

Report for Information

Report to Planning Applications Committee
4 February, 2010

Item
6

Report of Head of Planning Services

Subject Performance of the Development Management Service,
October - December, 2009 (Quarter 3, 2009-10)

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 on their satisfaction with the Committees' operation.

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' and "Other" applications the National Performance Indicators (NI157) achieved in the third quarter were 70%, 81% and 90% respectively. All were above, minimum government targets (set at 60% and 65% and 80% respectively) and above the 60% target set by the Council at the start of the year for "majors". The "minors" at 81% and "others" at 90% are marginally (two percentage points) below the Council's target for 2009-10 of 83% and 92% respectively. These local targets for "minors" and "others" were set at challenging levels equivalent to top quartile for English councils last year.
4. The cumulative figures for the first three quarters of 2009-10 are 70%, 86% and 91%. These are 10 percentage points above local target for "majors", 3 points above for "minors" and 1 point below for "others".
5. 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 December there were 128 applications pending compared to 190 twelve months ago and 310 twenty-four months ago. There has now been a drop in pending applications for eight 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) and has now steadied to around 200 per quarter. Planning fee income is, however, considerably under budget this year reflecting the lack of the large scale residential applications which attract relatively higher fees.
6. For new "major" applications submitted since January 2009, performance figures have significantly improved due to the introduction of new working practices. Of the thirty major applications that have been validated since January 2009, twenty have been determined within the 13 week time period with ten pending a decision (but still within the 13 week period).
7. The Planning Applications Committee met on 5 occasions over this quarter and determined 18 applications, 16 of which were in accordance with officer

recommendations. Applications at Redwell St for a public house and the former EEB site at Duke St for temporary car parking were refused contrary to officer recommendations. The percentage of decisions delegated to officers to determine increased from 82% in quarter 2 to 88% in quarter 3. This followed changes to delegation levels for applications received from September onwards. This level is now close to the Government target that local planning authorities should aim for a 90% delegation rate.

8. Of the 24 applications which were determined outside of the 8 or 13 week period the reasons for the lateness in determination was as follows:

- Procedural error or delay	10 cases
- Complex issues in application or legal agreement	7 cases
- Need to refer to Committee	4 cases
- Late amendments and sound reasons to accept	2 cases
- Reference to GO East	1 case

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>	<u>Q3</u>
Major												
No.	8	17	10	11	5	12		38		13	10	10
% 13 wks	13%	41%	60%	27%	60%	17%		37%		54%	90%	70%
Minor												
No.	57	86	100	64	78	81		316		63	64	53
% 8 wks	44%	44%	65%	72%	78%	79%		75%		90%	85%	81%
Others												
No.	117	151	202	147	127	132		608		103	134	122
% 8 wks	63%	49%	78%	74%	80%	82%		80.0%		92%	91%	90%

**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>	<u>Q3</u>
Received	279	240	232	302	250	199	222		185	211	187
Withdrawn/called in	16	15	27	21	29	24	22		14	14	16
On hand at end	270	310	254	229	228	193	166		155	143	128
Decisions	280	185	261	306	222	210	225		180	209	185