3 E3 C6		E
1.9	The LPA produces LDDs according to the PARSOL LDF XML schema to enable documents to be exported/imported to a common format, e.g. for publishing on the Planning Portal.	Q3 E2 C5	LDF XML Schema	I
1.10	Individual representations can be viewed online, together with the authority's response/action in relation to the representation made.	Q4 E3 C7	SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information	E
1.11	All DPDs, including the Statement of Community Involvement, can be viewed online including supporting materials with links to RSSs and county websites where applicable.	Q4 E4 C8	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP20 Electronic capture of map-based information; SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information	E
1.12	The LPA publishes Supplementary Planning Documents online, including design guidance.	Q4 E3 C7		E
	<b>TOTAL BENEFIT POINTS</b>	<b>Q38 E39 C77</b>		

### Success measures

**SM 1.1:** % of representations received electronically (online or by structured e-mail) on last 2 relevant DPDs where the consultation period has closed

<10%	10% - <30%	30% - <50%	50%+
	☆	☆☆	☆☆☆

## 2 Providing accessible, accurate and up-to-date information and advice to customers

### Quality benefits:

- Ensures that information and services are accessible, open and transparent.
- Improves the quality and completeness of planning applications.
- Potential to improve the quality and predictability of planning decisions.
- Helps to improve customer satisfaction.
- Helps to meet quality of service standards set out in BVPI 205.
- Improves the understanding of the planning process
- Consistency of advice.

### Efficiency benefits:

- Reduces the number of unnecessary front office, telephone and email queries.
- Reduces number of appeals.
- Reduction in customer complaints.

### General Guidance:

POS Moving Towards Excellence in Planning; PAS Diagnostic and Support Framework for Development Control; Enforcement Concordat

### PAS Planning Service Benchmark:

1. Leadership and corporate engagement: (A) Vision and direction
2. Customer focus and community engagement: (A) Transparency of process

## 2 Providing accessible, accurate and up-to-date information and advice to customers

	Details of the standard	Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
2.1	The LPA website shows the structure and responsibilities of the Planning Service and contacts with links to other regulatory services contacts.	Q2 E1 C3		E
2.2	The LPA publishes its customer charter online.	Q1 E0 C1	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information; SP26 Performance Management	E
2.3	Information on the plan making process is available online. The LPAs website should include a user friendly overview of the development plan process, including details of the progress which is being made in implementing the LDS and summaries of the nature and contents of the individual LDDs.	Q3 E2 C5	The Planning Portal	E
2.4	The LPA publishes its policy in relation to the requirement for, and content of, Section 106 Agreements/Unilateral Undertakings.	Q2 E2 C4	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information	E
2.5	General pre-application advice is available online. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The application process including the need for planning permission and detail about committee and delegated decisions.</li> <li>• The consultation process and how to make comments.</li> <li>• The appeals process and how to make an appeal.</li> </ul>	Q3 E4 C7	The Planning Portal	E
2.6	The LPA publishes its enforcement policy, including conditions monitoring policy, online.	Q2 E1 C3	SP09 Enforcement; SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information	E

## 2 Providing accessible, accurate and up-to-date information and advice to customers

	Details of the standard	Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
2.7	<p>General enforcement information and advice is available online. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to report an alleged breach of planning control.</li> <li>• The enforcement process and how to make an appeal against an enforcement notice.</li> <li>• Details of the fees for the monitoring of minerals and landfill sites (where relevant).</li> </ul>	Q2 E2 C4	The Planning Portal; PARSOL Planning and building control information online – Guidance notes for practitioners 2nd edition	E
2.8	The LPA provides online advice using FAQs which are reviewed every six months and updated as required. The page should indicate when it was last updated to reflect customer demand.	Q3 E2 C5	SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information; Planning Portal	E
2.9*	Customers can access an electronic tool for confirmation and guidance on the need for planning permission.	Q4 E5 C9 <sup>1</sup>	SP07 Planning Permission Enquiry; Planning Portal	E
2.10	Customers have online access to general information relating to flood risk; contaminated land; TPOs; Conservation Areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Article 4 Directions*; Article 3 restrictions on permitted development rights_; listed buildings*. Where appropriate the information should be through links to external websites.	Q4 E4 C8	SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information; NeSDS e-Trees Service Delivery Standards	E
2.11	Customers have online access to site-specific information allowing the customer to determine whether a specific site is subject to: flood risk; contaminated land; TPOs; Conservation Areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; Article 4 Directions*; Article 3 restrictions on permitted development rights*; listed buildings*.	Q3 E3 C6	SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information; SP20 Electronic capture of map-based information; NeSDS e-Trees Service Delivery Standards	E
2.12	The LPA publishes application forms online for downloading.	Q2 E2 C4	SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information; The Planning Portal	E

\*Not applicable to county councils

<sup>1</sup>The benefits of an electronic tool would be expected to increase as the tools become more sophisticated and intelligent over time.

## 2 Providing accessible, accurate and up-to-date information and advice to customers

	Details of the standard	Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
2.13	The LPA publishes online advice and checklists on the completion of application forms.	Q3 E4 C7	SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information; ODPM Best Practice guidance on the Validation of Planning Applications; The Planning Portal; 1APP	E
2.14	The LPA publishes fees information on its website and customers can access an online fees and volumes calculator * either on the LPA's website or through an explicit link to the Planning Portal tools.	Q3 E3 C6	SP07 Planning Permission Enquiry; Planning Portal	E
2.15	Planning Committee meetings are broadcast live on the local authority's website (webcast).	Q3 E0 C3		E
	<b>TOTAL BENEFIT POINTS</b>	<b>Q40 E35 C75</b>		

### Success measures

**SM 2.1:** % all PS1 and PS2 applications (electronic and paper) accepted as valid on receipt

<75%	75% - <80%	80% - <90%	90%+
	☆	☆☆	☆☆☆

### Success measures

**SM 2.2\*:** % of site specific enquiries on the need for planning permission that are determined through use of an electronic tool (e.g. based on the PARSOL Expert System) either online or through a call centre

<0%	0% - <20%	20% - <40%	40%+
	☆	☆☆	☆☆☆

\*The fees and volumes calculator is not applicable for county councils

### 3 Efficiently and effectively managing the receipt and processing of planning applications including appeals

#### Quality benefits:

- Gives applicants the choice to deal with the LPA and the Planning Inspectorate electronically.
- Ensures that services are accessible, open and transparent.
- Increases the speed of the process.
- Improves the quality of planning decisions.

#### Efficiency benefits:

- Reduces the number of unnecessary front office, telephone and email queries.
- Reduces manual entry of data and scanning of documents.
- Improves the quality and completeness of planning applications.
- Increases the speed of the process.
- Improves the quality and completeness of planning appeals.

#### General Guidance:

POS Moving Towards Excellence in Planning; NeSDS e-Trees Service Delivery Standards; Pendleton Criteria; PAS Diagnostic and Support Framework for Development Control

#### PAS Planning Service Benchmark:

2. Customer focus and community engagement: (B) Accessibility, (C) Responsiveness to users
3. Achieving outcomes effectively and sustainably: (B) Delivering through partnership working

### 3 Efficiently and effectively managing the receipt and processing of planning applications including appeals

	Details of the standard	Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
3.1	A list of all applications on the Register of Planning Applications from the past ten years should be available online, searchable by application number, address, date received and date of decision. This should include details of Section 106 Agreements/Unilateral Undertakings. County councils should include links to the registers of the relevant district authorities.	Q3 E3 C6	Online Publication of Planning & BC Register Information; SP25 Planning Register online	E
3.2	The LPA actively promotes applications to be made online through means such as agent forums, leaflets, web banners and email promotions.	Q3 E3 C6	PARSOL Website Guidance; SP06 e-planning Service Improvement Toolkit; SP19 Electronic planning system; 1APP	I/E
3.3	The LPA can receive online planning applications either through its own website or through an explicit link to the Planning Portal electronic application facility or other third party provider.	Q4 E2 C6	SP22 Submitting Planning Applications Online	E
3.4	Applications received online automatically update the back office system.	Q0 E5 C5	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information	I
3.5	Online applicants are sent electronic acknowledgement of receipt of their application within one working day. This response time is made clear on the website.	Q3 E3 C6	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information	E
3.6	Online applicants are sent electronic confirmation of the validity or rejection of their application. 95% should be within three working days and 100% within five working days. This response time is made clear on the website.	Q4 E4 C8	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information	E

### 3 Efficiently and effectively managing the receipt and processing of planning applications including appeals

	Details of the standard	Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
3.7	An electronic 'case file' for each current application can be viewed online comprising completed application forms, application drawings, and any associated documents submitted as part of the application is available online (in accordance with the PARSOL Planning and building control information online – Guidance notes for practitioners 2nd edition) within five working days of the receipt of the application and before consultation requests are sent out.	Q5 E5 C10	SP 19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information; PARSOL Planning and building control information online – Guidance notes for practitioners 2nd edition	E
3.8	Any relevant documentation received or generated on applications subsequent to their submission (e.g. comments, revised drawings, decision notices, Section 106 Agreements/Unilateral Undertakings) is added to the electronic case file and available online within three working days of its receipt/generation (in accordance with the PARSOL Planning and building control information online – Guidance notes for practitioners 2nd edition).	Q5 E5 C10	SP 19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information; PARSOL Planning and building control information online – Guidance notes for practitioners 2nd edition	E
3.9	There is an electronic 'case file' for each application or appeal received in the last ten years that can be viewed online (in accordance with the PARSOL Planning and building control information online – Guidance notes for practitioners 2nd edition).	Q4 E3 C7	SP 19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information; PARSOL Planning and building control information online – Guidance notes for practitioners 2nd edition	E
3.10	Customers can search for application case files by a minimum of: application number; address; postcode; ward or parish; receipt, validation and decision date.	Q4 E4 C8		E
3.11	Customers can access an online map which allows them to click on a property or application and then links to relevant application case files.	Q4 E4 C8		E

### 3 Efficiently and effectively managing the receipt and processing of planning applications including appeals

	Details of the standard	Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
3.12	There is online access to further information about an application including: application status, case officer, contact details, date received, validation/registration date, target date for decision, start/end dates for public consultation, actual decision date.	Q4 E4 C8	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information	E
3.13	Officers have onsite/out-of-office access to case files and associated information.	Q1 E3 C4	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information; SP15 Mobile Technology; SP09 Enforcement; ODPM Review of Conditions at Mineral Sites	I
3.14	Customers can register online to be informed of applications in the area of their choice by email or SMS.	Q3 E0 C3	SP10 Consultation and Negotiation	E
3.15	Comments on planning applications can be made online or by email.	Q4 E2 C6	SP10 Consultation and negotiation; SP13 Extranet; SP14 XML	E
3.16	Comments on applications received online automatically update the back office system.	Q2 E4 C6	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information; SP08 Agent Certification; SP10 Consultation and Negotiation; SP13 Extranet	I
3.17	Respondents are sent electronic acknowledgement of receipt of their comments within one working day. This response time is made clear on the website.	Q3 E4 C7	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information; SP08 Agent Certification; SP10 Consultation and Negotiation; SP13 Extranet	E
3.18	The LPA publishes planning committee agendas, reports and minutes online. If the documents are provided as part of a corporate system then links should be provided on the relevant planning pages. Documents must be regularly updated, and it should be made clear when they will become available and when they were last updated. Minutes must be available no later than a week after the meeting approving them.	Q2 E1 C3	SP23 Planning Committee Agendas online	E

### 3 Efficiently and effectively managing the receipt and processing of planning applications including appeals

	Details of the standard	Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
3.19	The LPA proactively informs the applicant/agent by email or SMS of committee dates (where applicable) and decisions.	Q4 E2 C6	SP18 Informing Users; SP22 Submitting planning applications online	E
3.20	The LPA publishes planning application decisions online within one working day of the date of the decision notice.	Q3 E2 C5	SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information	E
3.21	The LPA has adopted the PARSOL Right First Time Agent Accreditation Scheme.	Q4 E3 C7	SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information	E
3.22	There are explicit links to the Planning Inspectorate and Planning Casework Service websites.	Q1 E1 C2	SP18 Informing Users; SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information	E
3.23	The LPA is signed up to the Planning Casework Service.	Q3 E3 C6		E
3.24	The LPA publishes details of planning appeals online.	Q3 E1 C4	PARSOL Planning and building control information online – Guidance notes for practitioners 2nd edition	E
<b>TOTAL BENEFIT POINTS</b>		<b>Q76 E71 C147</b>		

#### Success measures

**SM 3.1\***: % of all valid PS1 And PS2 planning applications received online

<5%	5% - <20%	20% - <40%	40%+
	☆	☆☆	☆☆☆

#### Success measures

**SM 3.2\***: % minor applications decided within 8 weeks

<65%	65% - <80%	80% - <90%	90%+
	☆	☆☆	☆☆☆

\*Not applicable to county councils

### 3 Efficiently and effectively managing the receipt and processing of planning applications including appeals

#### Success measures

**SM 3.3\***: other applications decided within 8 weeks

<80%	80% - <85%	85% - <95%	95%+
	☆	☆☆	☆☆☆

#### Success measures

**SM 3.4\***: % of planning application consultation comments from all sources received electronically (on-line or by e-mail)

<20%	20% - <40%	40% - <60%	60%+
	☆	☆☆	☆☆☆

#### Success measures

**SM 3.5\***: % of LPA appeal statements sent to the Planning Inspectorate electronically to target dates

<0%	0% - <90%	90% - <100%	100%+
	☆	☆☆	☆☆☆

\*Not applicable to county councils

## 4 Providing an open and effective planning enforcement service

### Quality benefits:

- Gives customers the choice to deal with the LPA electronically.
- Ensures that information and services are accessible, open and transparent.
- Improves the level of compliance with planning decisions and the outcomes of the planning process.

### Efficiency benefits:

- Reduces the number of unnecessary front office, telephone and email queries.
- Reduces manual entry of data.
- Improves the relevance and completeness of alleged breaches.
- Increases the speed of the process.

### General Guidance:

POS Moving Towards Excellence in Planning; Enforcement Concordat; The Code for Crown Prosecutors

### PAS Planning Service Benchmark:

2. Customer focus and community engagement: (B) Accessibility, (C) Responsiveness to users

## 4 Providing an open and effective planning enforcement service

	Details of the standard	Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
4.1	The public and stakeholders can inform the LPA of alleged breaches of planning control online or by email.	Q3 E1 C4	SP09 Enforcement; SP13 Extranet; SP14 XML Schema	E
4.2	Details of alleged breaches received online automatically update the back office system.	Q2 E4 C6	SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information	I
4.3	Customers are sent electronic acknowledgement of receipt of their electronic allegations of breaches of planning control within one working day. This response time is made clear on the website.	Q2 E2 C4	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning related information	E
4.4	Customers can search for alleged breaches of planning control by: address; postcode; ward or parish; and date received, whilst meeting the requirements of the Data Protection Act.	Q3 E3 C6	SP13 Extranet; SP14 XML Schema; SP18 Informing Users, SP19 Electronic planning system; SP09 Enforcement ; PARSOL Planning and building control information online – Guidance notes for practitioners 2nd edition	E
4.5	Customers can access an online map which allows them to click on a property and then links to relevant alleged breaches of planning control.	Q3 E3 C6		E
4.6	The LPA proactively informs the person or body alleging a breach of planning control of the outcome of investigations into the alleged breach by SMS or email.	Q3 E1 C4	SP18 Informing Users	I

## 4 Providing an open and effective planning enforcement service

	Details of the standard	Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
4.7	There is online access to the enforcement register including access to the actual enforcement notices for the past ten years. This is updated within one working day of a change to the information.	Q3 E2 C5		E
4.8	Customers can search for enforcement notices by: enforcement reference number; address; postcode; ward or parish; date authorised; date served; and compliance date.	Q4 E3 C7		E
4.9	Customers can access an online map which allows them to click on a property and then links to relevant enforcement notices.	Q4 E3 C7		E
4.10	There is an IT system that is used to monitor compliance with conditions and Section 106 Agreements/Unilateral Undertakings.	Q3 E3 C6		I
	<b>TOTAL BENEFIT POINTS</b>	<b>Q30 E25 C55</b>		

### Success measures

**SM 4.1:** % of alleged breaches reported online, by email or through a call centre with update to an electronic enforcement system

<10%	10% - <20%	20% - <30%	30%+
	☆	☆☆	☆☆☆

## 5 Producing accurate and timely performance management information

### Quality benefits:

- Ensures that information is accessible, open and transparent.
- Demonstrates progress in relation to customer charter and service plan objectives.
- Helps to identify where investment is needed.
- Helps to demonstrate effectiveness of investment.
- Promotes on-going, informed dialogue and helps build positive relationships with stakeholders.
- Improves the effectiveness of the planning service.
- Ensures better distribution of workload for case officers.

### Efficiency benefits:

- Enables effective service planning.
- Reduces administration time.
- Improves efficiency of case management and use of resources.

### General Guidance:

POS Moving Towards Excellence in Planning; PAS Diagnostic and Support Framework for Development Control

### PAS Planning Service Benchmark:

3. Achieving outcomes effectively and sustainably: (A) Efficient and effective processes
4. People, performance and resource management: (B) Performance management

## 5 Producing accurate and timely performance management information

Details of the standard		Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
5.1	There is an IT based system for capturing application related performance data, at authority, down to individual officer, level which shows: cases on hand; applications nearing their 8 and 13 week targets; and whether 95% of applications are validated and registered within three working days and 100% within five working days.	Q3 E5 C8	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information; SP26 Performance Management; SP13 Extranet; SP14 XML Schema; SP09 Enforcement	I
5.2	There is an IT based system for capturing enforcement related performance data, at an authority down to individual officer level, which shows: alleged breaches of planning control being dealt with and their status.	Q1 E2 C3		I
5.3	There is an IT based system for capturing appeals related performance data, at an authority down to individual officer level, which shows: type of appeal; dates that appeals statements were requested and provided to the Planning Inspectorate; and the outcome of appeals.	Q1 E2 C3		I
5.4	The LPA publishes BVPI data online within one month of the period end. The website should indicate whether the published figures are provisional or audited.	Q2 E0 C2		E
<b>TOTAL BENEFIT POINTS</b>		<b>Q7 E9 C16</b>		

### Success measures

None

## 6 Producing accurate and timely plan and land-use monitoring information

### Quality benefits:

- Ensures that information and services are accessible, open and transparent.
- Provides information on delivery against policy objectives.

### Efficiency benefits:

- Reduces administration time.

### General Guidance:

POS Moving Towards Excellence in Planning; PAS Diagnostic and Support Framework for Development Control

### PAS Planning Service Benchmark:

3. Achieving outcomes effectively and sustainably: (A) Efficient and effective processes

	Details of the standard	Benefit Points	Toolkits & Guidance notes	Validation
6.1	The LPA publishes its Annual Monitoring Report online.	Q3 E2 C5	SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information.	E
6.2	The LPA publishes performance data in relation to monitoring of heritage assets (i.e. ancient monuments, historic buildings conservation areas, and historic landscapes) and completion of Section 71 Conservation Area studies online.	Q2 E0 C2	SP12 Monitoring planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information; SP14 XML Schema	E
6.3	Land use monitoring information is held in line with the PARSOL Monitoring specification, either within the planning application system, or a linked database. Relevant information is derived from online 1APP applications by automatic uploading of data.	Q0 E4 C4	SP12 Monitoring; SP19 Electronic planning system; SP21 Electronic capture of planning-related information; SP13 Extranet; SP14 XML Schema	1
6.4	Land use information required for regional and national systems can be exported in line with the PARSOL Monitoring XML Schema.	Q0 E4 C4		I
	<b>TOTAL BENEFIT POINTS</b>	<b>Q5 E10 C15</b>		

### Success measures

**SM 6.1:** % of LDF Core Output Indicators that are completed in the AMR

<80%	80% - <90%	90% - <100%	100%
	☆	☆☆	☆☆☆

## Appendix A

### Organisations involved in the development of the Better Planning Services Standards:

Addison & Associates Ltd *	Hambleton District Council
Anglian Home Improvements Ltd	Hammersmith and Fulham Council
Birmingham City Council	Hampshire County Council
Borough of Poole	Haringey Council
Boston Borough Council	Harrogate Borough Council
Broadland District Council	Harrow Council
Broads Authority	Hart District Council
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council	High Peak Borough Council
Camden Council	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Chelmsford Borough Council	I&DeA
Cheltenham Borough Council	Kennet District Council
Cheshire County Council	Kent County Council
City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Coventry City Council	Knowsley Council
Department for Communities and Local Government *	KPMG
Deloitte	Leicester City Council
Derbyshire County Council	Lichfield City Council
District Surveyors Association* (Represented by Stroud District Council)	London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	London Borough of Sutton
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	Luton Borough Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	Macclesfield Borough Council
Eastleigh Borough Council	Manchester City Council
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council	Mansfield District Council
Enfield Council	Melton Borough Council
Entec SI	Mid Sussex District Council
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council	Middlesbrough Council
Fareham Borough Council	Mosaic Consulting Associates
Halton Borough Council	NeSDS
	Norfolk County Council
	North East Derbyshire District Council
	North Hertfordshire District Council

North Lincolnshire Council  
North Somerset Council  
North York Moors National Park  
Nottinghamshire County Council  
Pegasus Planning Group LLP  
Peter Pendleton & Associates Ltd  
Planning Advisory Service \*  
Planning Officers Society \*  
(Represented by Kirklees Metropolitan Council)  
Planning Portal \*  
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council  
Royal Town Planning Institute \*  
Rushcliffe Borough Council  
Salisbury District Council  
Sefton Council  
Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council  
Shropshire County Council  
South Norfolk Council  
South Tyneside Council  
St Helens Council  
Staffordshire County Council  
Stewart M&PS  
Stroud District Council  
Tandridge District Council  
Terraquest Solutions plc.  
Three Rivers District Council  
Torbay Council\*  
Trafford Metropolitan Borough  
Wandsworth Borough Council\*  
Westminster City Council  
Winchester City Council  
Wychavon District Council

\* Steering Group Members



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