

| Report of | Meeting | Date |
|-----------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Chief Executive | Overview and Scrutiny Performance Panel | 24 th September 2015 |

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.

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| Confidential report Please bold as appropriate | Yes | No |
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

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| Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all | | A strong local economy | |
| Clean, safe and healthy communities | | An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area | ✓ |

BACKGROUND

- In its terms of reference, the overview and scrutiny performance panel agreed that at each meeting, as well as considering performance reports, the panel have the opportunity to focus in on any specific area of service delivery. For the September meeting the panel selected planning performance.
- This report provides contextual information and suggests some initial questions to initiate discussions. This will enable the panel and relevant officers and Members to prepare in advance of the meeting.

PERFORMANCE CONTEXT

- Planning performance at the end of 2014/15 was above target for 'major' applications and off track but within threshold for 'minor' and 'other'. At the end of quarter 1 2015/16, performance for 'major' applications remains excellent however 'minor' applications are now off track and 'other' applications significantly off track.

| Indicator Name | Polarity | Target | Performance Quarter 1 | Symbol | Trend | % Change (year on year) |
|---|------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|-------|-------------------------|
| Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'major' application types | Bigger is better | 70% | 100% | ★ | ↑ | +39.99% |
| Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'minor' application types | Bigger is better | 65% | 59.61% | ▲ | ↓ | -5.88% |
| Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'other' application types | Bigger is better | 80% | 70.37% | ▲ | ↓ | -21.31% |

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.

| NI 157a - Processing of major planning applications (%) | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------|---------|
| Rank | Authority | 2014/15 | 2015/16 |
| | | Year End | Qtr 1 |
| 1 | Chorley | -- | 100 |
| 1 | Gedling | 77.8 | 100 |
| 1 | Kettering | 77.27 | 100 |
| 1 | North Warwickshire | 94 | 100 |
| 5 | East Northamptonshire | 89 | 90 |
| 6 | High Peak | 82 | 88 |
| 7 | East Staffordshire | 90 | 85 |
| 8 | Bassetlaw | 93.18 | 84.62 |
| 9 | Broxtowe | 61 | 50 |

| NI 157b - Processing of minor planning applications (%) | | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------|---------|
| Rank | Authority | 2014/15 | 2015/16 |
| | | Year End | Qtr 1 |
| 1 | Kettering | 76.71 | 100 |
| 2 | Broxtowe | 87 | 96 |
| 3 | High Peak | 77 | 90 |
| 4 | Bassetlaw | 87.7 | 89.87 |
| 5 | East Northamptonshire | 72 | 77 |
| 6 | East Staffordshire | 97 | 74 |
| 7 | North Warwickshire | 55 | 72 |
| 8 | Chorley | -- | 60 |

| | | | |
|----------|---------|------|----|
| 9 | Gedling | 63.6 | 55 |
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| NI 157c - Processing of other planning applications (%) | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Rank | Authority | 2014/15 Year End | 2015/16 |
| | | | Qtr 1 |
| 1 | Kettering | 88.89 | 100 |
| 2 | Broxtowe | 93 | 95 |
| 3 | Bassetlaw | 91.75 | 90.16 |
| 4 | High Peak | 78 | 90 |
| 4 | North Warwickshire | 84 | 90 |
| 6 | East Northamptonshire | 86 | 89 |
| 7 | East Staffordshire | 99 | 81 |
| 8 | Chorley | -- | 70 |
| 9 | Gedling | 73.6 | 65 |

8. 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' application types | 65.0% | 59.61% |
| Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'other' application types | 80.0% | 70.37% |
| Reason below target | <p>On 28 November 2014, the Government issued new advice within the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) on Section 106 Planning Obligations which provides that 'tariff style' planning contributions should not be sought from developments of 10 units or less, and which have a maximum combined gross floorspace of no more than 1,000 square metres. Prior to this Officers were given delegated authority to impose section 106 agreements on applications of 1 or 2 dwellings, with applications of 3 or more referred to Committee. Following the new Government advice, delegated authority was removed from Officers and all applications were therefore referred to Committee before the section 106 process could be started. This has therefore had an impact on the length of time taken to process these types of applications although where possible extensions to time were agreed with the applicant.</p> <p>There have also been performance issues with regard to the external supplier of the householder planning application service which was intended to relieve the pressure due to a vacancy within the planning team.</p> | |
| Action required | <p>The outcome of the legal challenge has now been released and Officer delegated powers are to be returned, this will in turn remove the need for a significant proportion of applications to be referred through Chairs brief to Committee.</p> <p>There is however an accumulation of applications where applicants and agents</p> | |

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| | <p>were waiting for the outcome of the legal challenge and it should be noted that this could have an effect on performance during quarter two.</p> <p>The staffing vacancy has now been advertised and is expected to be established within the next two months; the external provider has been reproached and closer supervision is being taken by them, including the allocation of a more senior officer to undertake the work.</p> |
| Trend: | Performance at the end of quarter one 2014/15 was 63.33% for 'minor' and 89.42% for 'other'. |

9. Despite performance being off track, customer satisfaction with the planning service is currently high, 83.3% at the end of June 2015.

Data Quality

10. In early 2015, the council's internal audit team carried out a review of data quality within the planning service which considered data management, collection and reporting protocols. On concluding the review, a controls assurance rating of 'red 8' was awarded which indicates a critical impact on the council should systems fail with adequate controls in place but opportunity for improvement. The final audit report included an action plan to achieve the necessary improvements in data quality.
11. Planning indicators are reported on a monthly basis through the council performance management system although no data has been formally entered since April 2015 for key indicators. The availability of complete, accurate and timely data is important in supporting customer care, corporate governance, management, decision making, service planning, accountability and transparency. A lack of regular performance reporting prevents the monitoring of trends and early identification of service delivery issues.

QUESTIONS:

- a) Please provide an update on the current situation with regard to performance.
- Has the corrective action identified at the end of quarter 1 taken effect?
 - Has the performance of the external supplier improved as a result of the measures put in place?
 - Is any action being taken to address the back log of applications and prevent further deterioration in performance in quarter 2?
- b) The data quality audit identified inaccuracies in the data being input into the performance management system.
- What has been done to rectify this and how confident are you in the current quality of the data being reported?
- c) The data quality audit also referred to working with ICT to improve monthly reporting capabilities and reduce the level of manual intervention involved in calculating the data.
- Has this action been progressed?

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

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

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

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

13. No comments

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

14. No comments

GARY HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There are no background papers to this report.

| Report Author | Ext | Date | Doc ID |
|------------------|------|------------|------------------|
| Victoria Willett | 5248 | 11/09/2015 | Planning Context |