

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive	Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel	17 September 2012

PERFORMANCE FOCUS: PLANNING CONTEXT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To provide contextual information and initial questions for focus to the performance panel for planning performance.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the context and questions be discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny performance panel, with a view to understanding performance.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Strong Family Support		Education and Jobs	
Being Healthy		Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Neighbourhoods	
Safe Respectful Communities		Quality Community Services and Spaces	
Vibrant Local Economy		Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages	
A Council that is a consistently Top Performing Organisation and Delivers Excellent Value for Money			x

BACKGROUND

- In its terms of reference, the overview and scrutiny performance panel agreed that at each meeting, as well as considering performance reports, one area of service delivery would be identified for a focus at the meeting. For the September meeting, planning performance has been selected.
- This report provides contextual information about the current performance in planning, and suggests some questions for initial discussion. This will enable the panel and relevant officers and Members to prepare in advance of the meeting.

PERFORMANCE CONTEXT

- Planning processing performance for minor and other applications has dropped in 2012/13 following excellent performance in 2011/12. Both indicators were off target at the end of

quarter one, and performance has dropped again in July. The table below shows the latest performance indicator information.

Indicator Name	Polarity	Target	Quarter 1 12/13	July 12	Direction of Travel
Processing of Major planning applications	Bigger is better	70%	73.33%	76.47%	↑
Processing of Minor planning applications	Bigger is better	65%	52.63%	50%	↓
Processing of Other planning applications	Bigger is better	80%	75.35%	72.77%	↓

7. The council takes part in regular benchmarking with its statistical nearest neighbours group, to compare performance in a range of performance indicators. The tables below show the council's performance compared to its nearest neighbours, based on the performance in the first quarter.

8. NI 157a - Processing of major planning applications			
Rank	Authority	2011/12 Year End	2012/13
			Qtr 1
1	Broxtowe	66.67%	100%
	High Peak	77.77%	100%
	St Edmundsbury	--	100%
	Amber Valley	--	100%
4	Newark & Sherwood	63.92%	91.67%
5	North Warwickshire	50%	87.50%
6	Gedling	71%	75%
7	Chorley	69.81%	73.33%
8	East Staffordshire	74%	56%
9	Wellingborough	54%	50%
	Kettering	45%	50%

NI 157b - Processing of minor planning applications			
Rank	Authority	2011/12 Year End	2012/13
			Qtr 1
1	East Staffordshire	92%	95%
2	Broxtowe	89.56%	92.11%
3	High Peak	87.77%	87.50%
4	North Warwickshire	72.19%	85.71%
5	Gedling	83%	79.05%
6	Newark & Sherwood	71.83%	78.67%
7	Amber Valley	--	72.46%
8	Chorley	71.43%	52.63%
9	St Edmundsbury	--	49%
10	Wellingborough	75%	48%
11	Kettering	79.67%	45%

NI 157c - Processing of other planning applications			
Rank	Authority	2011/12 Year End	2012/13
			Qtr 1
1	East Staffordshire	98%	99%
2	Broxtowe	95.06%	93.98%
3	High Peak	89.97%	92.38%
4	Gedling	88.26%	91.84%

5	Amber valley	--	84.18%
6	Newark & Sherwood	90.17%	83.67%
7	Wellingborough	84%	82%
8	North Warwickshire	78.72%	81.18%
9	Kettering	87.77%	80.17%
10	St Edmundsbury	--	80%
11	Chorley	89.55%	75.35%

9. As the performance for 'minor' and 'other' applications was more than 5% off target at the end of the first quarter, an action plan was prepared to set out the issues and action that would be taken to improve performance. The action plan is presented below.

Performance Indicator		Target	Performance
Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'minor'		65%	52.6%
Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'other' application types		80%	75.3%
Reason below target	The service experienced a significant increase in the volume of minor applications in April (receiving, for example, 30 in one week), and significant printing demands generated from safeguarded land applications. There have been issues, such as printing and indexing, that have impacted on the service's ability to easily and effectively process applications as they are received. As the target timescales for these types of applications are relatively short (at 8 weeks), issues such as these can easily impact on performance.		
Actions required	A number of measures have been put in place including additional staffing, workflow modifications, management controls and temporary ICT fixes. The Enterprise module to improve the ability to monitor and manage workflow is due for implementation 17 July. It is expected that the performance will improve during the next quarter, but that the minor performance target will not be reached during quarter two because of the impact of this quarter.		

10. Despite the current performance issues, customer satisfaction with the service is high, at 85.7% at the end of July.

QUESTIONS

11. To support those involved at the meeting to prepare, and to aid discussion, some initial questions to be addressed are set out below:
- Performance at the end of July is not starting to improve as hoped. Please provide an update on:
 - The reasons why performance remains lower than anticipated?
 - How the corrective action, reported at the end of quarter one is impacting on performance?
 - What additional corrective action could be being taken to improve performance?
 - What is the current situation, if known?
 - In previous years, Urban Vision has been used to help manage peaks in service demand and therefore planning performance. Has this option been considered this year to deal with the increase in volume and why?
 - Following on from the review of the service carried out in 2010/11, colleagues in other services, including HR&OD have been working with managers in the service to make

further improvements to the service. Please provide an update on this work including how it links to performance and customer satisfaction?

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

12. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area	✓	Policy and Communications	

GARY HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
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