



planning advisory service



PAS - Working in the public interest

14th July 2022

www.pas.gov.uk

Introduction

- What is PAS?
 - What do we do and why?
 - Challenges
 - Planning Reform
 - Opportunities
 - Summing up
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What is PAS?

We were originally set up in 2005 by the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to help councils respond to the significant changes initiated by the 2004 Planning Act. Since then we have been various shapes and sizes but our focus has always been on helping Local Government play their part in an effective planning system.

More recently we have started working with **Defra** and **Natural England** to knit together how we plan for places alongside planning for the environment.

What we do

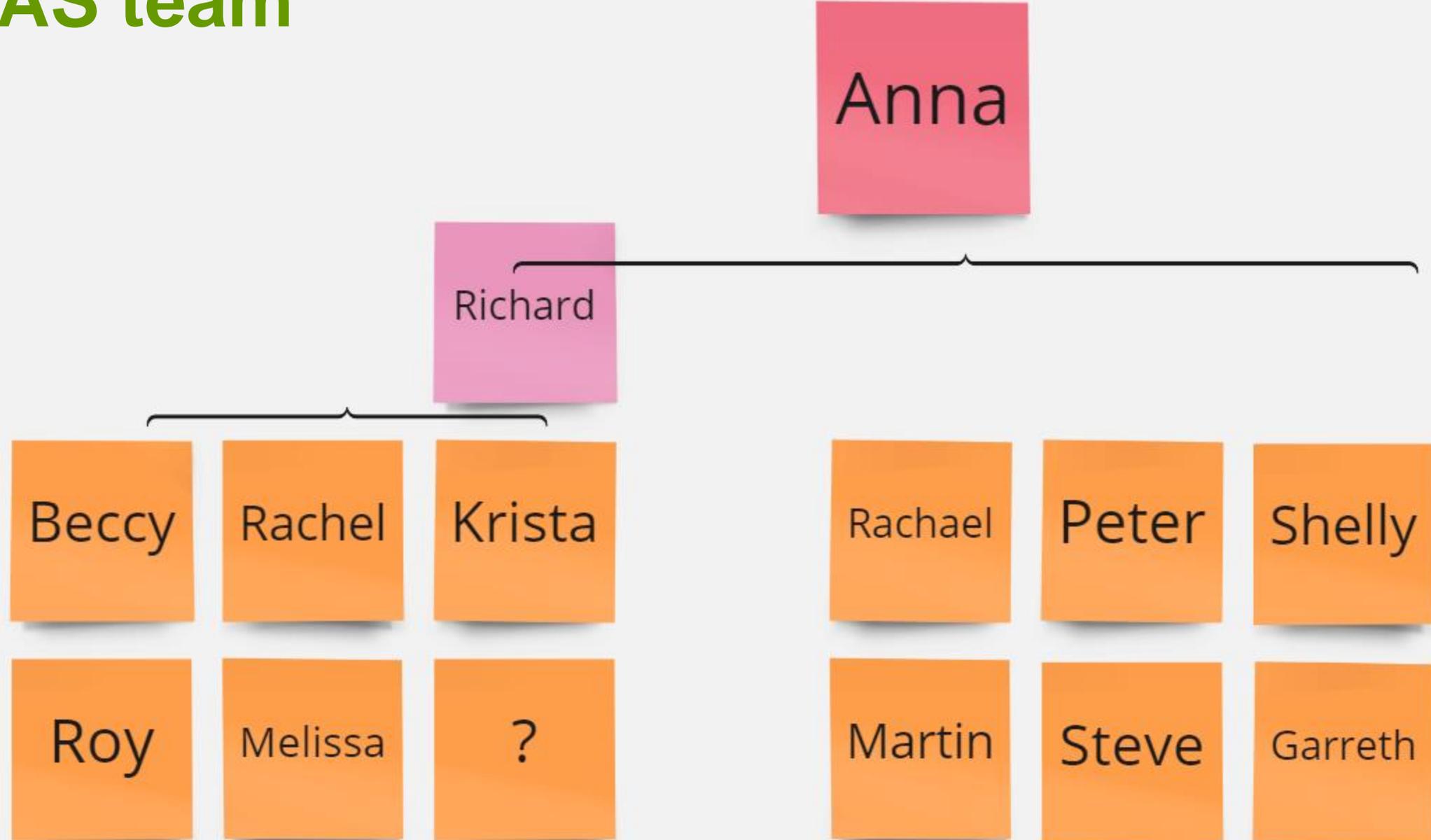
Getting planning right is important for councils. It allows them to manage development, ensuring that the best possible outcomes are delivered for places. It requires political and technical leadership and engaged communities. **Helping councils plan better is what we do.**

The **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities** provides a grant each year for PAS so we can provide support to councils.

Why we do it

- We are passionate about planning
 - We know a lot about planning.....and local government
 - We believe in building capacity in local government
 - We believe that local government is capable of great things
 - We work to unlock greatness
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The PAS team



The 2022/23 Planning Programme

- Agreed with DLUHC policy teams
 - Signed off by Simon Gallagher
 - Captures a moment in time
 - Recognises the need to be flexible
 - Relies on trust and excellent communication – no surprises!
 - We rarely deliver the programme as agreed for April each year.
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Project	Delivery
Local Plan Support	Project Management and direct support
Design - NMDC	Capacity building across the country through training and direct support
Environmental Outcome Reports	Deep dive sessions for LA officers to inform policy formulation
Nutrients and protected sites	Cross-sector working on nutrient neutrality
Developer Contributions and Infrastructure Funding Statements	Governance and spend support and guidance
Avoiding designation and improving performance	Speed and Quality
Pre-applications and PPAs	Best practice research, training and guidance
Town Centres	Use class E research
NSIPs	Identify the capability gap and means of filling it
Planning Reform	To support LPAs to understand and respond to the LURB proposals.

We need to talk about “green wing”

- PAS used to be about housing
 - Planning for housing
 - Consenting housing
 - Monitoring the delivery of housing
 - Three years ago we had nothing to say about the environment
 - Not a sausage
 - Then we started with BNG and nutrients
 - Now LNRS, soon protected sites. It’s half the team.
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What we're doing already

- Mandatory BNG
 - Working with unfavourable “nutrient” catchments
 - Nature recovery networks
 - Enabling tools and systems
 - Conservation covenants
 - Registers of land + mitigation + offset
 - Environmental outcome reports
 - Design for nature
 - Monitoring and reporting
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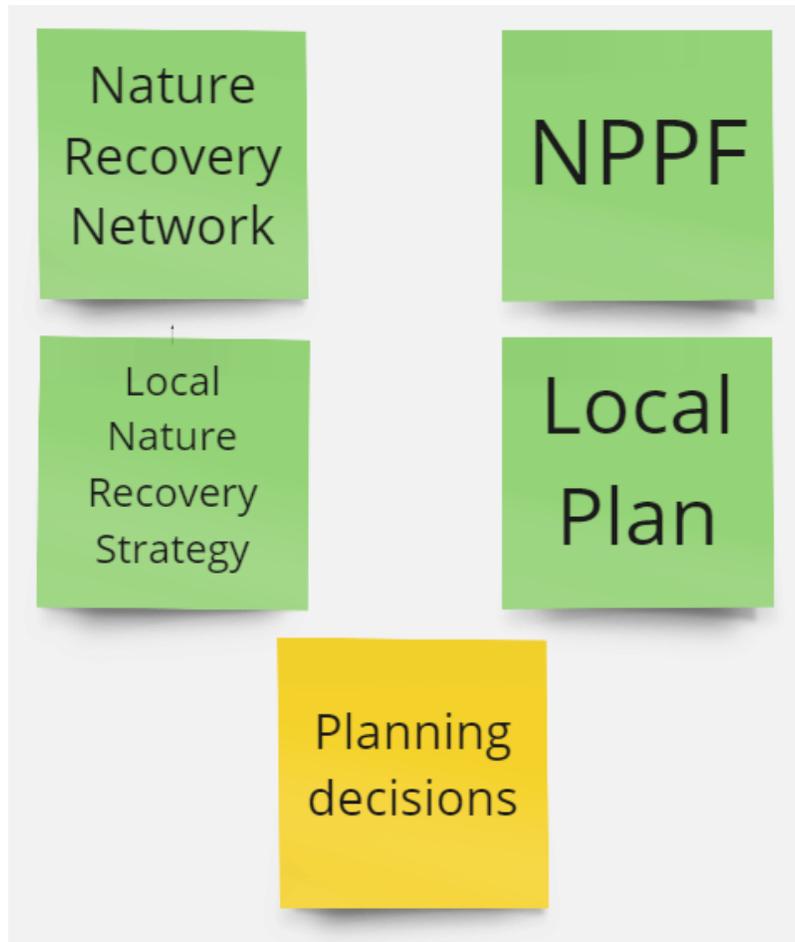
Early reflections on the challenge

Planning properly for the environment requires system change. Are we up for it?

1. Coordinating land use systems somehow
2. Finding new points of influence
3. Double loop learning about impact and outcome



1. Coordinating land use systems



- Conceptually it's a hierarchy
- How to introduce?
- How to maintain?
- How to arbitrate competing uses / markets / wills?
 - Allocations for nature?
 - Something that remains outside the plan?
 - Optimise the opportunity
- And in the context of widespread reform

Environment Act

LNRS

NRN

Biodiversity duty

Conservation covenants

Biodiversity reporting

Protected site and species strategies

Biodiversity register

LURB

Design codes (including Green Infrastructure Framework)

New local plans

Environmental Outcomes Reports

s106 replacement

nature designation?

Standards, data, registers

Habitats Regs

Habitats Regulations requirements now

Nutrient neutrality

Habitats Regulations changes

Water neutrality

SANGS

EOR register (?)

Other stuff

Climate emergency

Natural capital and ecosystem services

Greenspace and health

Flood risk

Inequality (health and wealth)

Air quality

Water quality and resources

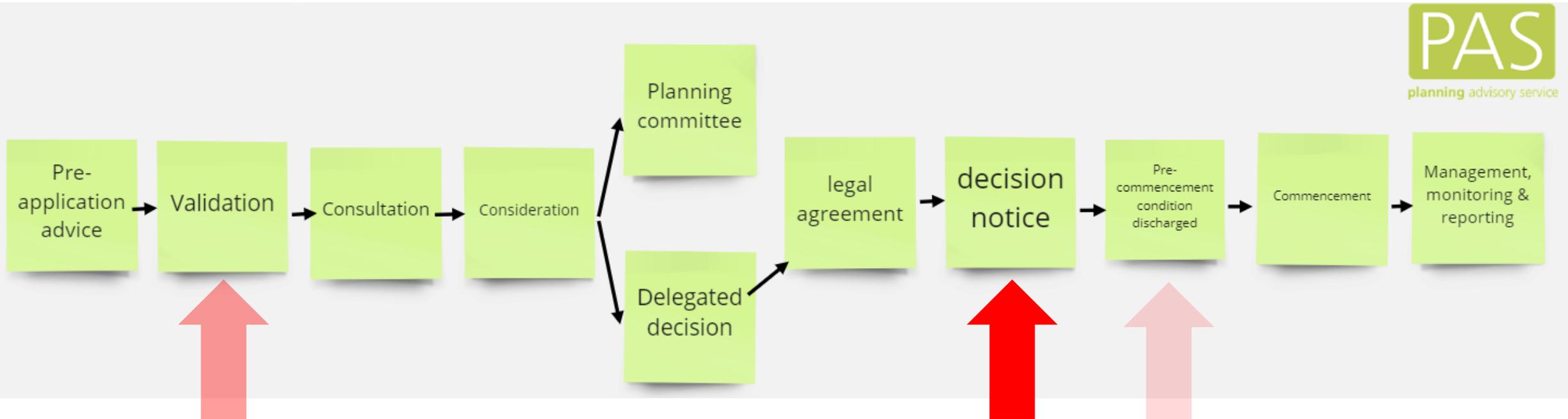
NPPF

National BNG model conditions

National DM policies

2. Finding new points of influence

- Councils have natural influence
 - Land owners, long term, powerful network
- Planning Authorities have clear points of control

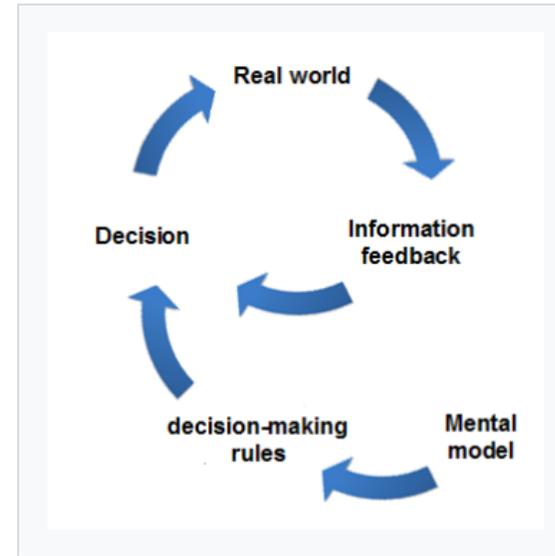


2. Finding new points of influence

- What happens post-decision?
 - We don't know unless we go and look. Not paid to go and look.
 - We sometimes check if houses get built – a binary yes/no
 - Environmental outcomes are tricky
 - They are not binary
 - They are long-term. 80 years? 120 years?
 - They are in the control of residents / operators
 - Possibly non-local – even in another council area
 - Is this a job for influence rather than enforcement?
 - Encouraging people to own the outcome?
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3. Double-loop learning about impact and outcome

- **Double-loop learning** entails the modification of goals or decision-making rules in the light of experience. The first loop uses the goals or decision-making rules, the second loop enables their modification, hence "double-loop". Double-loop learning recognises that the way a problem is defined and solved can be a source of the problem



Single-loop learning



Double-loop learning

3. Double-loop learning about impact and outcome

- Environmental systems are complex systems
 - Naturally (tides)
 - Unnaturally (WWTW)
 - Stuff is changing
 - Hotter / drier / stormier
 - We're going to start with good intentions
 - And learn that we can do better
 - Conditions for success, interventions, unforeseen consequences
 - Politics, democracy, markets, incentives
 - Feedback loops into local plans have been slow / missing
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We need to have hope for green wing

- Planning for the environment is not new, but this approach feels fundamentally different
 - We start from a low base
 - Defra is culturally quite different
 - How do you apply a “journey” mentality into a local plan examination?
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Peer Reviews (and other commercial activity)

- Councils can pay us to undertake work outside of our work programmes
 - Most popular are Peer Reviews and Committee training
 - We do between 8 and 16 peer reviews every year
 - We also work nearly every day from the middle of May to the middle of June on committee training!
 - We offer value for money and make much use of our wonderful peer network.
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Current challenges

- Resources – people and money
 - Expert opposition
 - Delicate local politics – national politics?
 - Continuous reform
 - Lack of policy direction
 - Planning by appeal
 - Lack of time for the ‘nice to haves’
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What next for PAS?

- Planning reform – transition and implementation
 - a) Community
 - b) Capacity
 - c) Capability
 - Multi-year agreement?
 - Possible scaling up?
 - Definitely local government and certainly planning!
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Questions?

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