

## Agenda Item 7b

<b>Executive Member</b>	Councillor Duncan Irvine – Executive Member for Planning		
<b>Strategic Management Team Lead Officer</b>	Jack Straw – Corporate Head of Service		
<b>Author</b>	Jack Straw – Corporate Head of Service		
<b>Telephone</b>	01306 879246		
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:jack.straw@molevalley.gov.uk">jack.straw@molevalley.gov.uk</a>		
<b>Date</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2018		
<b>Ward (s) affected</b>	All	<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes
<b>Subject</b>	Report of the Planning Panel.		
<p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>The Planning Panel has met four times and following the consideration of extensive reports, comprehensive background papers and presentations by officers from the Planning Service, invites the Scrutiny Committee to recommend to the Executive that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The resources of the Development Management Service are deployed to ensure the delivery of the planning enforcement function is improved.</li> <li>2. The 2012 Local Enforcement Plan is reviewed and updated.</li> <li>3. The content of the initial acknowledgement to reported alleged breaches of planning control is improved to explain the stages in the planning enforcement process and manage expectations of a resolution.</li> <li>4. A mandatory training programme for Members of the Development Control Committee is established.</li> <li>5. A peer review of the work of the Planning Service is commissioned.</li> <li>6. Officers in the Planning Service and Members are encouraged to work collaboratively wherever possible on planning applications and in the preparation of the new Local Plan for the benefit of Mole Valley's residents and businesses.</li> </ol>			
<p><b>Executive Summary</b></p> <p>In September 2017 it was agreed by the Scrutiny Committee to establish a Panel of Members to examine and review MVDC's planning service and identify recommendations that could contribute to its improved delivery for the benefit of Mole Valley residents and businesses. The Panel has met on four occasions.</p> <p>The Panel conducted a wide ranging review of the operation of the Planning Service. This included the work of the Development Management Team who are responsible for the timely determination of planning applications and the enforcement of planning</p>			

control; the Planning Policy Team who are preparing the new Local Plan and provide the Planning Conservation Service; and the Planning Support Team who deliver the administrative support for the service. Other matters that the Panel considered included the Building Control Service; training for Members of the Development Control Committee and a peer review of the way the Committee operates; MVDC's performance in defending appeals against the refusal of planning permission; customer service issues and the interaction between the Planning Service and Members.

This report explains the findings of the Planning Panel and its recommendations to the Scrutiny Committee.

### **Corporate Priority Outcomes**

Through the preparation of planning policies, the determination of planning applications and taking planning enforcement action against alleged breaches of planning control, the Planning Service has an important role to play in contributing to the delivery of MVDC's environment and prosperity priorities that the District is a highly attractive area with housing that meets local need and has a vibrant local economy with thriving towns and villages.

### **The Scrutiny Committee has the authority to determine the recommendations**

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 As part of its work programme, the Scrutiny Committee agreed at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017 to establish a Planning Panel. The Panel met on 21<sup>st</sup> November; 9<sup>th</sup> January; 5<sup>th</sup> February and 22<sup>nd</sup> February. The Panel agreed the content of this report at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018.
- 1.2 The Panel's Terms of Reference are set out in Annex 1 to this report. They have determined the structure of the report.

## **2. Contribution of the Planning Service to the delivery of the MVDC Corporate Strategy.**

- 2.1 The Corporate Strategy sets out MVDC's vision for the District as a place where people want to live, work, do business and spend their leisure time. The District's environment is one of the three priority themes for MVDC. To support this priority, MVDC is committed to:
  - (i) Protect and enhance the natural and built environment and ensure Mole Valley's areas of natural beauty are well looked after.
  - (ii) In consultation with the community, develop plans for how land is used, setting out proposals for residential, leisure and commercial development which balances residents' needs with the protection of the Green Belt

(iii) Pursue policies that encourage the creation of affordable housing.

2.2 The Planning Service has a major role to play in delivering the vision of the Corporate Strategy and the Environment priority theme through its work to establish planning policies that guide the location of development and in the determination of planning applications for the use of land and the provision of new development.

### **3. Development Management Service**

3.1 The Panel looked closely at the work of the Development Management Service (DMS) whose principal role is to ensure the timely determination of planning applications; defend appeals against the refusal of planning permission and instigate enforcement action against alleged breaches of planning control where it is expedient to do so.

3.2 The proposed 2018/19 DMS Service Plan was considered by the Panel. It was noted that the main thrust of the work programme will be to process planning applications, defend appeals against the refusal of planning permission, process requests for pre-application advice and investigate alleged breaches of planning control.

3.3 The Panel noted the volume of applications that the DMS handle, details of which are set out in Annex 2. The DMS is performing very well against the Key Performance Indicators which establish the time to be taken for the determination of planning applications. The performance is among the best in Surrey across all types of planning application<sup>1</sup>.

3.4 The Panel also looked at the instances where the Development Control Committee refused planning permission against the recommendation on the agenda paper and where the applicant subsequently appealed the decision. See Annex 3. In the period 2010 to 2017, the Development Control Committee refused 38 applications for planning permission which had been recommended for approval. These decisions were appealed by applicants<sup>2</sup>. Of the 38 appeals, 24 (63%) were allowed and planning permission granted in accordance with the recommendation on the agenda paper. There were 14 (37%) instances where the decision of the Development Control Committee to refuse planning permission contrary to the recommendation on the agenda paper was supported by the Planning Inspectorate in dismissing the appeals.

3.5 The Panel also considered the cases where costs had been awarded against MVDC where a Planning Inspector had adjudged that the Council had acted unreasonably in refusing to grant planning permission. The Panel appreciated that the award of costs against MVDC is an exception. The cases they looked at did however provide a timely reminder that reasons for refusal of planning permission must be substantiated, be based on evidence and clearly explain the demonstrable harm that would result from the

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<sup>1</sup> During Q2 of 2017/18, MVDC was in the top three Surrey Councils in terms of the time taken to determine major, minor and other planning applications.

<sup>2</sup> The total number of 'overturned' recommendations to permit development was 53 of which 18 were not appealed.

proposed development. Vague, generalised assertions about a proposed development's impact which are unsupported by any objective analysis should be avoided.

- 3.6 The challenges facing the DMS were considered by the Panel. These include staff retention and recruitment. This is being addressed in the short term by the use of contract staff and the introduction of career grade posts while a reshape of the service is carried out to ensure its composition matches the nature of the work it has to manage. While there may be some limited scope for sharing resources with other Surrey Councils, the reality is that all the local planning authorities in Surrey face similar staffing issues and are drawing from the same pool of available planners.
- 3.7 Other challenges include the need to continue to meet the national Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the time taken to determine planning applications and performance in terms of the outcome of appeals against the refusal of planning permission. Failure to meet the KPIs could result in MVDC becoming a "standards authority" whereby applicants would be able to by-pass MVDC and submit applications for planning permission to the Planning Inspectorate who also receive the fee for the application. This is particularly important for MVDC as one of the measurements is the success of appeals against the refusal of planning permission for major developments. As there are relatively few appeals in Mole Valley relating to major developments, the loss of one or two appeals can make a significant difference in terms of the percentage of allowed and dismissed appeals. If MVDC was to exceed the threshold of 8% it could become a standards authority.<sup>3</sup>

### **Planning Enforcement**

- 3.8 The Panel examined the work of the Enforcement Service. It was noted that enforcement action is discretionary and should only be taken where it is expedient. Each alleged breach of planning control requires detailed investigation before a decision can be taken about what if any action should be taken. This takes time and can lead to frustration for those making the allegations of breaches of planning control who assume action will be taken immediately and the breach stopped. Consequently managing customer expectations that prompt action can be taken to remedy a breach of planning control is a significant challenge.
- 3.9 The Panel felt that there is room for improving the flow of feedback information in response to reports of alleged breaches of planning control. It was considered that the initial acknowledgement of the receipt of an alleged breach which is currently in the form of a case reference number should be expanded to include information about the stages in the planning enforcement process to manage expectations of a resolution.
- 3.10 The significant case load of the Planning Enforcement Team was also examined by the Panel<sup>4</sup>. It has been a challenge to clear the backlog of cases while trying to keep on top

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<sup>3</sup> Currently at 0%

<sup>4</sup> It was noted that there are 103 open cases and 98 cases waiting to be registered. Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018, 13 cases have been closed.

of new cases. It was noted that one of the drivers for reshaping the DMS is to ensure the enforcement work is adequately resourced.

- 3.11 The Panel noted that an Enforcement Register is now available on the MVDC website and that each month an update of open, closed and pending enforcement cases are posted on MOSS.
- 3.12 The Panel noted that MVDC's approach to planning enforcement is set out in the Local Enforcement Plan. It explains the way that alleged breaches of planning control will be prioritised according to the severity and type of alleged breach. It was noted that national planning guidance requires that enforcement action should only be taken where it is expedient to do so and where it is, that the action is proportionate to the breach. The Panel noted that the Local Enforcement Plan was adopted in 2012 and that the service is not able to meet the targets for investigating alleged breaches. It was therefore concluded that it would be timely to review the Local Enforcement Plan and revisit the targets it contains.

### **Trees and Heritage**

- 3.13 The DMS also provides specialist advice on works to trees and on the built heritage of the District, especially Listed Buildings.
- 3.14 The Panel was advised that the Tree Officer (TO) handles on average 350 tree works applications a year. This includes applications to carry out works to trees that are the subject of Preservation Orders or in a Conservation Area. The TO also serves Tree Preservation Orders and provides advice on the arboricultural aspects of planning applications.
- 3.15 The Panel were pleased to note that Council budget for 2018/19 enabled the Parks Service to recruit an arboriculturalist to carry out inspections of trees on MVDC property and felt this could have mutual benefits through collaborative working with the TO.
- 3.16 The Historic Environment Officer is involved in approximately 300 applications relating to heritage assets<sup>5</sup> in the District each year and provides detailed advice on potential works to historic buildings. The Panel noted that as a result of this pro-active approach, the quality of work to the District's built heritage is of a high standard.

### **Development Control Committee**

- 3.17 It was recognised by the Panel that the work of the Development Control Committee has a high profile and is closely scrutinised by both applicants for planning permission and those affected by development proposals. It is a shop window for the Council and for many customers it is the only occasion they observe Members at work.
- 3.18 The Panel therefore recognised the importance of Members of the Development Control Committee undergoing regular training sessions as required by the Members Planning Code of Good Practice which is contained in the Constitution. The Panel concluded that

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<sup>5</sup> Heritage assets includes Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

training, in the form of workshops rather than seminars facilitated by external providers as well MVDC staff, on the following topics which are some of the most frequently faced by the Committee would be helpful for its members.

- Making defensible planning decisions
- Development in the Green Belt
- Design considerations of new development
- Use of planning conditions to ensure they meet the six tests in the NPPF<sup>6</sup>
- Planning enforcement

- 3.19 The Panel took the view that training for members of the Development Control Committee should be mandatory. It was also noted that such training would complement the programme of training around the preparation of the Local Plan that has been arranged for Members.
- 3.20 The value of a peer review of the work of the Development Control Committee was also considered by the Panel. Like any important function of the Council the Panel felt the Committee's work would benefit from a review to ensure it is performing to the highest standards. The last review was carried out in 2013 and it was felt timely to consider a new review. The Panel felt that a peer review carried out by the Planning Advisory Service<sup>7</sup> would be beneficial to ensure the way the Committee operates is open, accessible to all, efficient and effective. Information about the scope of a PAS peer review is shown at Annex 4.
- 3.21 The Panel appreciates receiving the agenda papers for the Development Control Committee two weeks in advance of the meeting. It was however accepted that this is difficult to sustain and has led to reports which are lacking in detail. Reliance on the addendum to provide supplementary information which can be critical to the consideration of an application is not good practice and publishing a recommendation before all the relevant information is available is open to challenge.
- 3.22 The stages of processing a planning application were considered. See Annex 5. The Panel appreciated that the determination of planning applications requires a tight turn around to ensure the target times for the determination of planning applications can be met. It was agreed that in future the agenda for the Development Control Committee would be published electronically on the Tuesday evening of the week before the Committee's meeting and a hard copy dispatched at the same time. This would satisfy the statutory requirement of publishing the agenda five working days before the Committee meeting.

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<sup>6</sup> The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes it clear that planning conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.

<sup>7</sup> The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) is grant funded by the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government but is part of the Local Government Association. It exists to provide support to local planning authorities to provide efficient and effective planning services to drive improvement in those services and respond to and deliver change in the planning system.

## **4. Planning Policy Service**

- 4.1 The principal role of the Planning Policy Service (PPS) is to ensure that MVDC has an up to date Local Plan. This contains MVDC's planning policies against which planning applications are determined. It also establishes how much and where new development should be located. It is through the Local Plan that the land use implications of the Council's corporate priorities for housing, the environment and prosperity can be delivered through the statutory planning process. The two year preparation of the Local Plan and the stages it has to go through before it can be adopted were explained to the Panel. The importance of having an up to date Local Plan in place was emphasised to the Panel. Unless meaningful progress on the Plan's preparation can be made, the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government could step in and take over responsibility. The Panel was advised that the lack of an up to date Local Plan also weakens MVDC's ability to sustain objection to planning applications it has refused and which are subsequently appealed.
- 4.2 The most significant aspect of the work on the Local Plan will be to decide how many new homes and jobs should be provided in the District and where they should be located. In doing so account will need to be taken of the scale of need and the constraints on development including the Green Belt and other policies of restraint, the capacity of the District's infrastructure and the scope to improve it. Resolution of the competing pressures for development and the need to safeguard the environment of the District's towns, villages and countryside will require close engagement between the PPS and Members, local communities and the development industry.
- 4.3 In addition to preparing the Local Plan, the PPS will review the Community Infrastructure Levy; support the preparation of the Ockley Neighbourhood Development Plan; respond to neighbouring local authorities' plans and proposals where they affect the District, including for example the London Plan; monitor and respond to changes in aviation policy and developments at Gatwick Airport.
- 4.4 The Panel received a comprehensive review and presentation on the work of the Planning Conservation Service which is part of the PPS. Specific areas of work include ensuring MVDC's input to the two Countryside Management Projects operating in Mole Valley. These are the Lower Mole Partnership and the Gatwick Greenspace Partnership.
- 4.5 Other work involves close liaison with the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit in delivering the statutory management plan; working with specialists to provide advice to the DMS where there are major development proposals with landscape or ecological considerations and participating in the River Mole Catchment Management Partnership to help deliver improvements to the river and its tributaries.
- 4.6 The Conservation Service also works on delivering improvements to public areas, largely focusing on Conservation Areas. Recent schemes have included the improvements to West Street in Dorking and Church Street in Leatherhead. Other work includes preparation of a heritage strategy as part of the Local Plan, organising the

programme of events for Heritage Open Days and working with the voluntary sector on conservation projects.

- 4.7 The Panel was very impressed by the extent and quality of the work carried out by the Principal Conservation Officer given the limited resources.

## **5. Planning Support Service**

- 5.1 The service provides the administrative back up for the entire Planning Service. In particular it manages the departmental database, document management system and web pages. It also manages the receipt and validation of planning applications and arranges consultations and neighbour notifications. It delivers a planning information service through the day to day interaction with customers for straight forward planning enquiries. The Planning Support Service also provides the statutory Land Charges service<sup>8</sup> and administers the collection of the Community Infrastructure Levy<sup>9</sup>. It also works with the Southern Building Control Partnership to ensure the receipt of accurate and timely information about the commencement and completion of new development in Mole Valley to enable completion of Government returns and for monitoring performance indicators.
- 5.2 The service has been streamlining the way it operates by making greater use of technology. It has been able to make efficiency savings over the last year while providing a more focused and effective service for its customers by delivering more information on line.
- 5.3 The service provides the first point of call for many customers some of whom may not have had any previous experience of engaging with the planning system. The team has worked hard to ensure the customer's experience meets or exceeds their expectations and in recognition of the way they are delivering the service have received a Customer Service Excellence award.
- 5.4 The Panel was advised that there continues to be uncertainty about whether and when the Land Registry will assume the statutory responsibility for a digitised Land Charges Plan Register for England and Wales and what this would mean for MVDC, especially in terms of income, which last year was £194,000. Current indications are that the rollout of the transfer will not be completed until 2023/24 but it is not known when MVDC's responsibilities would be transferred. MVDC would however retain responsibility for the Con 29 part of the Land Charges Service<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 31 December 2017, 95% of Land Charge Searches were processed within the five day target.

<sup>9</sup> Since the introduction of the CIL in Mole Valley on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017, £339,200 has been collected and £901,500 is liable.

<sup>10</sup> The Con 29 Form provides prospective property purchasers with information that relates to the property held by the local authority. This can include the property's planning history and development proposed in the area.

## **6. Building Control**

- 6.1 The Building Control service is a statutory function responsible for the delivery of safe, healthy, accessible and sustainable buildings. The service is in direct competition with private sector Approved Inspectors and operates in a trading environment whereby the costs of the service are recharged to the users. Since June 2017 the building control service in Mole Valley has been provided by the Southern Building Control Partnership (SBCP) a shared service which has been created following an amalgamation of the building control services of MVDC, Reigate and Banstead BC and Tandridge DC.
- 6.2 There have been considerable challenges with the implementation of the SBCP's new Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). They are now substantially resolved. The customer base of the constituent authorities has held up despite the ICT challenges and the Key Performance Indicators for meeting the deadlines for the passing or rejection of plans have been met and latterly exceeded.
- 6.3 A Joint Partnership Board has been put in place as part of the arrangements for establishing the shared service. The Executive Member for Planning represents MVDC on the Board which oversees and provides advice on the strategic direction of the development, implementation and ongoing operation of the shared service on behalf of the constituent authorities. The Board met on 16<sup>th</sup> January and considered the performance of the Partnership to date and the risks to its sustainability. The Board will meet again in April to review the operation of the service and to be satisfied that it is maximising opportunities for revenue generation with appropriate establishment costs.

## **7. Customer Service**

- 7.1 The Panel appreciated that the Planning Service engages with a range of customers who have differing requirements. They can include those who submit planning applications, wish to comment on applications, allege a breach of planning control or wish to respond to a consultation by MVDC, such as the Local Plan. There are also customers who look for general planning advice.
- 7.2 Increasingly, web based facilities are being put in place that allow customers to find the information they require at any time through the MVDC website. For example the whole journey of a planning application can be followed on line from its submission through consultation to final determination. Although the pre-application service for householders is temporarily suspended and will be reintroduced when resources are available, Customers can have a face to face discussions with staff from the Planning Service for basic planning advice and request pre-application advice, for which a fee is charged, in the case of larger development proposals. Feedback is invited from customers to help improve service delivery. A survey of customers between August 2016 and June 2017 recorded a high level of satisfaction with the service. Annex 6.
- 7.3 The Panel noted that the Planning Support Team and the Planning Policy Team had both received Customer Service Excellence recognition for their work to ensure the planning service is open, transparent and accessible to all.

- 7.4 It was explained to the Panel that the Planning Service is committed to develop and improve the ways it engages with local residents, organisations and partners. For example, a project is underway to digitise all the historic planning application files which are currently held on microfiche. Once these data are uploaded to the MVDC website, customers will be able to check the planning history of sites on line instead of having to visit MVDC's offices and search for the information on microfiche. The Panel were fully supportive of this initiative and felt it represented as significant step change in the way that customers can access information.
- 7.5 The Panel also looked the way the Planning Service interacts with Members and noted that the consideration and determination of planning applications and planning enforcement are the areas of the Planning Service's work that generate the most interaction between officers and members. This reaches its peak during the lead up to and during the debate at the Development Control Committee. Engagement with the Planning Policy Service tends to be more cyclical when a new Local Plan is being prepared or a Neighbourhood Development Plan is being drawn up by the local community.
- 7.6 There were two areas that the Panel reflected on in particular. The first relates to whether it is acceptable for Members to discuss planning applications with the case officer prior to the application's determination, especially if this is to be by the Development Control Committee. The Panel recognised this is something that arose during training sessions. The Panel were advised that if a Member requires further information about a planning application or wished to talk through an application in advance of its determination, it is open for members to speak to the case officer. In doing so, the Panel were reminded that Members need to avoid putting themselves in a position where their actions might be considered to amount to predetermination or prejudgment but it is quite acceptable for members to discuss their thoughts on an application with the case officer and test their thinking about it in advance of the application's determination.
- 7.7 Related to this, is the issue of seeking clarification about the content of reports to the Development Control Committee in advance of the meeting. The panel appreciated that questions will come to mind during debates that might not have occurred in advance, but recognised that raising questions before the Committee meeting not only saves time at the meeting but also ensures members can be given accurate answers.
- 7.8 The Panel appreciated that it is not always possible to give out detailed operational information about the progress of a planning enforcement case because much of the work has to remain confidential until all the facts about the alleged breach of planning control are known. It also recognised that increasing the capacity of the Enforcement Team will help will help its ability to respond to questions from those alleging breaches of planning control and Members. This is something the Panel supported.
- 7.9 Interaction with the Planning Policy Service is currently focused on the preparation of the new Local Plan. The Planning Policy Working Group has been the main channel for information exchange and debate. Attendance at the Working Group has now been

widened so that all members can participate in its discussions. In addition a series of workshops, seminars and briefings that will be open to all members will be delivered as part of the Member engagement programme that the Executive has recently agreed should be put in place.

## **8. Conclusions**

- 8.1 Of all the services provided by MVDC, the Planning Service is one of the most high profile and for many people can be the most important point of contact with MVDC. The Panel recognises it is important to ensure that the service is delivered effectively, efficiently and with an understanding of the needs of the wide range of customers. This is particularly the case with the Development Management Service which has to manage opposing but often strongly held opinions about planning applications and alleged breaches of planning control.
- 8.2 The Panel identified several challenges facing the Planning Service. The first is to ensure the Development Management Service can continue to meet and exceed key performance indicators in the face of the difficulties of staff recruitment and retention. The Panel noted that work is in hand to ensure the composition of the service is aligned with the scale and nature of the work that has to be done.
- 8.3 The second challenge identified by the Panel is to continue the process of driving improvements to the planning enforcement service to ensure alleged breaches of planning control are investigated efficiently and effectively and that complainants are kept informed of progress. The Panel did however recognise the difficulties of recruiting staff to undertake enforcement work and that there are significant legacy issues to address. The Panel was encouraged by the recognition that the service needs improvement and felt this should be taken into consideration in the reshaping of the DMS to deliver a more efficient planning enforcement service. While the backlog of casework will not be cleared overnight, the Panel felt progress is being made towards a more efficient and sustainable service.
- 8.4 The Panel concluded that the third significant challenge facing the Planning Service is the preparation of the new Local Plan. The challenge of meeting the demands for development in an area heavily constrained by national designations which restrict development<sup>11</sup> at a time when the national agenda is promoting the need to increase the delivery of new homes, is going to be contentious. The Panel noted the Planning Policy Service will be working hard to make sure there is robust and credible evidence on which MVDC can make informed and defensible decisions about the policies and proposals in the Local Plan which can withstand independent scrutiny by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 8.5 It was also accepted by the Panel that Members of MVDC have an important role to play in helping ensure the planning service operates efficiently and effectively. It was

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<sup>11</sup> For example those policies relating to Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding natural Beauty

recognised that the Development Control Committee has a high profile and its Members need to have the skills and knowledge to discharge their important decision making role which is coming under increasing scrutiny by applicants and objectors.

## **8. Recommendations.**

8.1 The Planning Panel has made the following recommendations:

1. Ensure the resources of the Development Management Service are deployed to improve the delivery of the planning enforcement function.
2. Review and update the Local Enforcement Plan
3. Improve the content of the initial acknowledgement to reported alleged breaches of planning control to manage expectations of a resolution.
4. Establish a training programme for Members of the Development Control Committee
5. a peer review of the work of the Planning Service is commissioned.
6. Encourage officers in the Planning Service and Members to work collaboratively wherever possible on planning applications and in the preparation of the new Local Plan for the benefit of Mole Valley's residents and businesses.

## **9. Financial Implications**

The cost of Member training events and a peer review can be covered by existing budget provision.

## **10. Legal Implications**

None

### **Corporate Implications**

#### **Monitoring Officer Commentary**

The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that all relevant legal implications have been taken into account.

#### **S151 Officer Commentary**

The s151 officer confirms that all relevant financial implications and risks have been taken into account in this report.

### **Risk Implications**

The recommendations of the Planning Panel propose actions that are intended to improve the delivery of the Planning Service for the benefits of Mole Valley's residents and businesses.

**Equalities Implications**

The delivery of the planning service must be accessible to all.

**Employment Issues**

None directly as a result of this report.

**Sustainability Issues**

None directly as a result of this report,

**Consultation**

None

**Communications**

None.

**Background Papers**

None

