

PLANNING FOR TRANSFER: CAPACITY BUILDING & TRAINING FOR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

SESSION 1 – OVERVIEW OF THE NEW PLANNING SYSTEM

Speaking Notes – Angus Kerr

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- From April 2015, Councils will become the new planning authority – this will strengthen local democracy and put elected representatives at the heart of the planning system.
- Very different role for Councillors and planners. Councillors will have the recommendations of the professional planners but Councils will make the decisions for the greater good of their communities.

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- The proposed system is broadly consistent with the approach in the rest of the UK. The bulk of planning functions will no longer rest with the Department. Instead planning powers will be devolved to the 11 newly created councils who will be responsible and accountable for most decisions. The responsibilities will include;
 - preparing local development plans;
 - carrying out development management work – determining the vast majority of planning and other consent applications received, including those of a specialist nature relating to, for example, minerals, waste and hazardous substances. The only exception will be a small number of applications which have regional significance, which will be processed by the Department and determined by the Minister; and
 - carrying out enforcement against breaches of planning control.

- The integration of the development plan and management functions along with other functions will ensure timely and appropriate development. The development plan is central to delivering the corporate priorities of a council by clearly indicating where development, including necessary infrastructure and regeneration, should take place. Development management will enable councils to deliver this on the ground. Such integration provides council with a leading role in place shaping. (Training events planned for Sessions 2 and 3 will focus on the development plan and development management processes)

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- The Department will retain responsibility for setting strategic planning policy, making legislation and will have oversight of the planning system.
- The Department will also determine a limited number of planning applications that are of strategic importance.
- The Department will also develop a performance management framework in order to identify areas for improvement, drive up performance and establish a consistent basis for comparison. It will work closely with councils in establishing this framework and in helping drive continuous improvement through advice, guidance and support.

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- The local area development plan will provide the local backdrop to planning decisions by the council.
- It will be the key test for determinations and possibly future challenges.
- The formulation of the plan is intended to be inclusive and will be set out in two stages:-
 - **Plan Strategy** – Sets vision, objectives and growth strategy and general strategic policies having regard to the Regional Policy
 - **Local Policies Plan** – Sets local policies & proposals including settlement limits, zonings and designations consistent with Plan Strategy.
- Plan Strategy to be adopted before Local Policies Plan can be adopted.