

To the Chairman and Members of the
PLANNING REGULATORY BOARD

Date 11 May 2017

Report of the Director of Planning and Regeneration Service

ITEM NO. SUBJECT

1 Development Management Performance Report 2016-2017

Item 1

Development Management Performance Report 2016-2017

Recommendation

That the contents of the report be noted.

Background

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the current performance in relation to Development Management (DM) and the processing of planning applications.

Facts and Figures

Performance statistics for DM are measured around the speed of decision making for the three different types of application categories (Major, Minor and Other). Nationally the Government has set minimum standards for the time allowed to deal with these types of applications. These are currently set at:

Government Targets

Major	60% of applications to be determined within 13 weeks
Minor	65% of applications to be determined within 8 weeks
Other	80% of applications to be determined within 8 weeks

As part of the continuous improvement programme, DM has consistently surpassed these figures. The aim is to continue to set high performance standards to ensure that the service is efficient, accountable and reflects the desire to ensure performance is comparable to other top performing planning teams in the Country.

Type	2013 - 2014	2014 - 2015	2015 – 2016	2016-2017	Gov't Target
Major	91%	98%	100%	100%	60%
Minor	85%	91%	99%	100%	65%
Other	93%	98%	99%	100%	80%

Rotherham's planning performance on all three application types, has exceeded targets for this year. This represents a significant achievement across all three application types and demonstrates that the improvement measures incorporated into the daily workflow and the benefits of a fully electronic document management system continue to have a positive effect.

It is important that performance is maintained and monitored to ensure targets are achieved as the Government has introduced penalties for low performance by introducing measure which would require a refund of planning fees, should applications not be determined within a 26 week period.

The Government has also confirmed the introduction of the Planning Performance Guarantee and ‘Special Measures Designation’ enabling developers to bypass a Council and apply directly to the Planning Inspectorate for planning permission where that local authority has a track record of either poor performance in decision making or not acting positively to promote economic growth within its area. The thresholds for special measures designation are:

Type	2017	2018
<i>Date Range</i>	<i>Oct 2014 – Sept 2016</i>	<i>Oct 2015 – Sept 2017</i>
Major	50%	60%
Non-Major	65%	70%

Looking at the special measures designation dates for 2017 (which are published on the Government’s website for planning statistics) Rotherham Council was joint first in determining Major applications (100%) and 2nd for Non major applications (99.4%) out of 339 local authorities. The following table compares this to neighbouring Council’s statistics.

LPA	Major	Position
Rotherham	100%	1 st (joint)
Barnsley	91.1%	83 rd
Doncaster	90.4%	91 st
Sheffield	88.3%	118 th

LPA	Non Major	Position
Rotherham	99.4%	2 nd
Sheffield	86.4%	127 th
Barnsley	85.6%	142 nd
Doncaster	82.0%	200 th

The Government will also introduce further quality measures in 2018 against appeals. The threshold will be 10% decisions (as a total number of decisions on all applications made during the assessment period) being overturned at appeal. A two year assessment period ending March 2017 will be used for designation decisions in 2018.

The Government is not assessing quality in the 2017 assessment but will be introducing this in 2018 based on an assessment period from October 2015 to September 2017. As we do not have this data yet, we are unable to assess

how we have performed. The only data that is available is from October 2014 to September 2016.

Based on this information, Rotherham's figures were 2% of major development and 1% of non major development overturned at appeal. Both of these are well below the 10% threshold.

Preparing for the future

The new Housing and Planning Bill includes the provision for the processing of planning applications to be undertaken within a competitive environment. This will potentially open up the opportunity for private individuals, local firms and neighbouring Local Planning Authorities to compete to process planning applications within Rotherham. There are significant implications of this which would have to be considered but maintaining a Planning Service as an efficient and customer focussed function would minimise any risk.

Conclusion

In addition to a high level of performance demonstrated in this report, Development Management has developed a strong reputation as being "open for business" and also represents good value for money. The Service has been recognised by the Planning Advisory Service who named Rotherham as one of the 10 top performing Local Planning Authorities nationally. Going forward the aim of the service is to continue to improve and offer a good level of service to customers.