Council 18 February 2015 - Questions submitted by Members

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
1	Cllr Mike Henderson	There are still many complaints coming to both members of the Independent group, and no doubt other councillors, about substantial delays of well over a month in registering and validating planning applications and then notifying applicants. This is despite a reported extra expenditure of £105,000 in staff costs to resolve this problem. When will these delays cease for all new planning applications.	Cabinet Member For Planning	Planning/ James Freeman

Response: As Councillors are aware, there have been significant start-up issues following the inception of the Mid Kent Planning Support Shared Service. This included IT system issues and as a result of that a significant back-log of validation work to resolve. Combined with staffing and recruitment issues arising for the formation of a shared service, this has meant that the Validation Team have not been able to meet the expected original service performance targets. However, I am pleased to inform Members' that since the end of December there has been a significant improvement in validation rates, and that the service is now in a position where it has no significant back log of validation cases. Very few complaints are now received about recent validation cases. The table below sets out the recent improvement in performance:

Month	Average days to complete validation	Range of days to complete validation of cases received	% of planning applications validated in five days (Number validated)
October 2014	17	2 to 60	12.84% (109)
November 2014	16	2 to 43	16.30% (92}
December 2014	7	2 to 23	34.33% (67)
January 2014	11	1 to 36	26.98% (63}
February 2014 (up to 11 February)	5	1 to 14	65.52% (29)

The target is that by the end of March 2015 the average validation rate should be less than five days, and that 95% of all planning applications will be validated within five days in accordance with the original targets set for the service.