

Local Members
N/A

Planning Committee – 02 December 2021

Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

Planning, Policy and Development Control Team Annual and Half Year Performance Report

Purpose of the Report

This delayed report is to inform the Planning Committee about our planning policy-making and planning development control performance and related matters during the previous financial year (2020-21) and first half of this 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 published our 16th [Annual Monitoring Report \(AMR\)](#) in December 2020. The AMR concluded that there was no immediate need to update our Minerals or Waste Local Plans. We intend to publish our 17th AMR shortly.

Planning development control performance - 2020-21

- a) Speed - major development decisions
96% (23 out of 24)
- b) Quality – major development decisions overturned at appeal
Nil (0 out of 24)
- c) Speed - County Council's 'non-major development' decisions
100% (7 out of 7)
- d) Speed - County Council's major development decisions
Nil (0 out of 0)
- e) Delegated decisions
87% (27 out of 31)

Planning development control performance - 2021-22 (Q1 and Q2)

- a) Speed - major development decisions
100% (6 out of 6)
- b) Quality – major development decisions overturned at appeal
Nil (0 out of 6)
- c) Speed - County Council’s ‘non-major development’ decisions
100% (5 out of 5)
- d) Speed - County Council’s major development decisions
Nil (0 out of 0)
- e) Delegated decisions
82% (9 out of 11)

Staffing, Caseload and our new IT System

The Team are still feeling the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic but in spite of this, supported by a recent temporary recruitment, we have managed to maintain our good performance. Plans to provide more resilience are in the pipeline for next year and further team resource planning will be considered following the publication of the Regeneration and Planning Bill in early Spring 2022 to ensure the balance between Development Management and plan-making functions are on a more sustainable footing for 2022/23.

In 2020-21 the total number of cases received (applications, submissions and consultations) was up compared to the previous two years (165 compared to 136 and 215). Notably the number of applications has remained around 30 for the past few years but submissions of detail were up last year (85 compared to 60).

At the end of Q2 in 2021-22 the total number of cases received (applications, submissions and consultations) was down compared to the same period in the previous two years (66 compared to 87 and 74). Notably the number of mineral / waste applications received is about half what it was at the same point in the previous two years (8 compared to 17 and 17).

We also went live with our new cloud-based IT system supplied by Agile Applications Ltd in July 2021. The project involved the mapping and migration of about 9,000 records and about 100,000 associated documents. For the first time we are connected to receive applications direct from the National Planning Portal. The system also supports new web pages to [view and comment on planning applications](#) and to support our [pre-application advice service](#).

Background

Performance in planning policy-making and planning development control is normally reported after the end of the financial year with an update after 6 months. This is delayed report is about the previous financial year (2020-21) and first half of this year (2021-2022).

Planning policy-making performance

We reported to the Planning Committee in December 2020 that we had completed our 16th [Annual Monitoring Report](#) (AMR) for the period April 2019 to March 2020. The AMR 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.

We are currently finalising our 17th AMR.

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 its planning reform white paper.

Planning development control performance

[Appendix 2](#) provides a summary of performance by quarter in 2020-21.

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

The number of mineral and waste development decisions made during the 2020-21 was almost the same as the year before but down on that two years ago (23 compared to 24 and 31).

The overall total number of cases received (applications, submissions and consultations) was up compared to the previous two years (165 compared to 136 and 215). Notably the number of applications received has remained around 30 for the past few years but submissions of detail were up last year (85 compared to 60).

[Appendix 4](#) provides a summary of performance in Q1 and Q2 of 2021-22

At the end of Q2 in 2021-22 the total number of cases received (applications, submissions and consultations) was down compared to the same period in the

previous two years (66 compared to 87 and 74). Notably the number of mineral / waste applications received is about half what it was at the same point in the previous two years (8 compared to 17 and 17).

Staffing and our new IT system

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

The Team are still feeling the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic but in spite of this, supported by a recent temporary recruitment, we have managed to maintain our good performance. Plans to provide more resilience are in the pipeline for next year and further team resource planning will be considered following the publication of the Regeneration and Planning Bill in early Spring 2022 to ensure the balance between Development Management and plan-making functions are on a more sustainable footing for 2022/23.

We also went live with our new cloud-based IT system supplied by Agile Applications Ltd in July 2021. The project involved the mapping and migration of about 9,000 records and about 100,000 associated documents. For the first time we are connected to receive applications direct from the National Planning Portal. The system also supports new web pages to [view and comment on planning applications](#) and to support our [pre-application advice service](#).

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 2020-21 - Planning Committee Report – 3 December 2020 ([see Committee agenda - item 95](#))
- [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.

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 (the total accumulated at the end of 2020-21 was just over £75,000).

The temporary recruitment is being funded from a Covid related budget.

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- 2020-21

	Target Description	Target (Local)	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Performance (final outturn)
National	Speed of 'major development' decisions	60% (90%)	100% 7 out of 7	100% 3 out of 3	100% 9 out of 10	100% 4 out of 4	96% 23 out of 24
	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% 2 out of 2	100% 2 out of 2	Nil 0 out of 0	100% 7 out of 7
	Speed of the County Council's own 'major development' decisions	(80%)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Applications determined under delegated powers	(80%)	100% 10 out of 10	100% 5 out of 5	67% 8 out of 12	100% 4 out of 4	87% 27 out of 31

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 – 2020-21

	<u>National</u> (Local Target)	
Speed of 'major development' decisions		
2020-21	60% (90%)	96% 23 out of 24
2019-20	60% (90%)	100% 23 out of 23
2018-19	60% (70%)	100% 31 out of 31
Speed of the County Council's own 'non-major development' decisions		
2020-21	(90%)	100% 7 out of 7
2019-20	(90%)	100% 13 out of 13
2018-19	(80%)	100% 11 out of 11
Speed of the County Council's own 'major development' decisions		
2020-21	(90%)	Nil 0 out of 0
2019-20	(90%)	100% 1 out of 1
2018-19	(80%)	100% 1 out of 1
Applications determined under delegated powers		
2020-21	(80%)	87% 27 out of 31
2019-20	(80%)	86% 32 out of 37
2018-19	(80%)	81% 35 out of 43

Appendix 4 Planning Development Control - Quarterly Performance– Q1 and Q2 - 2021-22

	Target Description	Target (Local)	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Performance (final outturn)
National	Speed of 'major development' decisions	60% (90%)	100% 1 out of 1	100% 5 out of 5			100% 6 out of 6
	Quality of 'major development' decisions	10% (5%)	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% 5 out of 5
	Speed of the County Council's own 'major development' decisions	(80%)	Nil	Nil			Nil
	Applications determined under delegated powers	(80%)	80% 4 out of 5	83% 5 out of 6			82% 9 out of 11