



# **HBF Planning Conference 2015**

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**September 16<sup>th</sup> 2015**

**[www.pas.gov.uk](http://www.pas.gov.uk)**

# Overview

1. PAS?

2. Resources

3. Performance

4. Thoughts

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# The Planning Advisory Service

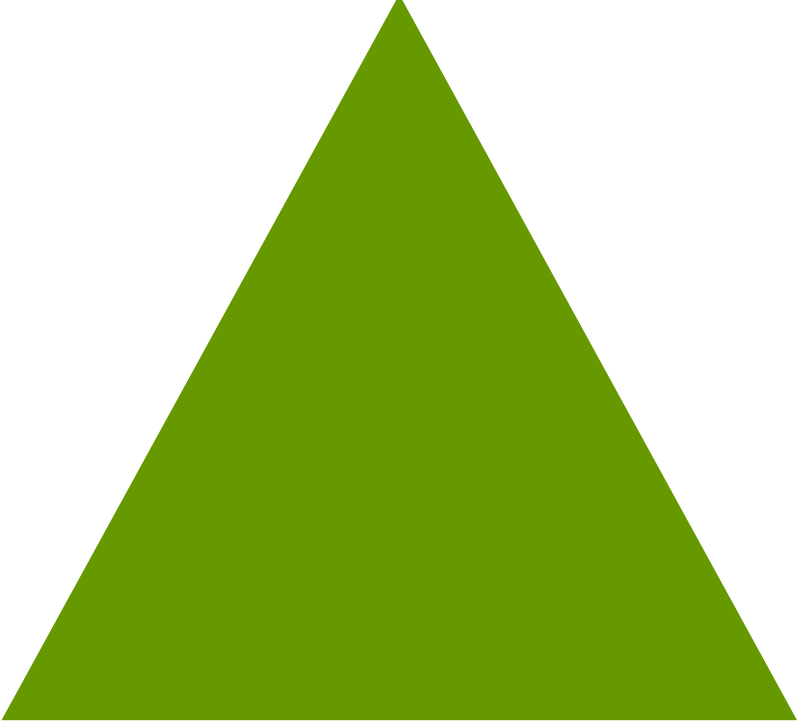
We

- Are funded by £2m from DCLG to the LGA
- Work for English Planning Authorities
- Have been around ever since 2005 (Planning Act) and subsequent reform
- Reduce cost, risk and delay through pilots, toolkits, Q&A

We are not

- A thinktank, “experts”, a lobby group or researchers
-

**DCLG £**



**LPA**

**Market**

**+ VFM**  
**+ team**  
**+ LGA**



Plans in place

Essentials

Duty to Cooperate

Strategic issues

**Strategic planning**

Pre-app, PPAs, conditions

**Leadership**

Evidence

CIL & S106s

**Delivery**

Energy & climate change

Committee training & peer review

**Local plans**

Viability

Viability Training

Peer challenges

Sustainability Appraisal

Project mgmt

Good decisions

Housing needs

Successful plan-making

**Improvement**

**Neighbourhood plans**

Community engagement

Designation

**Resources**

Peer support

Events, toolkits and materials

Resource Review

Planning Quality Framework

PAS

### Good Plan Making Guide

Plan Making Principles for Practitioners  
September 2014



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Getting down to business: lessons and tips from involving firms in neighbourhood planning

# PAS

### planning advisory service



Developing Neighbourhood Development and applying the Community Infrastructure Levy

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### On your marks, get set, go!

Implementing the Community Infrastructure Levy



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### Profitability in planning

for trainees and officers



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### Successful plan-making

Advice for practitioners



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### Strategic Planning

Local Investment  
Working for sustainable growth



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## Doing your duty – practice update



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Neighbourhood planning: A simple guide for ward councillors (revised June 2013)

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How planning works an introductory guide for councillors (revised May 2013)



spaces and places for gypsies and travellers



10 commitments for effective pre-application engagement

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### The Pre-application Suite



Renewable energy and local plan policies Case Study



Planning continuity through partnership

How to plan for setting your housing number finding your authority's optimal results



Making the Community Infrastructure Levy Work for you (revised 2013)

Profitability in planning for trainees and officers



Organising Neighbourhood Development and applying the Community Infrastructure Levy

How planning works an introductory guide for councillors (revised May 2013)



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### From aspirations to action

How adopted local plans can help



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### Co-operating on a plan – the East Sussex, South Downs and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Plan



Viability Testing Local Plans  
Advice for planning practitioners  
Local Planning Institute for the Chartered Institute of Public Relations  
June 2012

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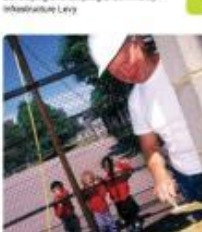
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### Working with developers in plan making

Experience from York and Doncaster



Setting the bar  
Developing and adopting a Community Infrastructure Levy



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### Neighbourhood planning

A simple guide for councils



Steps to success: Babby's employee-led recovery



# PAS

- We do lots of things, but limited to the needs of people in councils
  - This focus may be why we've made it this far
- Feel free to suggest improvements to us, and to suggest to councils they make use of our work
  - Eg 'Pre-application suite'
  - Eg 'Using & discharging conditions'
- Our bulletin is not news



## 2. Resources

- By chance we know lots about resourcing planning (we were preparing for fees)
    - What was supposed to be covered by the fee ?
    - And what was RSG ?
  - It's a bit out of date
    - But still the best source of data around
-



# Benchmark 2009 - 2014

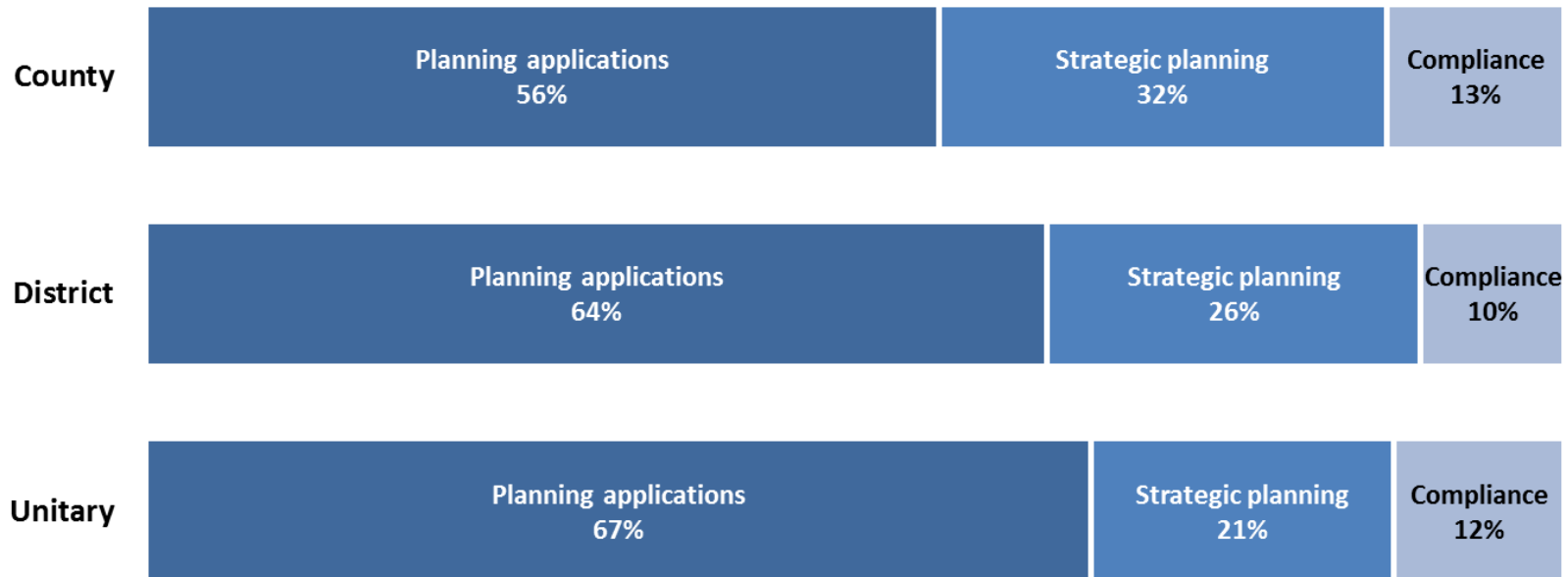
e.g. 2012 benchmark:

- 235 Councils finished. Good mix of big/small urban/rural counties / districts etc
- 8,000 people submitted at least 4 timesheets
- Model of £0.5bn of costs
- Feedback from 3,000 applicants
- 94% of councils\* said “*benchmark report gave us information to help us improve*”

\* Who expressed a preference

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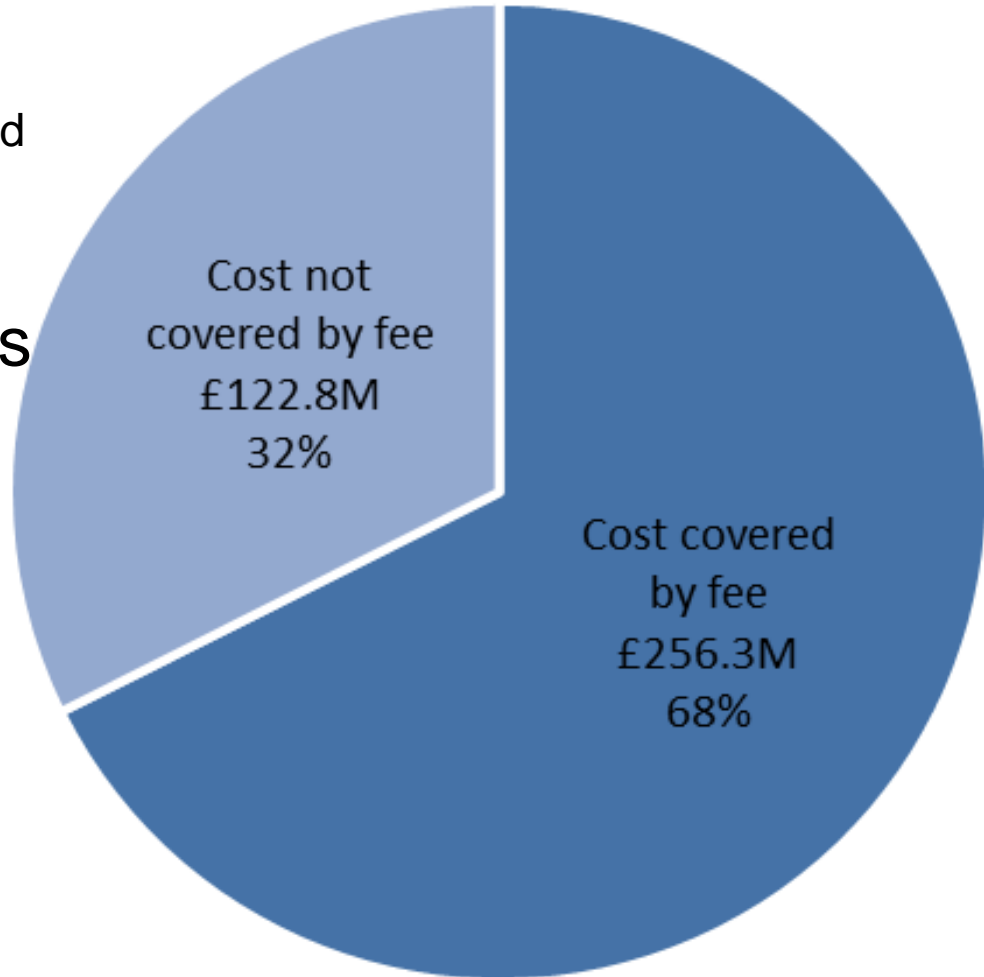
# “Planning”: £spend in proportion



- Policy & compliance \*not\* covered by application fees
  - And so even more at risk ?

## Estimated annual cost of application processing (£379.1M)

- Shortfall is about 1/3<sup>rd</sup>
- But not equal across all development types



## (some) Councils said

- Take the one-off pain – rebase fees
  - In return we accept the need for a downward pressure on performance to prevent costs rising
  - Ringfencing fees within planning will prevent problems across council departments
  - Resourcing problems are already serious, but are about to get worse 2016 onwards
  - Public sector is failing to compete with private
-

# (some) developers said

- Resourcing is already a problem. Central London is an outlier.
  - Trust is an issue. No meaningful sanction and a monopoly provider.
  - Fee model should change to cover the whole process
  - Performance regime needs to include councillors / appeals / policy / behaviours
  - Not a total free hand on fee setting, but national base fees with local flex ?
-

# The LGA

“introducing locally-set planning fees to ensure effective, responsive and fully funded council planning services, removing the burden from taxpayers who currently subsidise 30 per cent of total costs”

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# Spending Smarter: A Shared Commitment

The Local Government  
Association's 2015 Spending  
Review Submission

# 3. Performance

- We've been banging on about performance for years. It's difficult – the rabbit hole of “good planning”
- Doesn't have to be perfect to be useful
  - Surveys
  - Housebuilding end-to-end



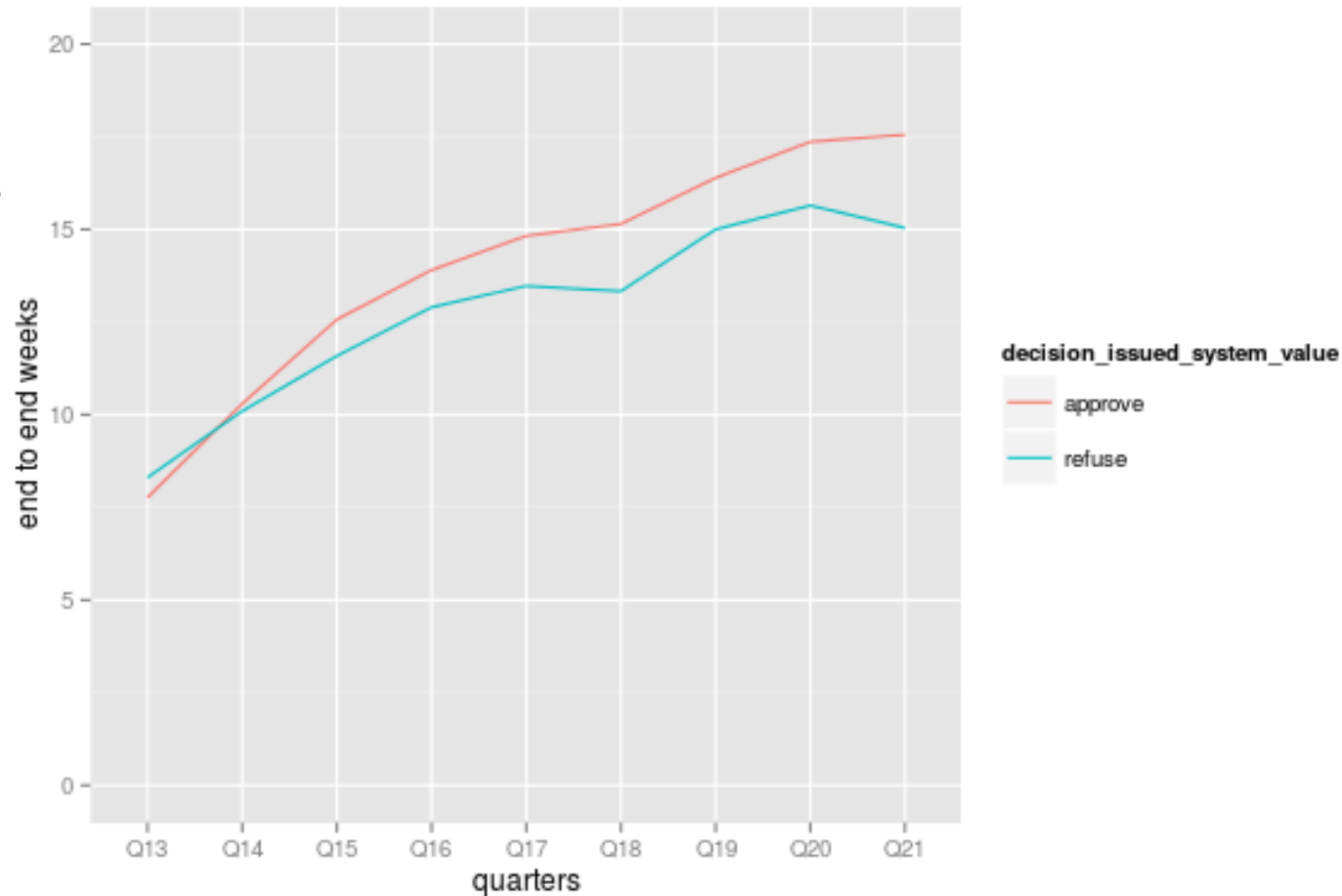
# 3. Performance

- We've learned that stats are only part of the story
    - Statistics (how long / what happened)
    - Perceptions (how you felt about it)
  - We have a number crunching machine
  - And a survey machine
    - Agents, applicants, neighbours, reviewers
-



# Housebuilding end-to-end times

- Major & minor house builds
- Received to decision (inc validation)



- N=1260
-

# 3. Performance

- First results are coming back in (n = 1000)
  - We ask four questions:
    1. How helpful were we ?
    2. How well did we use information ?
    3. How well did we use the time ?
    4. How clear is our decision ?
  - Not a general survey, but on this case at this site dealt with by this officer.
-

# Answers are scaled to 100%

- Taking all answers together to make “overall happiness”

	approve	refuse
Agent	86	51
Applicant	85	27
Neighbour	43	73

- This might be early adopter syndrome, but this is really good
-

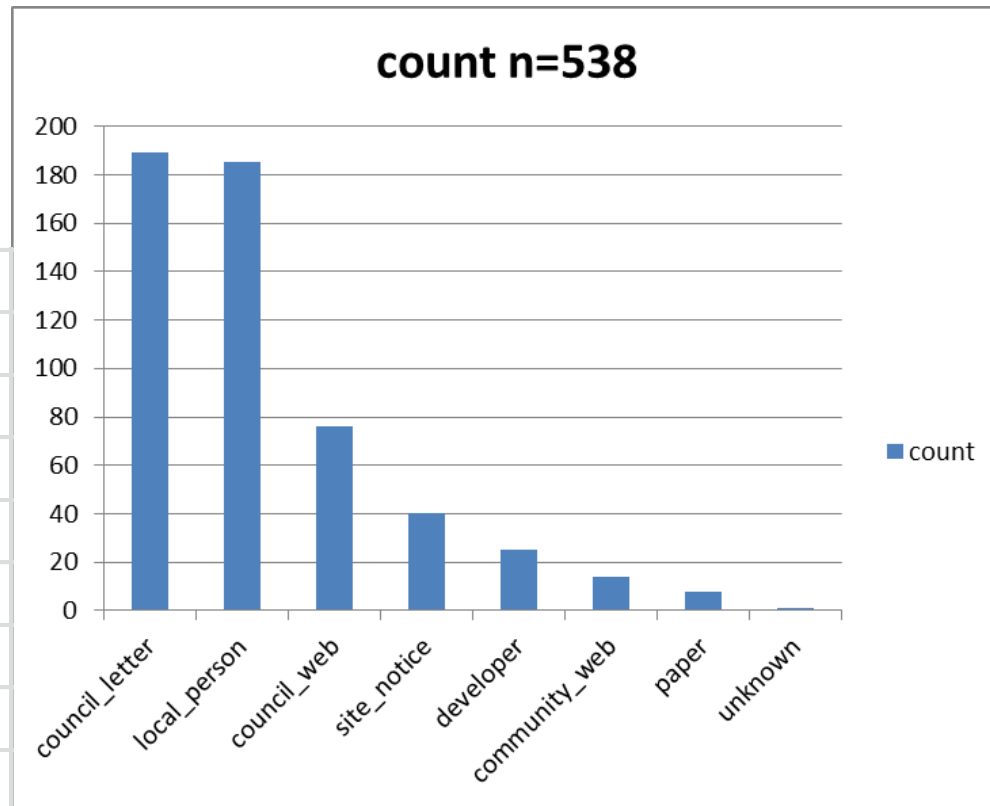
# And what about the 4 axes ?

<b>Agent &amp; Apps</b>	<b>Help</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Info</b>	<b>Decision</b>
approve	87	82	85	90
refuse	37	46	51	70
<b>Neighbour</b>	<b>Help</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Info</b>	<b>Decision</b>
approve	53	14		43
refuse	70	21		79

- Neighbours feel disregarded
-

# How do neighbours discover ?

method	count	
council_letter	189	35%
local_person	185	70%
council_web	76	84%
site_notice	40	91%
developer	25	96%
community_web	14	98%
paper	8	100%
unknown	1	100%



- The process is still mostly triggered by a letter
  - Making developers responsible ?
-

# Closing thoughts

1. Planning is often an excellent service !
  2. Let's rebase the fees
    - Your bills need to go up a few %. Other sectors vary – some will not be happy.
    - You should expect better services in return
  3. We shouldn't confuse planning being business-like with planning being a business
  4. You, the applicant, are only part of the resourcing story (eg policy & enforcement)
-

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planning advisory service


### Focus on Enforcement




28 August 2015  
These events will cover a new advice note on some of the key tools at the disposal of Enforcement services. They will also provide an opportunity to discuss the tools in more detail, including how to get the best from them for your service.

Pause 1 2 3

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**Getting your plan in place**  


**PAS support**  


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**PAS** @pas\_team 4 Sep  
We offer on-site support for the local plan process (inc OAN and 5 year land supply). Get in touch if we can help! [ow.ly/RuCyM](#)  
Expand

Don't forget the bulletin. It's not another news service.



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