

## ITEM 3 Development Control Performance Update

### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with a detailed update on the Development Control discipline's performance during the financial year 2006/07.

The report focuses on the following areas of development control activity, having regard to Service Plan priorities: -

1. BVPI 109 (speed of decision making)
2. BVPI 204 (percentage of appeals dismissed)
3. BVPI 205 (Quality of service checklist)
4. PLLP 33 (% of Pre-application enquiries responded to within target)
5. PLLP 02 (% of householder planning applications determined in 8 weeks)

### 1. BVPI 109 – Speed of Decision Making

This national performance indicator assesses the time taken to determine planning applications, based on 3 separate categories as identified by Central Government. These are classified as 'major', 'minor' and 'other' types of application. It enjoys the highest profile nationally of all the development control performance indicators and is widely regarded as providing a good means of assessing the efficiency of the service.

The Council has displayed considerable improvements in this indicator in recent times with the service being ranked number 1 in the North East region for 'minor' and 'other' applications for year 2005/06.

The results for the year ending 2006/07, in comparison to nationally set targets are shown below;

<b>Application type</b>	<b>2006/07 result</b>	<b>DCLG target</b>	<b>Variance</b>
Major applications	87.50% within 13 weeks	60%	+ 27.50%
Minor applications	92.41 % within 8 weeks	65%	+ 27.41 %
Other applications	95.40 % within 8 weeks	80%	+ 15.40 %

As the above table shows performance has been most healthy during 2006/07 with performance on all three categories of applications significantly above target.

The DCLG are likely to be issuing figures for all Local Authorities in the forthcoming weeks. This will enable comparisons to be made with other Authorities in the NE Region. Members will be advised when this information is to hand.

## **2. BVPI 204 – Percentage of Planning Appeals Allowed**

This national performance indicator assesses the number of appeals allowed against the Council's decision to refuse planning permission. It is widely regarded as providing an indication of the quality of decision-making within an Authority. However targets are not nationally set and rather all Authorities are invited to set their own, local targets.

This Council's Service Plan identifies a target of less than 30% of appeals allowed (i.e. at least 70% of appeals won).

During 2006/07 eight appeal decisions were issued. Seven of these appeals were dismissed, with the Council's decision to refuse permission being upheld, thus providing for a 88.50% success rate during the relevant period. This is also significantly above the locally set target.

## **3. BVPI 205 – Quality of Service Checklist**

This national performance indicator seeks to assess the overall quality of a Council's planning service. It operates on a points based system, with points being allocated on the basis of the provision of certain areas of service, perceived to constitute service excellence for Planning Authorities. Examples of these include;

- A fully developed web site, allowing customers to interact with the service electronically
- The provision of a free pre-application advice service
- The use of specialist design advice in the service
- The use of specialist archaeology advice in the planning service
- The availability of pre-prepared information leaflets for applicants

Whilst this is a national performance indicator again, as with the indicator for appeals (discussed above) there is no set target and Authorities are invited to set their own, local targets. This Council's Service Plan sets a target of 100% to be achieved by year-end 06/07.

Members will recall that they approved a report seeking to adopt a Multi Disciplinary Approach to Determining Major Applications, at their meeting in April 2007. The adoption of this approach has enabled the service to meet all of the relevant checklist criteria and accordingly achieve the maximum 100% score for 2006/07.

**4. PLL 33 % of Pre-application Enquiries Responded to Within Target**

This is a local performance indicator, designed to measure the speed of response to customer requests for free pre-application advice. The indicator was introduced into the 06/07-service plan in recognition of the importance of this area of the service in meeting customer's needs.

The indicator is broken down in to 2 parts; major and minor enquires. The response target for minor enquiries (mainly in relation to house extension proposals) is to provide a full response to 90% of such enquiries within 14 days. The response target for major enquires is to provide a full response to 90% of such enquiries within 28 days.

The figures for the year ending 2006/07 show returns of 78.10 % within target for major inquiries and 70.10 % within target for minor inquiries. Both these figures are clearly below the local target of 90%.

Whilst this is clearly regrettable Officers are confident that performance will be improved, in line with local targets, once the two vacant Planning Officers post are filled and the team is fully staffed. It should also be noted that Officers have had to give lesser priority to this indicator, in favour of ensuring the BVPI 109 targets were met, during the recent staffing shortages.

**5. PLL 02 % of Householder Planning Applications Determined in 8 Weeks**

This is a local performance indicator, designed to measure the speed of determining householder-planning applications. The indicator has been measured for some time and is considered to be of particular importance as householder planning applications generally account for some 70 – 75 % of all applications received. As such this indicator measures a high profile area of the planning service's workload.

The target response time, as detailed in the service plan, is to determine 95% of householder applications in 8 weeks.

The figures for the year ending 06/07 show a return of 97.32% within 8 weeks, some 2.32 % above the locally set target.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report.