

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

MID-YEAR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014/2015

Purpose of the report

To provide members with a mid-year report on the performance recorded for Development Management (Development Control) between 1st April 2014 and 30th September 2014. Figures for 2012/13 and 2013/14 are also provided for comparison as are targets set within the Planning and Development Service Plan for 2014/15.

Recommendations

(a) That the report be received.

(b) That the Head of the Planning and Development continue to operate mechanisms to maintain current high performance levels and improve the service provided for those procedures where our level of performance still needs to be addressed.

(c) That the next 'Development Management Performance Report' be submitted to Committee around May 2015 reporting on performance for the complete year 2014/15.

Reasons for recommendations

To ensure that appropriate monitoring and performance management procedures are in place and that the Council continues with its focus on improving performance, facilitating development and providing good service to all who use the Planning Service.

1. Background:

For many years an extensive set of indicators have been collected to monitor the performance of Development Management. These include both "National Indicators" and those devised by this Council – "local indicators". These indicators have changed over time and officers have sought to ensure that the right things are being measured to enable us to improve performance in every area. The range of indicators included reflects the objective of providing a *balanced end to end* development management service, including dealing with pre-application enquiries, breaches of planning control, considering applications, & approving subsequent details and delivering development.

2. Matters for consideration:

There is an Appendix attached to this report:-

APPENDIX 1: 'NATIONAL AND 'LOCAL' PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR DEVELOPMENT CONTROL, 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15: Contains quarterly and annual figures for the national and 'local' Performance Indicators applicable during 2014/15 (comparative figures for 2012/13 and 2013/14 are also shown).

This report is a commentary on the national and local performance indicators as set out in detail in Appendix 1. It follows on from a report that was considered by the Planning Committee at its meeting on the 10th June 2014 which reported on the performance achieved in 2013/14, and discussed appropriate targets.

3. The performance achieved:

6 indicators are included in the 2014/15 Planning and Development Service Plan relating to Development Management. Each these indicators have "targets" for 2014/15. It is currently predicted that the targets are unlikely to be met in all except one case.

INDICATOR - : Percentage of applications determined within timescales:-

- (a) 70% of 'Major' applications determined 'in time'**
- (b) 85% of 'Minor' applications determined within 8 weeks**
- (c) 92.5% of 'Other' applications determined within 8 weeks**

The above challenging targets for 2014/15 have been set 'locally' – the former comparable national targets for this indicator as set by the previous Government were 65% and 80% respectively for Minors and Others. 'Major' applications are defined as those where 10 or more dwellings are to be constructed (or if the number is not given, the site area is more than 0.5 hectares), and, for all other uses, where the floorspace proposed is 1000 square metres or more or the site area is 1 hectare or more. 'Minor' applications are those developments which do not meet the criteria for 'Major' developments nor the definitions of Change of Use or Householder Development. 'Other' applications relate to those for Change of Use, Householder Developments, Advertisements, Listed Building Consents, Conservation Area Consents and various applications for Certificates of Lawfulness, etc.

(a) In dealing with '**Major**' applications during 2013/14 we determined 62.5% within 13 weeks against the then target of 70% and as such the local target was not met. For 2014/15 a new indicator measuring decisions defined by the government as made 'in time' has been adopted, the target figure remaining 70%. Performance for the first half of 2014/15 was 85.7% which is considerably above the target. It is anticipated that a performance of around 80% will be achieved.

TARGET FOR 2014/15 LIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED

(b) During 2013/14 77.2% of '**Minor**' applications were determined within 8 weeks against the then target of 85%.

Performance for the first half of 2014/15 was 75.7% and the predicted result for the year against the target of 85%, taking into account actual performance up to the end of October, is that this target is unlikely to be achieved.

TARGET FOR 2014/15 UNLIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED

(c) During 2013/14 93.1% of '**Other**' applications were determined within 8 weeks.

Performance for the first half of 2014/15 is 77.2% compared with the 'local' target of 92.5%. The prediction for the year is that the target will not be achieved, bearing in mind performance to date and the applications in hand.

TARGET FOR 2014/15 UNLIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED

The prediction is that all three targets relating to speed of determination of applications are unlikely to be met primarily as a consequence of a period when posts have been vacant and staff absent due to sickness. The vacant posts remaining on the establishment have now been filled as such it is hoped that performance will start to improve, although the absence of one officer on long term sickness will continue to affect performance.

INDICATOR - Percentage of pre-application enquiries answered within target

For 'Major' pre-application enquiries the target response time is 35 calendar days, for 'Minor' pre-application enquiries the target response time is 14 calendar days and for 'Other' pre-application enquiries the target response time is 10 calendar days

The performance for the first half of the year is 52.1% against a target figure in the Service Plan of 80% (performance in 2013/14 being 78.3%).

To give members some idea of volume the Service received some 591 such enquiries in the first 6 months of 2014/15 (compared to 442 for the same period last year) of which 22 were 'Major' pre-application enquiries; 181 were 'Minor' pre-application enquiries; and 388 were 'Other' pre-application enquiries.

TARGET FOR 2014/15 UNLIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED

INDICATOR - Percentage of applications for approvals required by conditions determined within 2 months

The performance figure for 2013/14 was 66%. The figure so far this year is 64.3% and the prediction for the year is around 70% reflecting a particular focus the Service is placing on dealing with conditions applications promptly. The target for 2014/15 within the existing Service Plan is 75%. The Service received some 312 such applications in the first 6 months of 2014/15 compared to 214 in the first 6 months of 2013/14.

TARGET FOR 2014/15 UNLIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED

INDICATOR - Percentage of complainants informed within the required timescales of any action to be taken about alleged breaches of planning control.

Performance in this area was 55.9 % in 2013/14, and performance recorded so far this year is 35.3% compared with the 'local' target of 75% (down from last year's 85%). The current prediction therefore is that it may well not be possible to achieve the target. The performance to date appears to be a result of the staffing resource issues that have been referred to above. Consideration is currently being given to the possibility of securing additional resources and hopefully this will lead to improvements in performance.

TARGET FOR 2014/15 UNLIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED

Source of information/background papers

- 1. General Development Control Returns PS1 and PS2 for 2011/12 – 2014/15**
- 2. Planning Services own internal records, produced manually and from its uniForm modules**
- 3. Planning and Development Service Plan for 2014/15**