

DELEGATED

AGENDA No.

**REPORT TO PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

6th JUNE 2007

**REPORT OF HEAD OF
PLANNING**

PLANNING PERFORMANCE

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update members on the current performance of the planning department for the fourth quarter of 2006/2007, and present the final outturn figures for the year, as recommended in the PIP. An update on the current staffing situation will also be presented.

Recommendation

That planning committee note this quarterly/annual performance report.

Background

1. In terms of the processing of applications, the government established new national targets, broken down by categories of development, known as BVPI standards. It is required that all LPA reached these standards by March 2007. Members will be aware that this refers particularly to BVPI 109 a, b and c, where 60% of all major applications must be determined within 13 weeks (109a), 65% of minor within 8 weeks (109b) and 80% of others within 8 weeks (109c).
2. There are two different performance reporting periods, the first which determines the level of PDG and determines whether the authority will become a Planning Standards Authority (PSA), and the BVPI reporting year. Both have different reporting timeframes, the first running from 1st July-30th June in any one year, and the BVPI targets from 1st April-31st March.

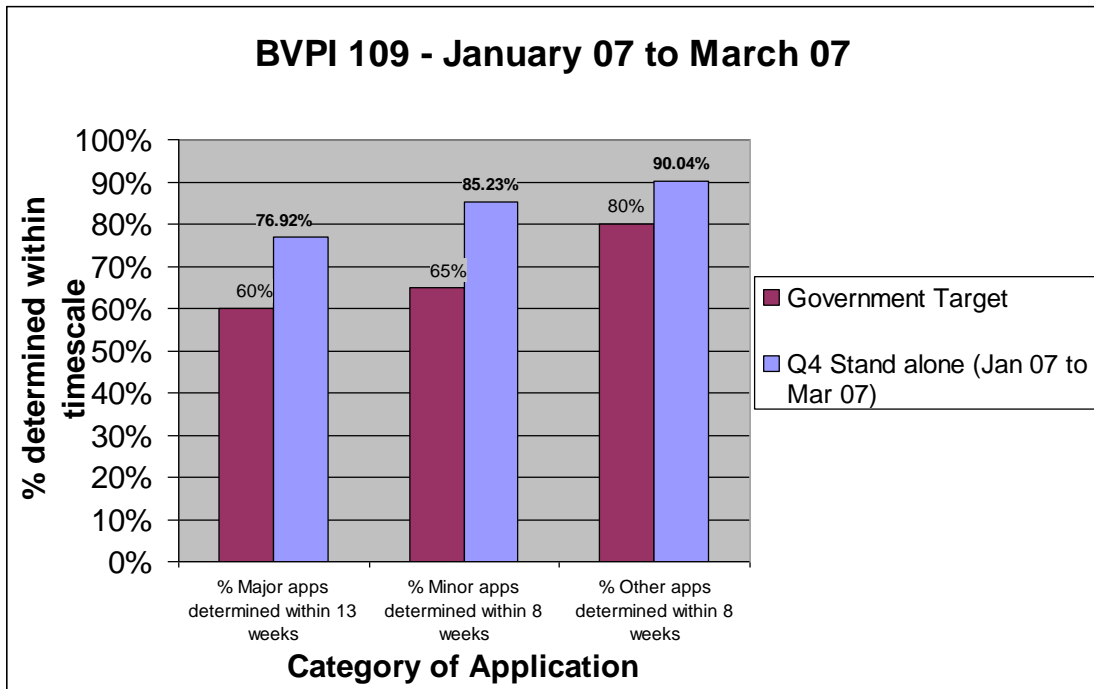
Current position

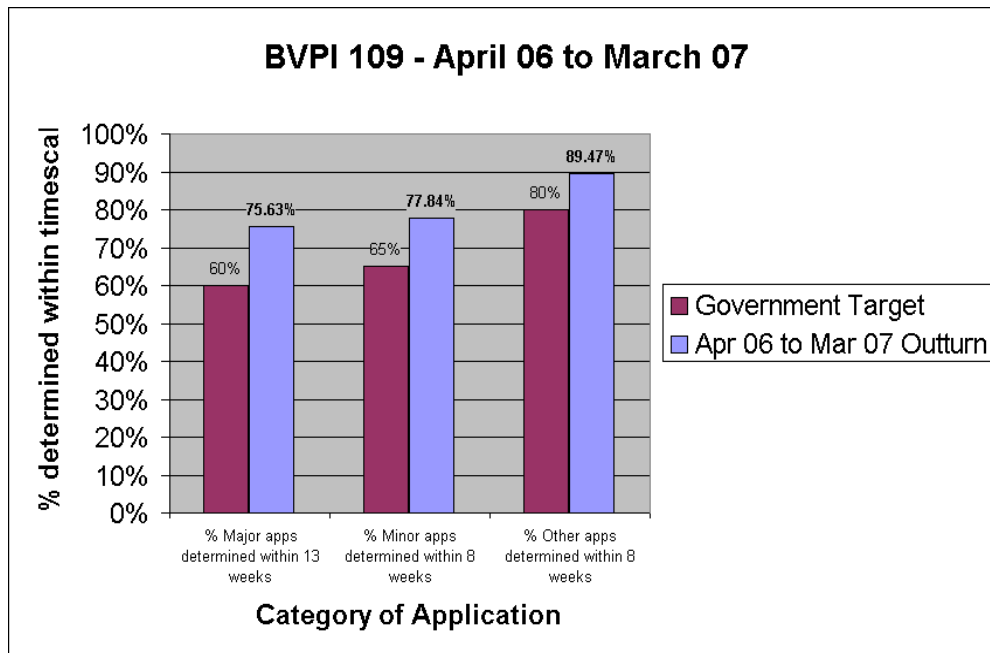
3. The BVPI 109 indicator is reported on the annual year-end results, and the final quarter of that period has now passed. Performance results achieved for that period are 76.92% for major applications, 85.23% for minor and 90.04% for others, achieving above performance in all categories. Table 1 highlights the performance over the last quarter and the cumulative performance to date, i.e. the final annual figure, which will be, reported as the BVPI performance figures.

Q4 Jan/Mar 07			Cumulative April 06/March 07		
Determined	within period	Percent	Determined	within period	Percent
26	20	76.92%	119	90	75.63%
88	75	85.23%	388	302	77.84%
271	244	90.04%	1292	1156	89.47%
			Total 1799	1548	

Table 1

4. Performance of major applications since the last quarter has risen from 67.74% to 76.92%, as the vast majority of all the old outstanding majors have been dealt with. There are now only 3 outstanding major applications that have expired still in the system, 1 of which has already been to committee and approved (Durham Tees Valley Airport), and another one, which will be determined by committee on 31st May 2007. The following 2 graphs chart the performance over the quarter and the year to date.





5. As can be seen from the annual graph above, from the position in 2005/06 where Stockton was at risk of becoming a Planning Standards Authority again, performance has hit an all time high and all 3 targets have been exceeded.
6. This has been reflected in the level of PDG allocation announced on 21st May 2007. The grant is being announced in 2 stages, Stockton being allocated £55,142 in the first round, based entirely on development control performance for the year ending June 2006. The second tranche of grants will be announced in July 2007, and again will relate to development control performance from 1st July 2006 to 31st March 2007 with a proposed bonus of £50,000 for authorities like Stockton who have met all 3 BVPI targets. In addition, the second part of the grant will also cover progress on plan-making (LDF) and sustainable development, e-planning and housing in high demand areas.
7. The grant aims to provide additional funding to enable local authorities to improve their planning resources and introduce the many changes that the government is bringing in to as part of its programme to reform planning. To encourage reinvestment, 25% of any PDG allocation must be spent on capital expenditure, which is likely to involve the replacement of 5 of the servers to continue the provision of a seamless end to end planning system.
8. From a staffing perspective, there have been 5 new members of staff appointed in the quarter, all who took up post in January 2007 as reported in the last performance update. However, since then there have been 5 members of staff who have resigned, 2 in Development Services, 2 in Spatial Planning and 1 in the administration team. In addition there is a temporary 1-year post within Spatial Planning to assist in the LDF process over the next year, and the post of Area Team Leader still to fill. Interviews will be held in the second week of June for the 6 vacant posts within planning. This turnover

of staff could effect performance levels in the future as it takes time to appoint new staff and train them.

Recommendations

That planning committee note this quarterly/annual performance report and acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Planning Staff and colleagues within other service areas to continuously improve performance and the reputation of the Council.

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Financial Implications; PDG based on performance targets reached

Environmental Implications; None directly.

Community Safety Implications; None directly.