

Report to Planning Applications Committee
18 April 2013

Report of Head of planning services

Subject Performance of the Development Management Service,
January - March 2013 (Quarter 4, 2012-13)

Item
6

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

Graham Nelson, head of planning services
Ian Whittaker, planning development manager

01603 212530
01603 212528

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 2012-13 were 7.1% for major schemes, 63.3% for minors and 82.4% for others. The majors (defined as over 10 dwellings or 1,000 sq.m.of floorspace) figure relates to a few cases (14 in total). Many 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 housing market and the economy generally. *The “minors” were down four percentage points and “others” figures were up by one percentage point over the previous quarter.*
4. The government has commenced collecting and publishing data on decisions made in 26 weeks. In the last quarter almost *two thirds of major applications took over 26 weeks (5 cases)*, but almost all minors and other applications were determined within six months.
5. Prospects for the higher performance levels for major schemes remain difficult due to the state of the housing market and the time spent undertaking viability work. NI157 is a lagging indicator and action taken to address performance necessarily takes time to work through in the out-turn figures. The lower figures for this quarter are linked to an increase in volume of complex major applications being brought to fruition (such as Anglia Square), some staffing difficulties and vacant posts in the team dealing with incoming work. In addition there have been problems in resolving legal agreements due to delays at nplaw. The reinforcement of the technical team and the filling of a vacancy will take place later this month. There is also some minor impact compared with last year because of the Committee meeting monthly from June 2012 onwards (to reduce costs) rather than on a generally three weekly cycle in the previous year.
6. The number of pending applications remains relatively high (the final figures for those received in the quarter were not finalised at the time of writing this report) However the NI157 figure does not comprise the full workload of the team as 165 written informal enquiries were also processed as well as 32 applications for condition discharges which are not recorded. In addition 9 telecoms

applications were processed and again, these do not appear in the NI157 data.

7. The planning applications committee met on 3 occasions over this quarter and determined 29 applications with one deferral.
8. The percentage of decisions delegated to officers for the quarter was 82.8% (previous quarter 88%), and will have contributed to poorer performance due to the additional time involved in waiting for a committee slot.

APPENDIX

Table 1

Speed of determination of planning applications recorded by National Indicator 157

	2008 - 2009	2009 - 2010	2010 - 2011				2011 - 2012										
	Year	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year
Major % 13 wks	37%	72.5%	70%	100%	88.9%	44.4%	75.7%	75%	20%	71.4%	30%	52.9%	77.7%	50%	14.2%	7.1%	35%
% 26 weeks	47.4%	73.8%					88.9%					73.5%	88.8%	90%	28.6%	35.7%	
Minor % 8 wks	75%	88.4%	81.7%	89.0%	87.8%	51.9%	78.9%	50%	64.3%	83.1%	74.5%	67.2%	81.5%	69.6%	66.1%	63.3%	73.4%
% 26 weeks							99.6%					95.9%	97.7%	98.5%	100%	96.6%	
Others % 8 wks	80%	90.3%	93.6%	94.3%	93.9%	73.1%	89.6%	70%	78.3%	90.08%	88.5%	81.6%	86.4%	77.2%	78.6%	82.4%	81.1%
% 26 weeks							99.6%					97.9%	100%	98.6%	100%	97.7%	

Table 2**Numbers of planning applications recorded by National Indicator 157**

	2009 - 2010				2010 - 2011				2011 - 2012				2012-13			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Received	185	211	188	196	212	222	197	255	184	245	176	221	273	255	170	196*
Withdrawn/called in	14	14	16	9	15	11	19	15	9	21	10	8	17	6	8	8
On hand (pending) at end of quarter	155	143	129	144	144	132	136	206	169	160	119	179	190	154	149	162*
Decisions	180	209	185	172	197	222	174	169	212	232	203	157	246	223	167	170

* data to be updated at committee and is likely to be higher than stated