

Report for Information

Report to Planning Applications Committee
12 November 2009

Report of Head of Planning Services

Subject Performance of the Development Management Service,
July - Sept, 2009 and Member Training

Item
6

Purpose

To report the performance of the development management service to members of the Committee, to seek feedback on Member satisfaction with the operation of the Committee and to discuss any training requests.

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 on their satisfaction with the Committees' operation. At the meeting on 22 October, 2009 details of appeals were presented and this report deals with other performance information.

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.
3. For both "Major" and 'Minor' applications the National Performance Indicators (NI157) are above, minimum government targets (set at 60% and 65% respectively) and above the targets set by the Council at the start of the year at 60% and 83%. The "others" at 90.29% is just below the Council's target of 92% (Government minimum is 80%). The Councils targets for "minors" and "others" were set at challenging levels equivalent to top quartile for English councils last year.
4. It should also be noted that there has been a steady drop in the number of planning applications on hand (see Table 2, of the appendix). At the end of September 2009/10 there were 143 applications pending compared to 228 twelve months previously. There has been a drop in pending applications for seven successive quarters. Staff have made serious progress in clearing the backlog of applications that built up through 2007/08 when the planning service had a large numbers of vacant posts. This has been helped by the reduction in submitted applications which peaked at 302 applications in Quarter 1 (Apr-Jun 08), dropped to 250 and 199 respectively in the following two quarters (Q2 & Q3), and then has steadied at 222, dropped to 185 (Q1) and has risen in the last quarter to 211. Planning fee income is, however, considerably under budget reflecting the lack of the large scale residential applications which attract relatively higher fees.
5. For new "major" applications submitted since January 2009, performance figures have significantly improved due to the introduction of new working practices. Of the nineteen major applications that have been validated since January 2009, sixteen have been determined within the 13 week time period with three pending a decision (but still within the 13 week period).
6. The Planning Applications Committee met on 4 occasions over this quarter and determined 36 applications, all of which were in accordance with officer recommendations. Overall, 82% of decisions were delegated to officers. Government advice is that local planning authorities should aim for a 90%

delegation rate.

Training

7. Unfortunately the design tour planned for October was cancelled because insufficient members were available to make it cost effective and worthwhile. Other suggestions for training are requested.

APPENDIX

**Table 1 -
Speed of determination of planning applications**

2007-08			2008-09			2008-09			2009-10		
	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q4</u>		<u>Year</u>		<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q2</u>
Major											
No.	8	17	10	11	5	12		38		13	10
% 13 wks	12.5%	41.2%	60.0%	27.3%	60.0%	16.7%		36.8%		53.9%	90.00%
Minor											
No.	57	86	100	64	78	81		316		63	64
% 8 wks	43.9%	44.2%	65.0%	71.9%	78.2%	79.0%		74.7%		90.4%	84.38%
Others											
No.	117	151	202	147	127	132		608		103	134
% 8 wks	63.2%	49.0%	78.2%	73.5%	80.3%	81.8%		80.0%		92.23%	90.29%

**Table 2
Numbers of planning applications**

	<u>2007-2008</u>				<u>2008-2009</u>			<u>2009-2010</u>	
	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q2</u>	<u>Q3</u>	<u>Q4</u>	<u>Q1</u>	<u>Q2</u>
Received	279	240	232	302	250	199	222	185	211
Withdrawn/called in	16	15	27	21	29	24	22	14	14
On hand at end	270	310	254	229	228	193	166	155	143
Decisions	280	185	261	306	222	210	225	180	209