

Report for Information

Report to	Planning Applications Committee 19 January, 2012	Item 8
Report of	Head of Planning Services	
Subject	Performance of the Development Management Service, Oct - Dec, 2011 (Quarter 3, 2011-12)	

Purpose

To report the performance of the development management service to members of the committee.

Recommendations

That the report be noted.

Financial Consequences

The financial consequences of this report are none.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority “Strong and prosperous city – working to improve quality of life for residents, visitors and those who work in the city now and in the future” and the implementation of the planning improvement plan.

Contact Officers

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Background Documents

None.

Report

Background

1. On 31 July 2008 Planning Applications Committee considered a report regarding the improved working of the Committee which included a number of suggested changes to the way the Committee operates. In particular it suggested performance of the development management service be reported to the Committee and that feedback from members of the Committee be obtained.

Performance of the development management service

2. Table 1 of the appendix provides a summary of performance indicators for the development management service. The speed of determining applications is National Indicator 157. Table 2 shows the numbers received, pending and on hand at the end of the quarter.
3. The National Performance Indicators (NI157) achieved in the third quarter of 2011-12 were 71.4% for major schemes, 83.1% for minors and 90.8% for others. The majors (defined as over 10 dwellings or 1,000 sq. m. of floorspace) figure relates to a very few cases in this quarter (seven in total) and the headline figure was much better than the previous quarter. However, any of these cases are proving to be difficult to resolve with considerable periods of time spent negotiating s.106 agreements and undertaking viability assessments due to the current state of the market and the economy generally. The “minors” and “others” figures were both much improved and were well above minimum targets set by the previous government (set at 65% and 80% respectively. The stretching local targets of 85% for “minors” was almost reached and the “others” target of 90% was exceeded for the first time in 12 months.
4. From the very high performance levels in the 3rd quarter of 2010-11 (Oct – Dec 2010) there was a significant drop in the early part of 2011 and measures were taken to re-organise staffing levels. This was previously identified as providing the right level of resources to secure top quartile service standards by quarter 3 (Oct-Dec 11). In addition a Lean Review of the application process is underway with the intention of speeding up receipt and registration processes and which will also benefit performance figure.
5. Performance did improve significantly in this third quarter with majors and others falling within 2 percentage points either side of the target levels. Prospects for the previous high performance levels for major schemes remain difficult due to the state of the housing market and the time spent undertaking viability work. Increasingly, in the future, this work will be undertaken prior to formal submission so that, in the medium term, this headline figure is expected to rise to former levels. NI157 is a lagging indicator and action taken to address performance necessarily takes time to work through in the outturn figures.
6. The number of pending applications is at a low level of 119 cases. This is partly based on the lower number of incoming applications in the last quarter and partly because applications are being pushed through the system more

speedily. The total numbers of decisions recorded by the NI157 indicator was 203 (plus 10 withdrawals). However this does not comprise the full workload of the team as some 238 Informal Enquiries were also processed as well as 57 applications for condition discharges,

7. The Planning Applications Committee met on 3 occasions over this quarter (the 22nd December meeting was cancelled due to the minimal number of items that could have been referred) and determined 9 applications, all but one of which were determined in accordance with officer recommendations. A mobile phone mast at Bowers Avenue was refused prior approval in September 2011.
8. The percentage of decisions delegated to officers for the quarter was 95% (previous quarter 87%).

APPENDIX

**Table 1 –
Speed of determination of planning applications recorded by National Indicator 157**

	2088 - 2009	2009 - 2010					2010 - 2011					2011 - 2012				
	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year
Major % 13 wks	37%	54%	90%	70%	86%	72.5%	70%	100%	88.9%	44.4%	75.7%	75%	20%	71.4%		
Minor % 8 wks	75%	90%	85%	81%	98%	88.4%	81.7%	89.0%	87.8%	51.9%	78.9%	50%	64.3%	83.1%		
Others % 8 wks	80%	92%	91%	90%	89%	90.3%	93.6%	94.3%	93.9%	73.1%	89.6%	70%	78.3%	90.8%		

Table 2
Numbers of planning applications recorded by National Indicator 157

	2008 - 2009				2009 - 2010				2010 - 2011				2011 - 2012			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Received	302	250	199	222	185	211	188	196	212	222	197	255	184	245	176	
Withdrawn/called in	21	29	24	22	14	14	16	9	15	11	19	15	9	21	10	
On hand (pending) at end of quarter	229	228	193	166	155	143	129	144	144	132	136	206	169	160	119	
Decisions	306	222	210	225	180	209	185	172	197	222	174	169	212	232	203	