

**DELEGATED**

**AGENDA No.**

**REPORT TO PLANNING  
COMMITTEE**

**DATE 4<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2009**

**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 third quarter of 2008/2009 and present an update on the current situation in light of the credit crunch and expected income for 2009-2010.

**Recommendation**

That planning committee note this quarterly performance report.

**Background**

1. 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.
2. 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 was 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.
3. 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%

4. 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.
5. The reporting timeframe for the NI targets remains and runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April-31<sup>st</sup> March. This report presents the performance of the third quarter in that period, 1<sup>st</sup> September -31<sup>st</sup> December 2008.

**Current performance position**

6. The NI indicator is reported on the annual year-end results, and the third quarter of that period has now passed. Performance results achieved for that period are 94.44% for major applications, 95.83% for minor and 89.53% for others, achieving above performance in all 3 categories. Table 1 highlights the performance over the first 3 quarters of this year.

Table 1 Quarter 1/3 performance results

Determined	April/June within period	percent
Major-22	21	95.45%
Minor-84	68	80.95%
Others-238	205	86.13%

Determined	July/Sept within period	percent
Major-26	26	100.00%
Minor-112	101	90.18%
Others-306	272	88.89%

Determined	<b>Q3</b> Oct/Dec within period	percent
Major-18	17	94.44%
Minor-96	92	95.83%
Others-191	171	89.53%

	<b>Cumulative</b>	
	April/December	
Determined	within	percent
	period	
Major-66	64	96.97%
Minor-292	261	89.38%
Others-735	648	88.16%

7. Performance of major applications has exceeded NI standards for the third quarter with 17 applications determined within the 13 week time period.
8. Performance in the "other" category of 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 89.53%. Minor applications have risen in the third quarter from the previous quarter from 90.18% to 95.83%.
9. From a staffing perspective, Spatial Planning have a vacant planning officer post due to the appointed post holder withdrawing their offer, and there is still the outstanding post of senior planning officer in Development Services.

### **Current Economic Climate**

10. The "credit crunch" has had an impact on both the number of planning applications and the level of income received during the year to date. In line with other authorities throughout the country, income levels from previous years are unlikely to be achieved in 2009/2010, due to the current economic downturn and changes to the GPDO. This has led to all staff within Planning Services being asked to consider redeployment, either within the Council or externally, and for suggestions on how the service could achieve the income levels set for the next financial year. HR are working closely with staff to offer opportunities elsewhere, and give practical advice and support to those staff wishing to redeploy. The vacant post in Spatial Planning will be backfilled by a current member of staff from Development Services, and any posts vacated in admin or development services will be "frozen" until the market recovers and the workload increases.

### **Recommendation**

11. 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.**