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***DRAFT: Proposal letter sent via e-mail***

Dear Richard,

## **Review; Major Planning Applications Processes at Uttlesford District Council**

### **Background**

Uttlesford District Council (the council) has asked Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to review its processes for handling Major planning applications. This is a response to the council's Scrutiny Committee's request for a review of processes for dealing with major planning applications (which stems from a recent application to increase the passenger cap at Stansted Airport (which, while not having been called in by the Sec. of State, is potentially subject to a legal challenge)).

### **Scope:**

The review will not examine any individual planning applications, but will look more generally at the major applications process, using the Stansted application as an example.

PAS' starting point for reviewing the major applications process is its Development Management (DM) Review Framework and this is set out in **Appendix 1**. The PAS DM framework reviews processes right through from pre-application to discharge of conditions and monitoring.

However, it is rarely the case that planning services' require a review of every aspect of their DM process. The PAS framework is designed to be used on a modular basis so that a review can focus on specific aspects of the overall process.

At this stage, it is unclear where any issues with the process may lie, if indeed there are any issues. So, PAS proposes first of all to carry out a small scoping review that encompasses 2 key aspects of the service's decision making framework for major applications:

- A review of the planning policy framework;
- A review of pre-application processes

It is our view that an initial review of these elements of the planning service will form a useful backdrop and help us to identify whether a more focused review of specific parts of the actual major applications process is required (and which aspects to focus on).

### **How PAS will deliver the review**

PAS will use its extensive network of peers and approved consultants to deliver the review. For this review we are proposing to use a team that consists of a PAS Team

Consultant and PAS approved consultant that is an experienced Head of Planning/Chief Planner.

The peers will review the aspects service as outlined above and, based on their own experience and knowledge of good practice, report back on these-r aspects and make some recommendations for building on what works well and areas for improvement.

### **The review process**

The review will:

- Include a pre-review scoping meeting between PAS Consultant(s) and the Chief Planner
- One day on site interviewing a sample of planning staff and planning committee members
- A desk top review of the planning policy framework and pre-application processes
- A short and concise report responding to the points agreed in the scope, including references to good practice from elsewhere where possible, and recommendations.

### **Working with Planning Advisory Service**

PAS will manage the overall project and in agreement with you select the PAS approved peer. PAS likes to work closely with councils and the key things we would expect from you are: -

- To supply any key documents and information.
- To provide facilities for interviews.
- To assist in managing the availability of interviewees.
- Review and feedback on draft and final reports.

### **Estimated Costs**

We estimate that the cost of the review will be in the region of **£5-6,000, plus VAT and reasonable expenses.**

### **Timing**

To be agreed. Dependencies; Consultant Availability, Stansted application call-in/legal challenge

### **Next steps and contact details**

This proposal is based on my current understanding of the requirements of the council, however nothing is set in stone and I'd be pleased to get your feedback on the scope and the planned method of delivery.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

***Martin Hutchings***  
**Improvement Manager**  
**Planning Advisory Service**