

<b>Local Members' Interest</b>
N/A

## **Planning Committee – 7 June 2018**

### **Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills**

#### **Planning, Policy and Development Control – Annual Performance Report**

##### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform the Planning Committee about our planning policy-making and planning development control performance over the previous 12 months (1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018) and related matters.

##### **Summary and Recommendation**

###### **Planning policy-making performance**

2. We published our 2017 [Annual Monitoring Report](#) in January 2018 and there is a report on the agenda setting out the process and programme to review our Waste Local Plan.

###### **Planning development control performance**

3. There are two measures of development control performance:

###### **a) Speed of major development decisions**

The percentage of the minerals and waste applications determined within 13 / 16 weeks or within an agreed extension of time:

- National target 60% measured over two years
- **Performance 96%** (50 out of 52 )
- Local target 70% measured over the financial year
- **Performance 100%** (20 out of 20)

###### **b) Quality of major development decisions**

The percentage of the minerals and waste decisions overturned at appeal:

- National target 10% measured over two years
- **Performance 1%** (1 out of 67)
- Local target 5% measured over the financial year
- **Performance Nil** (0 out of 20)

**c) Speed of the County Council's major development decisions**

The percentage of the County Council's major development applications determined within 13 / 16 weeks or within an agreed extension of time:

- Local target 80% measured over the financial year
- **Performance 100%** (1 out of 1)

**d) Speed of the County Council's 'non-major development' applications**

The percentage of the County Council's non-major development applications determined within 8 weeks or within an agreed extension of time: <sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup>

- Local target 80% measured over the financial year
- **Performance 100%** (9 out of 9)

**e) Delegated decisions on all applications**

The percentage of all applications determined by your officers in accordance with delegated powers.

- Local target 80% measured over the financial year
- **Performance 77%** (23 out of 30)

**Application and Pre-application Advice Service Income**

4. We handled about 90 chargeable applications and submissions and received about £151,000 in fees. We also received about 20 chargeable requests for pre-application advice and received about £6,000 in fees.

**Staffing**

5. Declining development control cases and a pause in policy-making work has led to several adjustments to the team. A Senior Planning Officer has been seconded to the Planning Regulation Team; a Team Leader and a Senior Planning Officer have assisted the County Farms Team by preparing planning applications on their behalf; a Senior Planning Officer is assisting the Regeneration Team on a part-time basis; and, a request for voluntary redundancy by a Principal Planning Officer has been accepted and will take effect in July 2018.

**Recommendation**

6. That the report be noted.

---

1 The definition of 'major' and 'non-major' development is explained at the end of the report.

2 There is no measure of quality of decisions on county development applications as there is no appeals process.]

## **Background**

7. Performance in planning policy-making and planning development control is reported on an annual basis with an update at 6 months. Quarterly performance updates are reported to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Infrastructure and published on our Staffordshire Planning '[A to Z of Planning](#)' web page ('P' for Performance).
8. This is a report about planning policy-making and planning development control performance over the 12 months from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

## **Planning policy-making performance**

9. We published our 2017 [Annual Monitoring Report](#) in January 2018 and there is a report on the agenda setting out the process and programme we intend to follow to review our Waste Local Plan.

## **Planning development control performance**

10. Appendix 2 provides a summary of performance by quarter in 2017-18.
11. Appendix 3 provides a comparison with the previous two years.

## **Speed and quality in determining minerals and waste applications**

12. The national speed target was to determine 60% of minerals and waste applications in 13 / 16 weeks or within an agreed extension of time (measured over a 2-year period). The local target was 70% measured over a 1-year period. We achieved:
  - **96%** (50 out of 52) October 2015 to September 2017
  - **100%** (20 out of 20) April 2017 to March 2018
13. The national quality target was no more than 10% of decisions on minerals and waste applications should be overturned at appeal (measured over a 2-year period). The local target was 5% measured over a 1-year period. We achieved:
  - **1%** (1 out of 67) April 2015 to March 2017
  - **Nil** (0 out of 20) April 2017 to March 2018
14. *Commentary:* The percentage of mineral and waste applications determined within 13 / 16 weeks, or within agreed extensions of time, remains very high and the number of appeals very low as we continue to try to resolve outstanding matters before reaching a decision. However, the total number of applications continues to decline (see Appendix 3).

## **Speed in determining the County Council's 'major' and 'non-major' development applications**

15. The local speed target was to determine 80% of major development applications within 13 / 16 weeks (8 weeks for non-majors), or within an agreed extension of time. We achieved:
- **100%** (1 out of 1) (major)
  - **100%** (9 out of 9) (non-majors)
16. *Commentary:* Performance remained very high, however, the number of county development applications continues to decline (see Appendix 3).

[Note: The County Council's non-major applications typically involve small scale projects e.g. additional classrooms at schools and new barns on the County Farms. The major applications typically involve much larger scale projects e.g. the Branston Road High School near Burton and the Stafford Western Access Road.]

Applications determined by your officers in accordance with delegated powers

17. We monitor the percentage of all applications determined by your officers in accordance with delegated powers.<sup>3</sup> The local target was to determine 80% measured over a 1-year period. We achieved:

- **77%** (23 out of 30)

18. *Commentary:* Even though the Planning Committee only met on 4 occasions between April 2017 to March 2018 (including one meeting which was cancelled due to elections in May 2017) the percentage of applications dealt with by your officers under delegated powers was just below target. This is in no small part due to the overall decline in the number of applications being determined (see Appendix 3). However, it is important to point out that your officers also dealt with other matters including reviews of old mineral permissions, submissions of detail, applications for non-material amendments and consultations from the districts. This year the total number of matters determined is slightly lower than last year but similar to the year before (199 compared to 224 in 2016-17 and 203 in 2015-16) (albeit that the latest figures include a significant number of consultations from the districts related to our mineral safeguarding policy). For more details refer to the 'Quarterly Performance Reports' published on our Staffordshire Planning '[A to Z of Planning](#)' web page ('P' for Performance).

**Application and Pre-application Advice Service Income**

19. We handled about 90 chargeable applications and submissions and received about £151,000 in fees (see Appendix 1 'Resource and Value for money implications' for more information).

---

<sup>3</sup> 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.

20. We introduced our chargeable [Pre-application Advice Service](#) on 1 February 2017. From April 2017 to March 2018 we received about 20 chargeable requests and received about £6,000 in fees. We increased our charges slightly in April 2018 to take account of the general 2% increase in charges for council services and our experience in the amount of work required to deliver the service. We intend to carry out a customer survey in 2018-19.

### **Staffing update**

21. The Planning, Policy & Development Control Team:

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

22. Several adjustments to the team have been made to respond to the decline in development control cases and pause in policy-making work following the adoption of the Minerals Local Plan in February 2017. The adjustments include:

- a) A Senior Planning Officer was seconded to the Planning Regulation Team in April 2017. The secondment has recently been extended by agreement of all parties.
- b) A Team Leader has assisted the County Farms Team by preparing a planning application. A Senior Planning Officer is currently working on a second planning application.
- c) A Team Leader and a Senior Planning Officer are now working on the review of the Waste Local Plan and Statement of Community Involvement.
- d) A Senior Planning Officer is now assisting the Regeneration Team on a part-time basis.
- e) A Principal Planning Officer's request for voluntary redundancy has been accepted and will take effect in July 2018.

23. The staffing requirements of the team will be kept under review.

24. Finally, the Committee may be interested to learn that we are currently working to replace our planning ICT database (developed in-house in 2003) as it is now vulnerable and lacks functionality compared to more modern, externally hosted, systems used by many other Local Planning Authorities.

### **Report author:**

Name: Mike Grundy  
Planning, Policy and Development Control Manager  
Telephone No: (01785) 277297

## 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 2017-18 - Planning Committee Report – 2 November 2017 ([see agenda item 26](#))
- 'Quarterly Performance Reports' published on our Staffordshire Planning '[A to Z of Planning](#)' web page ('P' for Performance).
- [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.

### Resource and Value for money implications:

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

Improvements in performance may require additional resources which would have financial implications. 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.

A budget has been earmarked for the Waste Local Plan review examination in 2019-20 if required.

The Principal Planning Officer voluntary redundancy will contribute towards the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

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 e.g. pay towards, or at least contribute towards, the cost of an externally hosted planning ICT system.

Planning application fee income was about £151,000 from about 90 cases and pre-application advice service income was about £6,000 from about 20 cases. The additional application fee income transferred to reserves for planning was £6,359.

#### **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, which refers to climate change ([section 10](#)), 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, which refers to healthy communities ([section 8](#)), is also a material consideration in reaching decisions.

**Planning Development Control - Quarterly Performance– 2017-18**

	<b>Target Description</b>	<b>Target (Local)</b>	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	<b>Performance (final outturn)</b>
<b>National</b>	Speed of 'major development' decisions	60% (70%)	<b>100%</b> 6 out of 6	<b>100%</b> 1 out of 1	<b>100%</b> 5 out of 5	<b>100%</b> 8 out of 8	<b>100%</b> 20 out of 20
	Quality of 'major development' decisions	10% (5%)	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Local</b>	Speed of the County Council's own 'non-major development' decisions	(80%)	<b>100%</b> 1 out of 1	<b>100%</b> 4 out of 4	<b>100%</b> 3 out of 3	<b>100%</b> 1 out of 1	<b>100%</b> 9 out of 9
	Speed of the County Council's own 'major development' decisions	(80%)	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>100%</b> 1 out of 1	<b>100%</b> 1 out of 1
	Applications determined under delegated powers	(80%)	<b>71%</b> 5 out of 7	<b>80%</b> 4 out of 5	<b>88%</b> 7 out of 8	<b>70%</b> 7 out of 10	<b>77%</b> 23 out of 30



Appendix 3

Planning Development Control – Full Year Performance – 2017-18

Comparison with the previous two years

<b>Year</b>	<b><u>National</u> (Local Target)</b>	<b>Performance</b>
<b>Speed of 'major development' decisions</b>		
<b>2017-18</b>	<b>60%</b> <b>(70%)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>20 out of 20</b>
2016-17	50% (70%)	94% 29 out of 31
2015-16	30% (70%)	100% 36 out of 36
<b>Speed of the County Council's own 'non-major development' decisions</b>		
<b>2017-18</b>	<b>(80%)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>9 out of 9</b>
2016-17	(80%)	100% 10 out of 10
2015-16	80%	100% 15 out of 15
<b>Speed of the County Council's own 'major development' decisions</b>		
<b>2017-18</b>	<b>(80%)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>1 out of 1</b>
2016-17	(80%)	100% 7 out of 7
2015-16	80%	100% 4 out of 4
<b>Applications determined under delegated powers</b>		
<b>2017-18</b>	<b>(80%)</b>	<b>77%</b> <b>23 out of 30</b>
2016-17	(80%)	79% 38 out of 48
2015-16	80%	80% 44 out of 55