

Local Members
N/A

Planning Committee – 09 June 2022

Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Planning, Policy and Development Control Team Annual Report

Purpose of the Report

This report is to inform the Planning Committee about our planning policy-making and planning development control activities and related matters during the previous financial year (2021-2022).

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

Summary

Planning policy-making performance

We are continuing to monitor our Mineral and Waste Local Plans and will be publishing our 17th [Annual Monitoring Report \(AMR\)](#) shortly. The AMR has concluded that there is no immediate need to update our Minerals or Waste Local Plans.

Planning development control performance - 2021-22

- a) Speed - major development decisions
100% (18 out of 18)
- b) Quality – major development decisions overturned at appeal
Nil (0 out of 18)
- c) Speed - County Council's 'non-major development' decisions
100% (6 out of 6)
- d) Speed - County Council's major development decisions
100% (1 out of 1)
- e) Delegated decisions
72% (18 out of 25)

Staffing and Caseload

The Team is still feeling the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic but despite this, supported by a temporary recruitment part way through the year and the return to work of an officer who had been absent because of long-covid on a limited basis towards the end of the year, we have managed to maintain our good performance. Interviews are due to be held shortly for a new graduate post (Grade 7) which will benefit the wider Policy and Enabling Team. The progress of the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#) is also being monitored to determine when more resources need to be found to support the plan-making function of the team.

In 2021-22 the total number of cases received (applications, submissions and consultations) was similar to last year and up on the year before (145 compared to 148 and 136). Notably the number of minerals and waste applications received was down compared to the previous two years (21 compared to 33 and 32) whereas submissions of detail received remained similar to last year which was up on the year before that (86 compared to 85 and 60).

Background

We report our policy-making and development control activities after the end of the financial year with an update after 6 months. This report is about the previous financial year (2021-22).

Planning policy-making performance

We reported to the Planning Committee in December 2021 that we were finalising our 17th [Annual Monitoring Report](#) (AMR) for the period April 2020 to March 2021. The AMR, which we will be publishing shortly, has concluded that:

- a) we have enough reserves of most minerals; adequate facilities to process our waste; and our policies are working well. There is some uncertainty about the longer-term supply of clay to some of the county's brickworks, and a few of our older mineral sites have yet to produce detailed restoration plans.
- b) overall, there was no immediate need to update our Minerals or Waste Local Plans.

Work on preparing for the review of our local plans is currently on hold as we have insufficient staff to commit to it full-time but also because the government is taking a fresh look at planning reforms (see [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#)).

Planning development control performance

[Appendix 2](#) provides a summary of performance by quarter in 2021-22.

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

The number of mineral and waste development decisions made during the 2021-22 was lower than last year and the year before that (18 compared to 24 and 23), reflecting the lower number of applications received (21 compared to 33 and 32).

The overall total number of cases received (applications, submissions and consultations) was similar to last year and up on the year before (145 compared to 148 and 136).

Staffing and Caseload

The Planning, Policy & Development Control Team:

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

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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

- Annual and Half Year Performance 2020-21 and 2021-22 - Planning Committee Report – 2 December 2021 ([see Committee agenda - item 15](#))
- [MHCLG - Improving planning performance: criteria for designation \(December 2020\)](#)
- [DLUHC - 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.

Income from planning application fees during 2020-21 was just over £185,000.

[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, agreed to re-invest the additional income in the planning service.

The total accumulated in the ring-fenced planning reserve since 2018 was just

over £106,000 at the end of 2021-22.

The temporary recruitment is being funded by the service from savings and the ring-fenced planning reserve.

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



Appendix 2 Planning Development Control - Quarterly Performance– 2021-22

	Target Description	Target (Local)	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Performance (outturn)
National	Speed of 'major development' decisions	60% (90%)	100% 1 out of 1	100% 5 out of 5	100% 3 out of 3	100% 9 out of 9	100% 18 out of 18
	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% 4 out of 4	100% 1 out of 1	100% 1 out of 1	Nil	100% 6 out of 6
	Speed of the County Council's own 'major development' decisions	(80%)	Nil	Nil	Nil	100% 1 out of 1	100% 1 out of 1
	Applications determined under delegated powers	(80%)	80% 4 out of 5	83% 5 out of 6	100% 4 out of 4	55% 5 out of 10	72% 18 out of 25

* 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 – 2021-22

	<u>National</u> (Local Target)	
Speed of 'major development' decisions		
2021-22	60% (90%)	100% 18 out of 18
2020-21	60% (90%)	96% 23 out of 24
2019-20	60% (70%)	100% 23 out of 23
Speed of the County Council's own 'non-major development' decisions		
2021-22	(90%)	100% 7 out of 7
2020-21	(90%)	100% 7 out of 7
2019-20	(90%)	100% 13 out of 13
Speed of the County Council's own 'major development' decisions		
2021-22	(90%)	100% 1 out of 1
2020-21	(90%)	Nil 0 out of 0
2019-20	(90%)	100% 1 out of 1
Applications determined under delegated powers		
2021-22	(80%)	73% 19 out of 26
2020-21	(80%)	87% 27 out of 31
2019-20	(80%)	86% 32 out of 37