



2016-17

Planning Advisory Service

Since 2004 the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) has provided high-quality help, advice and training to councils. We exist to help local government officers and councillors stay effective and up-to-date.

The government provides a grant to allow us to offer some services without charge for some councils. So, if your council is at risk of intervention or designation by the Secretary of State we may write to you separately with an offer of support. We will also hold free events to help the government publicise their changes to the planning system.

Everybody else can choose our services on a commercial basis. We're also taking the opportunity to provide services beyond our traditional scope with new courses on what it means to be a modern planner working in a political environment.

The best way of buying from us is via a subscription. This allows us to predict how much work we need to provide and in return for your support we give you a credit worth £400. In practical terms, the one subscription of £1800 allows you to buy £2200 worth of events, support and consultancy. Plus you only need to make one case for the expenditure.

Subscribers will also get a priority booking window for our whole events programme and access to our 'best practice' updates. Councils who don't subscribe will still have access to our materials and website and can buy support as they need it but won't receive the credit. **If you are a regular user of PAS services the subscription is for you.**

"PAS courses are always well focussed on the realities of the planning process rather than being theoretical. Good networking opportunity too."

Alison Young
Development Management
East Herts Council

"PAS were unbiased and honestly aimed at helping LAs to deliver improvement."

Bob Duxbury
Head of Planning at Cherwell.

PAS Key Facts

Nearly 6000 people from 99.5% of LPAs have accessed PAS support since 2012

Over 90% of respondents felt that our events or support improved their ability to do their work

Nearly 98% respondents felt that attending our events or support was a good use of their time.

Leadership and Committees

We understand that planning is an important and strategic process carried out in a political environment; we work with councillors and leadership teams to help make planning deliver corporate objectives.

On-Site Work

Peer Challenge	The most intensive thing we do. Ideal to support people newly in charge, or to improve the links between the planning service, the council and its objectives	£8 – £10k
Planning Committee Peer Review	This is an excellent way to periodically review how the committee is perceived by investors and the public	£2k
Planning Committee Training	We maintain standard modules for councillor training. We can deliver them too, as a programme of induction or as an annual update / refresh	From £500 to £1000 per session
Support and Mentoring	Being the chair of a planning committee is not easy, and good committees require preparation and team work. We offer an informal 'buddy' system to help newer chairs learn from experienced councillors.	£500/day

Off-Site Work

We also take councillors off-site and deliver intensive residential courses for leaders, portfolio holders and committee chairs (Leadership Essentials Programme). Attendees from across the political spectrum can explore issues in a supportive and confidential context. It is a great way to develop thinking and strategic leadership.
£250.

"I believe this course is an absolute must for chairs and portfolio holders in planning departments in all local authorities."

CLlr Bert Proctor,
Newcastle BC

Plan Delivery

The local plan is the most important, expensive and challenging strategy produced by councils. The sometimes difficult choices and compromises required by the plan are made more difficult by the changing policy context.

We will continue to make and share checklists and toolkits to help people manage the risk of challenge. We will also provide help and support to understand the options.

We want councils to focus on their timetabling, especially as the government intends to introduce performance management penalties on councils that fail to make demonstrable progress.

Making the right plan for a place is not a formulaic exercise, and we don't have standardised products and prices for councils. However we can offer a quick review focussed on challenges before perhaps going into more detail on:

- Objectively Assessed Needs
- Land Supply
- Programme Planning and the Local Development Scheme
- Achieving a Political Consensus
- Unblocking Issues

We are plugged into government and the Planning Inspectorate so you can be assured that the advice you get from us is up-to-date. We want to give you practical advice, and our starting point is that you should do as little work as possible to get a plan in place.

“The organisation is for planners and is run by people who understand planning”

Jo Wilkins
at South Somerset

“We had used the PAS service before for members and other services. We knew it was good, objective and balanced. We really valued the objective and independent view point, this helped to build engagement and cooperation.”

Cheryl Parks,
Project Manager – Local Plan,
Maidstone Borough Council

Development Management Improvement

For many years PAS has been at the forefront of understanding and explaining how good planning application processes can work.

Government is funding us to help those councils who are at risk of designation respond to it, but forward-thinking managers are always looking to improve.

Our background in benchmarking and data allows us to work with councils wanting to understand and perhaps challenge their own productivity.

The development management toolkit is the core of our offer. Delivered over 5 days it provides a framework for staff to talk about and begin improving the services they provide. It is also an excellent way to think constructively about the planning committee and the value its strategic oversight provides.

This support can be delivered for only £4k.

“PAS bring excellent, in depth knowledge (including statistical) of the issues facing Planning Departments, how they work and the potential solutions they could implement.”

Andrew Parker,
Head of DM, Greenwich



“The process was flexible and could be tailored to focus on the areas which were most relevant to us and the feedback we received was both insightful and practical.”



Carolyn Downs,
Chief Executive

Best Practice Updates

Our best practice updates take a few key templates and simplifies them. We use a team of helpful practitioners to apply plain English principles and common sense.

Planning departments need routines and standardised documents and templates to work. What tends to happen is these things become more complicated over time. They get “added to” in line with the latest change to the procedures order, or new processes get implemented as a result of a one-off problem.

Subscribing authorities will regularly receive these best practice updates. You can use them to review your current approach and choose what works best for you. Our goal is to help you keep things neat and tidy without much effort by spreading the load.

We are going to start with some of the basic but important things:

- **Committee reports**
- **Local Development Schemes**
- **Consultation letters**
- **Decision notices**

In time, we plan to introduce bigger updates like a sample enforcement plan. Let us know what you need.

“The opportunity to meet others and compare good practice and understand how other authorities run was the most valuable experience I have had since I have been a councillor... I will be able to make significant improvements as a result of this.”

CLlr Julia Baker-Smith,
Isle of Wight



Events & Training

PAS has a great track-record of providing practical, hands-on training for busy planners and councillors. People tell us our courses are seen as the benchmark for skills-based training in the sector.

We are focussing our courses on the key skills required to be an excellent planner. We aim to run courses for groups of between 20 and 30, to enable good learning and excellent networking. These events range from £150 to £250.

Viability on Schemes: Come and learn about viability and how development finance works. An important course relevant to negotiations and affordable housing.

Performance Management and The Plan: Government's focus on your plan production timetable means local development schemes need to be robust.

Understanding and Supporting Councillors and Committees: Planning operates in a political environment. Understanding and establishing a relationship with members is important.

DM Improvement: Share and compare what makes an excellent DM process by picking our brains and working with peers. A day to lift your head up away from the grindstone and allow yourself time to think.

Plans for Places: Stop thinking about the processes of planning and think about how DM and policy can be used to deliver outcomes relevant to your place.

Housing: Beyond the headlines about starter homes what does good modern housing policy look like? And how is it supported by evidence?

Our standard locations for events are London, Leeds and Birmingham. Other cities are added based on demand.

We want to remain the top national provider so we will try to hold events in places that are easy for everyone to get to. If you are further afield, register your interest and let us know your nearest city. You can help us run events economically by encouraging your neighbouring councils to register too, or by hosting events.

PAS Training Facilities



If you are interested in accessing PAS training and support closer to your locality, talk to us about the potential to cooperate with your neighbouring councils, so we can offer a more local bespoke package.

Subscribe Now

This is a new and exciting time for PAS, and it would be great to have you along.

This is the beginning of a commercial side of PAS, and we have some ambitious ideas for the future as well as a commitment to protect some of the things you value.

- **Our website will remain free for everyone – without a paywall**
- **Many of the self-serve materials will continue to be maintained and up-to-date**
- **The monthly bulletin to 9000 people will continue to be our main way of telling people what is going on**
- **The discussion forum on the knowledge hub (KHub) remains a free way of seeking the views of your peers and sharing expertise and support between over 2000 practitioners**

In the future we may enter into a partnership to extend and improve the Planning Quality Framework, and we may extend our support and training to planners working in commercial sectors.

Remember that we remain on your side and we will maximise value for you from your subscription. Because we are a non-profit organisation we have been able to put together a very economic package for a subscription of £1800 per year.

If you're interested in getting the extra £400 credit you need to sign up before the end of July 2016. To register your interest, email pas@local.gov.uk or sign up at www.pas.gov.uk/subscriptions

We hope to see you soon.

Alice and the PAS team

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