

DELEGATED

AGENDA No.

**REPORT TO PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

DATE 22nd MAY 2008

**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 final quarter and year end performance for 2007/2008 and present an update on the current staffing situation.

Recommendation

That planning committee note this quarterly and 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 was required that all LPA reached these standards by March 2007, which Stockton Planning Services achieved. 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. The reporting timeframes for the BVPI targets runs from 1st April-31st March. This report presents the performance of the fourth quarter in that period, 1st January - 31st March 2008.

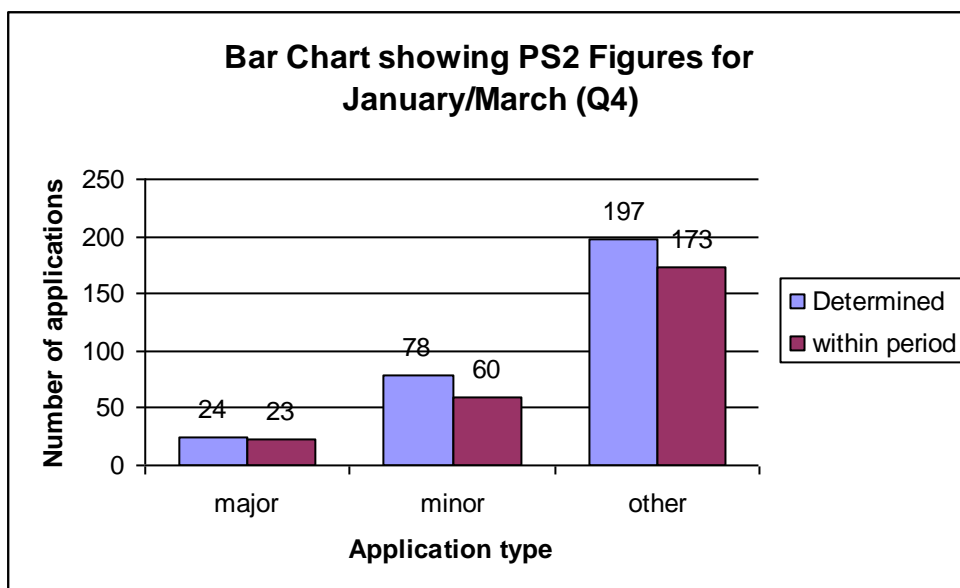
Current position

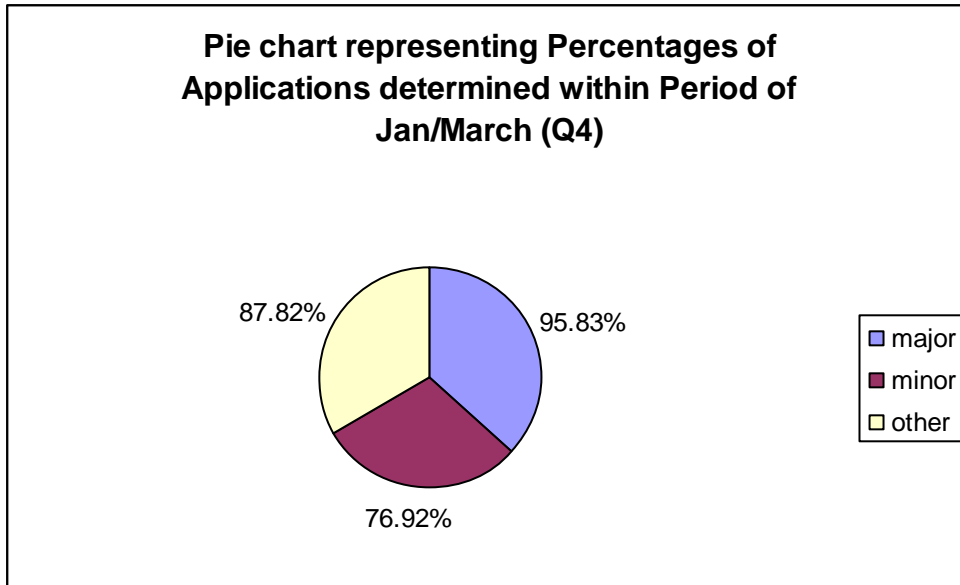
3. The BVPI 109 indicator is reported on the annual year-end results, and the final quarter of that period has now passed. Performance results achieved for that period are 95.83% for major applications, 76.92% for minor and 87.82% for others, achieving above performance in all 3 categories. Table 1 highlights the performance over the third quarter and the cumulative performance to date.

Q4 Jan-March 08			Cumulative April 07- March 08		
Determined	within period	percent	Determined	within period	percent
Major 24	23	95.83%	Major 91	84	92.31%
Minor 78	60	76.92%	Minor 384	317	82.55%
Other 197	173	87.82%	Other 1173	965	82.27%

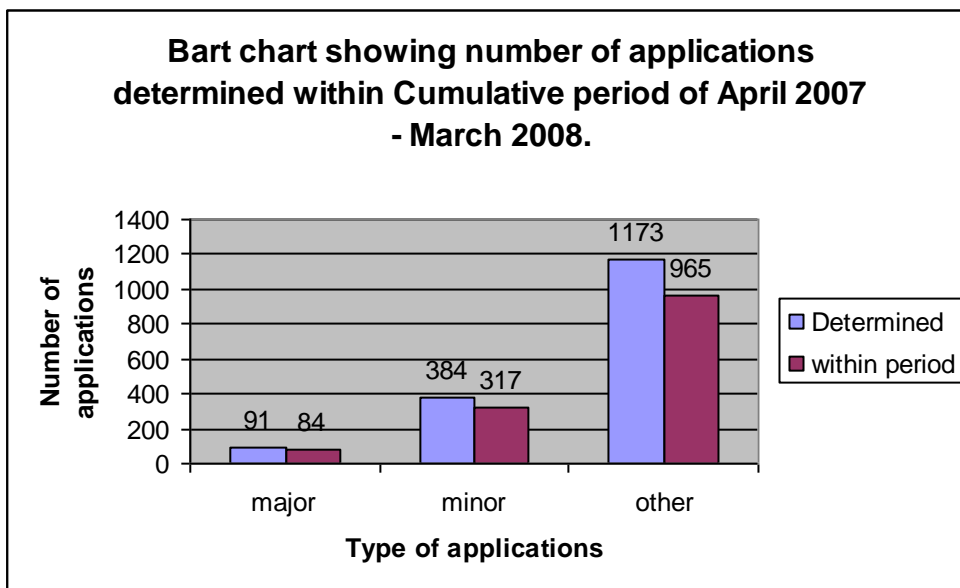
Table 1 Quarter 4 performance results

4. Performance of major applications has exceeded BVPI standards for the final quarter with 23 out of the 24 applications determined within the 13 week time period. There are now only 2 major applications that have expired still in the system, the Durham Tees Valley Airport application having already been to committee and approved in principle, but awaiting Darlington Borough Council to issue the decision notice, and the demolition and redevelopment at the Rookery in Eaglescliffe. Performance for the year as a whole was 92.31%, an outstanding achievement, and one to congratulate all planning staff and other colleagues for their dedication and hard work in achieving.
5. Performance in BVPI 109 c (other) applications has now started to rise again, following from a period of decline due to staffing issues at the time. Performance for the third quarter was 83.85% and for the final quarter 87.92%, contributing to a cumulative total of 82,55% of the applications being determined within 8 weeks, above the national target of 80%. Minor applications have fallen in the quarter by 10% but the annual figure of 82.55% is well above target.
6. The following graphs and charts highlight performance against national targets.





Quarter 4 statistics of applications determined



Cumulative year end chart of applications determined

7. However, this is the final report in which BVPI indicators will be reported as such. The old BVPI's have now been replaced National Indicators (NI). Planning will be directly responsible for 3, (NI 157, 159 and 170) and will have an impact into another 7 (NI 154, 155, 185, 186, 187, 188 and 198). Of these, 2 planning indicators have been included in the Local Area Agreement (LAA), in consultation with GONE and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) i.e. Renaissance Board. NI157 replaces BVPI 109 and is the processing of planning applications against targets which the local authority sets itself for major, minor and other applications. NI 159 relates to the supply of ready to develop housing sites, which is determined through the RSS housing numbers and the SHLAA.

8. With regards to performance, it has been the responsibility of each local authority to set their own targets, rather than sticking to the 60%, 65% and 80% from previous years, with the exception of the major target in 2010/11. For LAA purposes it will be necessary to set annual targets (for the next three years) to show the ambition to have the service improving year-on-year from a baseline position. The expectation from GONE of us as an excellent Council will be to be ambitious and stretch our performance levels.

9. The targets that have now been set for the next 3 years are as follows:-

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Major	70%	73%	75%
Minor	75%	78%	80%
Other	82%	85%	88%

10. Despite giving local authorities the ability to set individual performance targets, GONE would like Stockton to achieve 80% of major applications determined within 13 weeks by 2010/11, the target set at present being 75%. This is under review and the final figure chosen will be explained in the first report for 2008/09. Meeting or exceeding these targets no longer qualifies for Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG), but grant will be deducted instead if targets are not reached.

11. From a staffing perspective, there have been 2 appointments in the quarter to fill 2 new posts created in spatial planning, with John Dixon and Laura Edwards joining the team. Both staff members are due to start on 12th May. Development Services were unable to fill the senior planning officer post, and in April appointed one of the existing planning technicians (Ruth Hindmarsh) to the vacant planning officer post, leaving a technicians post free. This will be advertised shortly.

Recommendation

12. That planning committee note this quarterly 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, HPDG abated if targets not met

Environmental Implications; None directly.

Community Safety Implications; None directly.