

Report to: **Regeneration Services Scrutiny Committee**
Date: **7 January 2008**
Report of: **Head of Planning and Building Control**
Subject: **Service Unit Performance Reporting - Planning and Building Control**
Ward: **All**

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide information on the performance of the Planning and Building Control Services Unit.

2.0 Consultation

2.1 Consultation has taken place with appropriate staff of the Planning and Building Control Services Unit.

3.0 BVPI Performance

3.1 At the end of the second quarter, four service BVPI's are now demonstrated top quartile performance, supporting ambitions to drive up performance.

3.2 Performance improvement continues to focus upon on BV 109 (determination of Planning Applications), and current performance is show below. Performance on major applications is still on a trajectory to achieve this years service target. Performance on minor applications exceeds the service target and is routinely achieving top quartile performance. Performance on 'other' applications is consistently demonstrating high performance just below high quartile performance.

BVPI 109	Target	2006/7	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	Service Target
Major Applications	60% (13 weeks)	63.9%	75%	66%	69%
Minor Applications	65% (8 weeks)	68.7%	75%	84%	74%
Other Applications	80% (8 weeks)	80.8%	89.0%	87%	92%

3.3 As reported at the last meeting, performance on plan making (BVPI200b) has not achieved the next stage in plan production – the 'Preferred Option' document, which has fallen behind schedule. This is partially due to staffing problems, but also the need to deliver supporting planning documents and this is explained further below.

4.0 Staffing and Structures

4.1 Council agreed a number of staffing and structural issues in the Service Unit earlier this year. Appointments have since been made to reduce the number of planning application per case officer to the level recommended by the government and this has helped to support performance improvement in this area. Recruitment of staff to support plan making has only been partially successful, with the recruitment of two members of staff and the loss of a third. Unfortunately, it was not possible to recruit into this post at the last attempt.

4.2 At the last meeting, it was reported that a new Engineering Manager had been appointed but was yet to commence work. Unfortunately this person did not take up his post. This is also an area where recruitment difficulties have been experienced

and alternative arrangements have been implemented where three members of the the Engineering and Countryside Unit have take on additional duties and now work with the Head of Planning and Building Control to manage the service.

5.0 Local Development Framework

5.1 Substantial progress has been made in developing the new Local Development Framework for the District. A draft 'Preferred Options' report will shortly be published which sets out a new planning policy framework for the District. The report will be supported by a series of supporting studies designed to provide the evidence needed to support the proposed planning policies. The studies, which are now a requirement of government, have mostly been commissioned on a sub-regional basis, the exception being the Employment Land Review. These major studies comprise :-

- A Strategic Housing Market Assessment to provide evidence on the amount of housing needed, both private and affordable, and the type and size of houses required.
- A Strategic Land Availability Assessment to identify potential sites available for housing and the constraints that may limit their deliverability.
- An Employment Land Review to consider the demand and supply of employment land across the District to inform policy and future land allocations.
- A Wind Energy Scheme to consider the landscape capacity of the District and the likely cumulative impact further schemes.

5.2 A number of further technical studies are also underway to support the production of the Local Development Framework and together with those described above, have delayed progress in producing the new plan within the timescales set out in the approved Local Development Scheme. The sub regional nature of the studies and late production for government guidance for the production of these studies has made the delays inevitable, but completion of the studies will ensure a robust evidence base for the new plan. All of the studies will be completed early in the new year when a new Local Development Scheme will be published setting out the new timescales.

6.0 Implications

6.1 Policy Implications

It is not considered that there are any implications resulting from this report.

Legal Implications

It is not considered that there are any implications resulting from this report.

Financial Implications

It is not considered that there are any financial implications resulting from this report.

Risk Implications

The report reflects the current situation and therefore there are no risks arising from this report.

Communications

Development Control staff meet on a regular basis and performance improvement is a key element of the agenda.

5.0 Corporate Implications

6.1 Corporate Plan and Priorities

BVPI performance issues have been highlighted in the current plan.

Equality and Diversity

It is not considered that there are any implications resulting from this report.

E-Government & Procurement

The service is supported by recently purchased technology will be used to maintain enhanced service levels relating to e-government.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 That members note the content of the report.

Background Papers

- 1 Previous quarterly report
- 2 Best Value Performance Plan
- 3 Service Plan
- 4 Corporate Plan