

Report to Planning Applications Committee
18 October, 2012

Item

6

Report of Head of Planning Services

Subject Performance of the Development Management Service,
July to September 2012 (Quarter 2, 2012-13)

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 second quarter of 2012-13 were 50% for major schemes, 69.5% for minors and 77.2% for others. The majors (defined as over 10 dwellings or 1,000 sq.m. of floorspace) figure relates to a few cases (ten 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” and “others” figures declined over the previous quarter.
4. The government has commenced collecting and publishing data on decisions made in 26 weeks. In the last quarter 90% of major applications (1 case over 52 weeks), 98.5% of minor applications (1 case over 26 weeks) and 98.6% of other applications (2 cases over 26 weeks) were determined.
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 the bulge in application numbers in the previous quarter, some staffing difficulties and vacant posts in the team dealing with incoming work. There is also some minor impact compared with last year because of the Committee meeting monthly from June onwards 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) The very high number of incoming applications in quarter 1 was the highest for four years, The total numbers of decisions recorded by the NI157 indicator was 223, and the highest quarterly total for four years. However this does not comprise the full workload of the team as 180 written informal enquiries were also processed as well as 54 applications for condition discharges which are not recorded in the NI157 indicator. In addition 37 telecom 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 30 applications, all but two of which were determined in accordance with officer recommendation. Planning permission for the Bally shoe factory site was refused permission contrary to recommendation as was an application to amend conditions relating to the provisions of moorings at King Street.
8. The percentage of decisions delegated to officers for the quarter was 88.3% (previous quarter 92.3%). Of all the decisions made 90.1% were approved.

APPENDIX

Table 1

Speed of determination of planning applications recorded by National Indicator 157

	2008 - 2009	2009 - 2010	2010 - 2011					2011 - 2012					2012 - 2013				
	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%			
% 26 weeks													88.8%	90%			
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%			
% 26 weeks													97.7%	98.5%			
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%			
% 26 weeks													100%	98.6%			

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	262	189*		
Withdrawn/called in	14	14	16	9	15	11	19	15	9	21	10	8	17	6		
On hand (pending) at end of quarter	155	143	129	144	144	132	136	206	169	160	119	179	186	146*		
Decisions	180	209	185	172	197	222	174	169	212	232	203	157	246	223		

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