

DELEGATED

AGENDA No.

**REPORT TO PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

DATE 5TH NOVEMBER 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 second quarter of 2008/2009 and present an update on the current situation in light of the credit crunch.

Recommendation

That planning committee note this quarterly 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 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 on 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.
3. 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. 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.

4. 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%

5. 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.
6. The reporting timeframe for the NI targets remains and runs from 1st April-31st March. This report presents the performance of the second quarter in that period, 1st July -30th September 2008.

Current performance position

7. The NI indicator is reported on the annual year-end results, and the second quarter of that period has now passed. Performance results achieved for that period are 100.00% for major applications, 90.182% for minor and 88.89% for others, achieving above performance in all 3 categories. Table 1 highlights the performance over the first 2 quarters of this year.

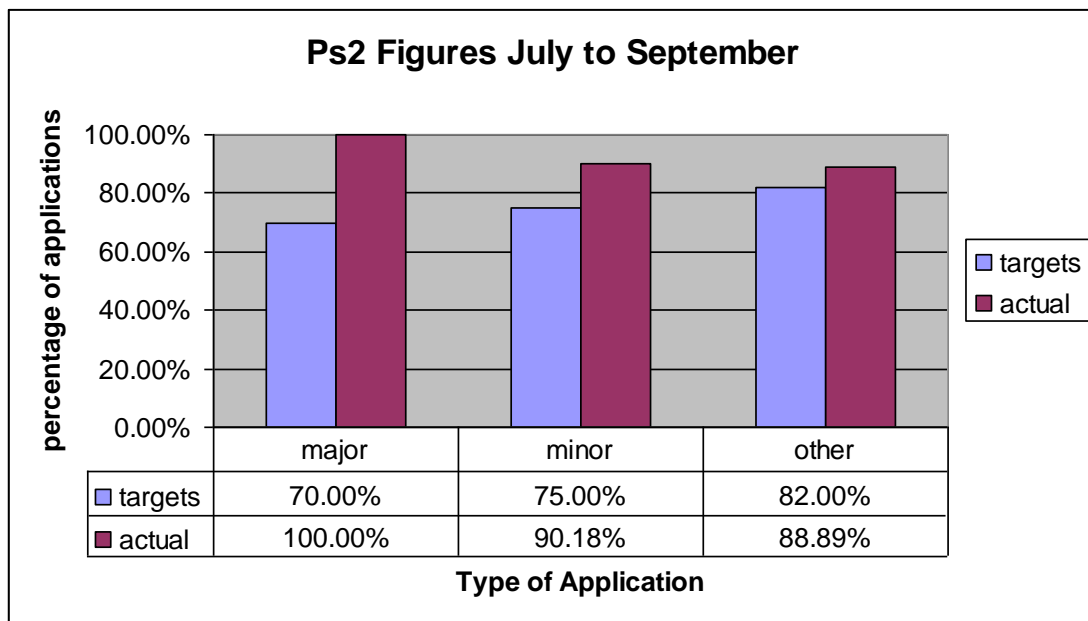
Table 1 Quarter 1/2 performance results

Q1 April/June 2008			Q2 July/Sept 2008		
Determined	within period	percent	Determined	within period	percent
Major 22	21	95.45%	26	26	100.00%
Minor 84	68	80.95%	112	101	90.18%
Others 238	205	86.13%	306	272	88.89%

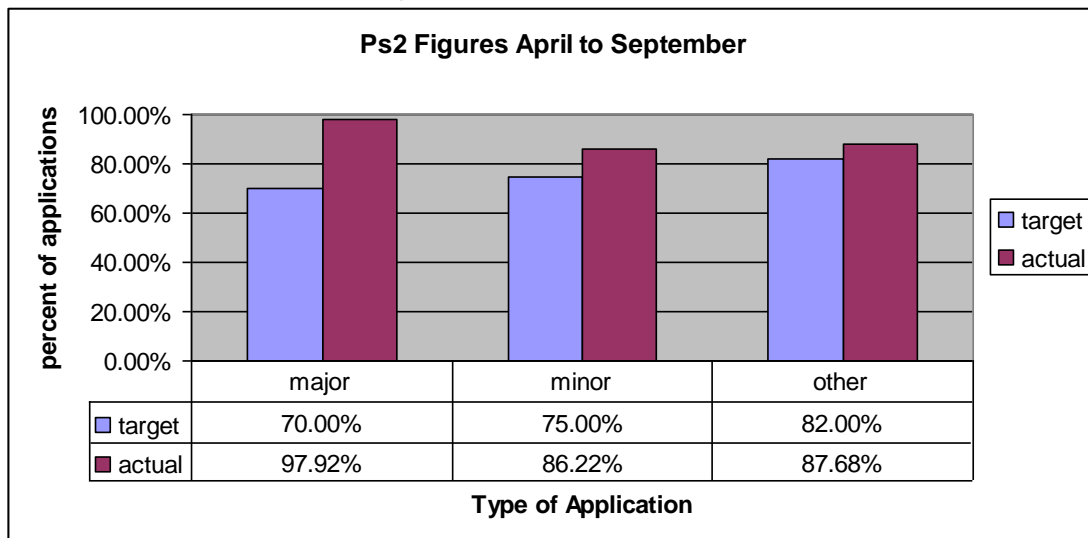
Cumulative April/September 2008		
Determined	within period	percent
Major 48	47	97.92%
Minor 196	169	86.22%
Others 544	477	87.68%

8. Performance of major applications has exceeded NI standards for the second quarter with all 26 applications determined within the 13 week time period.
9. Performance in other applications has continued at a high level, following from a period of decline due to staffing issues at the time. Performance for the final quarter of 2007/8 was 87.82%, and for the first quarter 2008/09 was 86.13% and now is up to 88.89%. Minor applications have risen in the quarter from the previous quarter from 80.95% to 90.18%.
10. The following graphs highlight performance against national targets in the quarter and cumulative in the year to date.

Quarter 2 statistics of applications determined



Cumulative statistics of first 2 quarters of 2008/09



11. From a staffing perspective, Spatial Planning have a vacant planning officer post due to the post holder accepting an appointment with Redcar and Cleveland. This post has now filled with the post holder due to start at the end of November.

Current Economic Climate

12. The current “credit crunch” has had an impact on both the number of planning applications received during the first 6 months compared to the same period last year, and the level of income. In the year to date, from 1st April – 30th September, there have been 1090 applications received, compared to 963 applications in the same period last year, a drop of 12% overall. This is reflected in a reduction in the level of income, although there was an increase in planning fees from 1st April 2008. Added to this are the changes to the GPDO, which mean that in the future there will be fewer householder applications submitted as many forms of development are now classed as Permitted Development, potentially leading to an additional 10% drop in the number of such applications received. It is anticipated that there may be a rise in the workload of the enforcement section if complaints are received about the size and impact of new extensions which will require officers to check on site.

Recommendation

13. 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; HPDG abated if targets not met , decrease in income has budgetary implications for service delivery

Environmental Implications; None directly.

Community Safety Implications; None directly.