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## Report of the DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

### Executive Board

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> June 2006

### Subject: A STRATEGIC CHANGE PROGRAMME FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES IN LEEDS

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**Electoral wards affected:**

ALL

**Specific implications for:**

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the gap

Eligible for call In

Not eligible for call in

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the recommended outcomes of a Strategic Review of Planning and Development Services. The focus of the Review is on services that deal with all development in Leeds, from initial enquiries through planning applications, appeals and enforcement. However, connections are made with strategically linked planning policy, plan making and implementation functions of the Development Department.

Since the Council's "Closer Working : Better Services" restructuring, many achievements have been recorded. However, there are issues and problems for which the service does not yet have wholly effective solutions. There is a need to reflect on the impact of the 2003 restructuring, and the new opportunities that exist as a result of the investment we have made in people and technology. The purpose of this change programme is to deliver significant and sustainable improvement across the range of planning services.

The attached report presents the conclusions of the review phase of the strategic change programme. It recommends courses of action and assesses the resources required to deliver high quality outcomes and customer services.

## **THE IMPROVEMENT THEMES**

The attached report sets out the context for the Review and the need for change. The priorities for improvement are set out in five themes, each distinct but inter-related. These five themes are:-

- 1. CAPACITY BUILDING AND WORKING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR**
- 2. REALISING A DEFINITIVE OFFICER VIEW**
- 3. DEVELOPMENT OF AND SUPPORT FOR PLANS PANELS**
- 4. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**
- 5. IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICES**

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This review has been conducted in a way that has involved a range of stakeholders and engaged a large number of staff at key stages. Whilst this has inevitably taken time, building understanding and support is essential to an effective change programme. In addition to the improvement actions included in the report, numerous other issues have been addressed in the course of the review. Similarly, certain options such as significant organisational change have been considered and assessed but not included in the final recommendations.

Consultation has demonstrated that the five key Improvement Themes are appropriate and necessary. These key themes are underpinned by a range of defined actions to improve performance and outcomes.

Fundamental to the effectiveness of this review is the need to continue to change and develop the culture of all associated services to promote collective ownership of priorities and of issues, and to emphasise the delivery of solutions. In due course, some adjustment to middle management responsibilities may help achieve that. In the short term the Chief Officers responsible for Planning & Development and for Strategy & Policy will jointly build on the outcomes of the review stage to ensure that Heads of Services and Team Leaders are able to drive and deliver the change required to maintain continuous improvement. Some changes will be visible relatively quickly. Others, including the technological changes, will take more time to come to fruition. The delivery of the improvement plan will be monitored closely.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

The Resource Implications are described in the attached report. The provisional total cost of the improvement actions is £675,000. This assumes full year costs most of which will be recurring. 2006/07 costs will be lower and will need to be met from the existing £250,000 provision plus any consequential savings. Expenditure will need to be prioritised within these constraints. Staffing and technology costs are the main contributors.

Further work on electronic service delivery, document imaging and associated process re-engineering will continue throughout 2006/07 to produce detailed estimates for 2007/08 and beyond. Similarly, consultation on staffing proposals associated with this review will allow detailed estimates to be produced.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Executive Board is asked to approve the conclusions and the summary of the Change Delivery Plan included in the attached report.