

Local Members' Interest
N/A

Planning Committee – 6 June 2019

Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Planning, Policy and Development Control Team Annual Performance Report

Purpose of the Report

To inform the Planning Committee about our planning policy-making and planning development control performance and related matters over the previous financial year (1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019).

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Summary

Planning policy-making performance

We [reported to the Planning Committee in February 2019](#) on the review of our Waste Local Plan and Minerals Local Plan, and publication of our Annual Monitoring Report. The reports confirmed that our Plans are performing well.

Planning development control performance

- | | | |
|----|--|----------------------------|
| a) | Speed - major development decisions | 100% (31 out of 31) |
| b) | Quality – major development decisions overturned at appeal | Nil (0 out of 31) |
| c) | Speed - County Council's major development decisions | 100% (1 out of 1) |
| d) | Speed - County Council's 'non-major development' decisions | 100% (11 out of 11) |
| e) | Delegated decisions | 81% (35 out of 43) |

Application and Pre-application Advice Service Income

- 125 applications and submissions and almost £45,000 in fees.
- 15 requests for pre-application advice and £5,865 in fees.

Staffing and Caseload

One Principal Planning Officer left the authority on voluntary redundancy terms in July 2018 and two Senior Planning Officers left the authority in September 2018 and January 2019 respectively.

The total number of cases received (applications, submissions and consultations) is slightly down on the previous two years (215 compared to 239 and 231).

Background

Performance in planning policy-making and planning development control is reported after the end of the financial year with an update after 6 months. Quarterly performance updates are reported to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Infrastructure.

This is a report about planning policy-making and planning development control performance and related matters over the previous financial year (1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019).

Planning policy-making performance

We [reported to the Planning Committee](#) in February 2019 that:

- a) The full review of the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Local Plan, adopted in March 2013, had been completed. The review concluded that there was no need to revise our Waste Local Plan at this time.
- b) The partial review of the Minerals Local Plan for Staffordshire, adopted in February 2017, had been completed. The review concluded that there was no need to revise our Minerals Local Plan as result of the publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework.
- c) The 14th Annual Monitoring Report also confirmed that both Plans are performing well.

Planning development control performance

[Appendix 2](#) provides a summary of performance by quarter in 2018-19.

[Appendix 3](#) provides a comparison with the previous two years.

- a) Speed - major development decisions **100%** (31 out of 31)

The proportion of the minerals and waste development decisions made within 13 / 16 weeks or within an agreed extension of time.

National target	60% (over 2 years)
Local target	90% (over 1 year)

- b) Quality – major development decisions overturned at appeal **Nil** (0 out of 31)

The proportion of the minerals and waste development decisions overturned at appeal.

National target	10% (over 2 years)
Local target	5% (over 1 year)

The proportion of the mineral and waste development decisions made on time, or within an agreed extension of time, remained at 100% and the proportion of those decisions appealed, let alone overturned on appeal, was nil as we continue to try to resolve outstanding matters before reaching a decision. Notably the number of mineral and waste development decisions made during the financial year was up on the preceding year and the same as that two years ago (31 compared to 20 and 31) (see [Appendix 3](#)).

c) Speed - County Council's major development decisions **100%** (1 out of 1)

The proportion of the County Council's major development decisions made within 13 / 16 weeks or within an agreed extension of time.

Local target	90% (over 1 year)
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d) Speed - County Council's 'non-major development' decisions **100%** (11 out of 11)

The proportion of the County Council's non-major development decisions made within 8-weeks or within an agreed extension of time.

Local target	90% (over 1 year)
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[See [Definitions](#) for an explanation of 'major development' and 'non-major development'.]

The proportion of County Council developments decisions made on time, or within an agreed extension of time, remained at 100% as we continue to try to resolve outstanding matters with the applicant before reaching a decision. Only one County Council major development application was received during the year, which is the same as the previous year and significantly down on that two years ago (1 compared to 1 and 7) (see [Appendix 3](#)). The number of non-major County Council development applications remains very similar to the previous two years (11 compared to 9 and 10) (see [Appendix 3](#)).

[Note: The County Council's major developments typically involve large projects such as new schools e.g. the Branston Road High School near Burton; and, major highway improvement schemes e.g. the Stafford Western Access Road and the Lichfield Southern Bypass. Non-major developments typically involve much smaller projects e.g. additional classrooms at schools and new barns on the County Farms.]

e) Delegated decisions **81%** (35 out of 43)

The proportion of all decisions made by your officers in accordance with delegated powers.

Local target

80% (over 1 year)

The proportion of decisions made by your officers under delegated powers is very close to the target and it is worth noting that as the number of decisions made is small, one decision either way has a significant effect on the percentage figure (e.g. 34 out of 43 = 79%).

[Note: The delegated powers apply to applications that do not involve a substantial new site or significant extension; applications for county developments; applications where there are no objections from a statutory consultee, district / parish council or local member; or applications where there are no more than 4 objections on material planning grounds.]

Application and Pre-application Advice Service Income

We received about 125 applications and submissions and almost £45,000 in fees. In line with Government regulations introduced in January 2018, the County Council has ring fenced 20% of the fee income to spend on the planning service. The total at the end of the financial year was just over £15,000 (see [Appendix 1](#) 'Resource and Value for money implications' section for more information).

We increased our pre-application service charges in line with the general 2% increase in April 2018. We received 15 requests for pre-application advice and £5,865 in fees.

We carried out a customer satisfaction survey of our 'pre-app. service' in the summer of 2018 which indicated that the level of satisfaction with our service was good or very good.

Staffing and Caseload

The Planning, Policy & Development Control Team:

Team Manager
2 Policy and Development Control Team Leaders
1 Principal Planning Officer
1 Senior Planning Officer (part-time)
1 Planning Information Team Leader and 2 Support Officers (1-part time)

One Principal Planning Officer left the authority on voluntary redundancy terms in July 2018 and two Senior Planning Officers left the authority in September 2018 and January 2019 respectively. When the Senior Officers left one officer was on secondment to the Planning Regulation Team and the other was on a part-time secondment to the Economic Regeneration Team.

The total number of cases received (applications, submissions and consultations) is slightly down on the previous two years (215 compared to 239 and 231). Whereas, the number of mineral and waste development decisions made during the year was up on the preceding year and the same as that 2 years ago (31 compared to 20 and 31) (see

[Appendix 3](#)). The paid-for pre-application service is also generating additional work and income. The completion of the review of the Waste Local Plan has released two officers to work full time on development control cases and other planning related work such as the review of the Statement of Community Involvement. Staffing, caseload and performance will continue to be monitored.

Finally, the Committee may be interested to learn that following a delay due to the Corporate spending freeze, we are once again working towards replacing our planning ICT database (developed in-house in 2003) as it is vulnerable in terms of ICT support and lacks functionality compared to more modern, externally hosted, systems used by many other Local Planning Authorities.

Report author

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Definitions

'Major development' is defined in the [Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#)

In so far as it is relevant to applications determined by the County Council, a 'major development' means development involving the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits; waste development; the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more.

List of Background Papers

- Half Year Performance 2018 -19 - Planning Committee Report – 7 February 2019 ([see Committee agenda - item 28](#))
- [DCLG - Improving planning performance: criteria for designation \(November 2016\)](#)
- [DCLG - Live tables on planning application statistics](#)
- [Town and Country Planning \(Section 62A Applications\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)

Appendix 1

Equalities implications:

This report has been prepared in accordance with the County Council's policies on Equal Opportunities.

Legal implications:

Officers are satisfied that there are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Resources and value for money implications:

Officers are satisfied that there are no direct resource and value for money implications arising from this report.

A significant increase in workload and the next review of our Minerals and / or Waste Local Plan are likely to require additional resources if we are to maintain our current high performance. Decisions to refuse applications may lead to appeals being made. The funds to cover the cost of appeals would need to be found from the County Council's contingencies.

An ICT budget has been provided to replace our in-house planning ICT system with an externally hosted system (in accordance with the Corporate ICT Strategy). An annual budget for the cost of hosting the new system, beyond the initial contract period, will be required.

[The Town and Country Planning \(Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2017](#) increased planning application fees by about 20% with effect from 17 January 2018. At the request of the Government, the County Council, together with all other Local Planning Authorities, has agreed to re-invest the additional income in the planning service (currently totalling just over £15,000).

Risk implications:

Officers are satisfied that there are no direct risk implications arising from this report

Climate Change implications:

The Staffordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plans and the Staffordshire District / Borough Local Plans include policies to address climate change which are considered, where applicable, when determining planning applications for mineral and waste development and applications for the County Council's own developments.

Government planning policy in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (February 2019), which refers to climate change (section 14), is also a material consideration in reaching decisions.

Health Impact Assessment screening:

The Staffordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plans and the Staffordshire District / Borough Local Plans include policies to address health which are considered, where applicable, when determining planning applications for mineral and waste development and applications for the County Council's own developments.

Government planning policy in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (February 2019), which refers to healthy communities (section 8), is also a material consideration in reaching decisions.

Appendix 2 Planning Development Control - Quarterly Performance– 2018-19

	Target Description	Target (Local)	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Performance (final outturn)
National	Speed of 'major development' decisions	60% (90%)	100% 8 out of 8	100% 8 out of 8	100% 8 out of 8	100% 7 out of 7	100% 31 out of 31
	Quality of 'major development' decisions	10% (5%)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Local	Speed of the County Council's own 'non-major development' decisions	(90%)	100% 3 out of 3	100% 4 out of 4	100% 3 out of 3	100% 1 out of 1	100% 11 out of 11
	Speed of the County Council's own 'major development' decisions	(80%)	Nil	Nil	100% 1 out of 1	Nil	100% 1 out of 1
	Applications determined under delegated powers	(80%)	91% 10 out of 11	75% 9 out of 12	83% 10 out of 12	75% 6 out of 8	81% 35 out of 43

Speed is measured (in so far as it relates to applications dealt with by the County Council) by the proportion of major applications dealt with within 13 weeks, or within 8 weeks for non-major development decisions, unless the application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement when the target is 16 weeks, or within an agreed extension of time.

Quality is measured (in so far as it relates to applications dealt with by the County Council) by the proportion of major applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal.

Generally, a 'major development' (in so far as it relates to applications dealt with by the County Council) is defined as an application for the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits; and, waste development. A 'non-major development' is defined as an application which is not a 'major development'.

Appendix 3 Comparison with the previous two years

Planning Development Control – Full Year Performance – 2018 -19

Year	<u>National</u> (Local Target)	Performance
Speed of 'major development' decisions		
2018-19	60% (90%)	100%
		31 out of 31
2017-18	60% (70%)	100%
		20 out of 20
2016-17	50% inc to 60% (70%)	94%
		29 out of 31
Speed of the County Council's own 'non-major development' decisions		
2018-19	(90%)	100%
		11 out of 11
2017-18	(80%)	100%
		9 out of 9
2016-17	(80%)	100%
		10 out of 10
Speed of the County Council's own 'major development' decisions		
2018-19	(90%)	100%
		1 out of 1
2017-18	(80%)	100%
		1 out of 1
2016-17	(80%)	100%
		7 out of 7
Applications determined under delegated powers		
2018-19	(80%)	81%
		35 out of 43
2017-18	(80%)	77%
		23 out of 30
2016-17	80%	79%
		38 out of 48