

Local Members' Interest
N/A

Planning Committee – 2 November 2017

Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Planning, Policy and Development Control – Half Year Performance Report

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform Members about our planning policy-making and planning development control performance over the previous six months (1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017) and related matters.

Summary and Recommendation

2. Planning policy-making performance:

The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Local Plan was adopted in March 2013 and so the 5-year review is due in 2018. Preparatory work on the review of the plan has now commenced. This work will help us determine the extent of the review that is required.

3. Planning development control performance:

a) Speed of major development decisions

The proportion 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%** (7 out of 7 after two quarters)

b) Quality of major development decisions

The proportion 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 7 after two quarters)

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

The proportion 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 Nil** (after two quarters)

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

The proportion of the County Council's non-major development applications determined within 8 weeks or within an agreed extension of time:

- Local target 80% measured over the financial year
- **Performance 100%** (5 out of 5 after two quarters)

[* For the definitions of 'major development' and 'non-major development' go to the end of the report.]

e) Delegated decisions on all applications

The proportion of all applications determined by your officers in accordance with delegated powers:

- Local target 80% measured over the financial year
- **Performance 75%** (9 out of 12 after two quarters)

4. Pre-application Advice Service:

The service commenced on 1 February 2017.

- 12 requests and fee income of £4,200 (inc VAT) (after two quarters)

5. Staffing: The adoption of the Minerals Local Plan in February released three officers to do other work. One officer was seconded to the Planning Regulation Team and this has now been extended to April 2018. The offer of support to the Strategic Property Team to assist them with the capital receipts programme during 2017-18 has not so far been taken up, however some planning support has been given to the County Farms team. Meanwhile, although the total number of minerals, waste and county development applications is down: the approval of details remains similar to previous years; the number of planning consultations has doubled; the paid for pre-application service is generating additional work and income; and, preparatory work on the review of the Waste Local Plan has commenced. As a consequence the staffing requirement of the team is being kept under review.

6. Recommendation: That the report be noted.

Background

7. Performance in planning policy-making and planning development control is reported on an annual basis with an update at six 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 six months from 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017.

Planning policy-making performance

9. The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Waste Local Plan was adopted in March 2013 and so the 5-year review is due in 2018. Preparatory work on the review of the plan has now commenced. This work will help us determine the extent of the review that is required. The adopted plan is available on our '[Waste Local Plan](#)' web page.

Planning development control performance

10. Appendix 2 provides a summary of performance after two quarters in 2017-18.
11. Appendix 3 provides a comparison after two quarters in the previous two years.
12. The numbers and commentary on the major and non-major development decisions:

a) Speed of major development decisions

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

- National target - 60% (measured over a two year period - October 2015 to September 2017)
- **Performance 96%** (50 out of 52)
- Local target - 70% (measured over the financial year)
- **Performance - 100%** (7 out of 7 after two quarters)

b) Quality of major development decisions

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

- National target -10% (measured over a two year period - April 2015 to March 2017)
- **Performance - 1%** (1 out of 67)
- Local target - 5% (measured over the financial year)

- **Performance - Nil** (0 out of 7 after two quarters)

Commentary: The proportion of the mineral and waste applications determined on time, or within an agreed extension of time, remains high and the proportion of those decisions appealed, let alone overturned on appeal, remains very low as we continue to try to resolve outstanding matters before reaching a decision. However the number of mineral and waste applications determined after two quarters is half that of the same period in the previous two years (7 compared to 15) (see Appendix 3). The number of applications received in the same period has dropped from 30 in 2015-16, to 17 last year and to 12 so far this year. The number of other submissions received has also dropped from around 60 in the previous 2 years to just below 50. No appeals have been made against decisions so far this year.

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

The proportion 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 - Nil** (after two quarters)

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

The proportion of the non-major development applications determined within 8 weeks or within an agreed extension of time:

- Local target - 80% (measured over the financial year)
- **Performance 100%** (5 out of 5 after two quarters)

Commentary: The proportion of County Council applications determined on time, or within within an agreed extension of time, remained at 100% as we continue to resolve outstanding matters with the applicant before reaching a decision. The number of County Council major development applications is generally low, however none have been determined so far this year, compared to 2 and 4 in the previous two years (see Appendix 3). The number of non-major County Council development applications continues the downward trend of recent years as more schools are now independently funded (see Appendix 3). The total number of County Council applications received has also declined from 11 and 13 in the same period in the previous two years to 8 so far this year.

[Note: The County Council's major development applications 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. Non-major applications typically involve much smaller projects e.g. additional classrooms at schools and new barns on the County Farms.]

e) **Delegated decisions on all applications**

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

- Local target - 80% (measured over the financial year)
- Performance - **75%** (9 out of 12 after two quarters)

Commentary: The proportion of applications dealt with by your officers under delegated powers is below the target. More generally, the total number of applications dealt with has dropped from nearly 30 two years ago, to 23 last year and less than half of that number so far this year (see Appendix 3). However, the total number of matters dealt with by your officers (applications, the review of old mineral permissions, submissions of detail, applications for non-material amendments and consultations from the districts), is just over 120 which is similar to the number in the same period in the previous two years. For more details refer to the 'Quarterly Performance Reports' published on our Staffordshire Planning '[A to Z of Planning](#)' web page ('P' for Performance).

[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.]

Pre-application Advice Service

13. The service commenced on 1 February 2017.
 - 12 requests and fee income of £4,200 (inc VAT) (after two quarters)

Staffing update

14. The primary policy-making work of the team ended with the adoption of the Minerals Local Plan in February 2017 which released three officers to do other work. One officer was temporarily seconded to the Planning Regulation Team in April. This secondment has recently been extended until April 2018. The offer of support to the Strategic Property Team to assist them with the capital receipts programme during 2017-18 has not so far been taken up, however some planning support has been given to the County Farms teams. The review of the Waste Local Plan, the Local Aggregates Assessment and Annual Monitoring Reports, will generate new policy work for the team in the next twelve months.
15. Although the total number of minerals, waste and county development applications is down: the approval of details remains similar to previous years; the number of planning consultations has doubled (51 compared to 23 and 20); and, the paid for pre-application service is generating additional work and income.

16. As a consequence of the above, the staffing requirements of the team is being kept under review.

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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.

A 'non-major development' is defined in the [Town and Country Planning \(Section 62A Applications\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#) as an application which is not 'major development'

List of Background Papers

- Planning Committee – 1 June 2017 - Planning, Policy and Development Control - Annual Performance Report ([see agenda item 5](#))
- '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. Funds to cover the cost of appeals would need to be found from the County Council's contingencies. The review of the Waste Local Plan will require funds to cover the cost of the examination of the updated plan by an Independent Inspector appointed by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

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 (after two quarters)

	Target Description	Target (Local)	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Performance (final outturn)
National	Speed of 'major development' decisions*	60% (70%)	100% 6 out of 6	100% 1 out of 1			100% 7 out of 7
National	Quality of 'major development' decisions**	10% (5%)	Nil 0 out of 6	Nil 0 out of 1			Nil 0 out of 7
Local	Speed of the County Council's own 'non-major development' decisions	(80%)	100% 1 out of 1	100% 4 out of 4			100% 5 out of 5
Local	Speed of the County Council's own 'major development' decisions	(80%)	Nil	Nil			Nil
Local	Applications determined under delegated powers	(80%)	83% 5 out of 7	80% 4 out of 5			75% 9 out of 12

* 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 'major development'.

Appendix 3

Planning Development Control – Half Year Performance – 2017-18

Comparison with the previous two years

Year	National (Local Target)	Performance
Speed of 'major development' decisions		
2017-18	60% (70%)	100%
		7 out of 7
2016-17	50% inc to 60% (70%)	93%
		14 out of 15*
2015-16	30% inc to 50% (70%)	100 %
		15 out of 15
Speed of the County Council's own 'non-major development' decisions		
2017-18	(80%)	100 %
		5 out of 5
2016-17	(80%)	100 %
		4 out of 4
2015-16	80%	100 %
		12 out of 12
Speed of the County Council's own 'major development' decisions		
2017-18	80%	Nil
		Nil
2016-17	80%	100 %
		4 out of 4
2015-16	80%	100 %
		2 out of 2
Applications determined under delegated powers		
2017-18	80%	75%
		9 out of 12
2016-17	80%	83%
		19 out of 23
2015-16	80%	90%
		26 out of 29