

DELEGATED

AGENDA No.

**REPORT TO PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

DATE 22nd JULY 2009

**REPORT OF HEAD OF
PLANNING**

PLANNING PERFORMANCE AND HERITAGE AWARD

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update members on the current performance of the planning department for the first quarter of 2009/2010 and to outline the recent Heritage Award presented to the Council.

Recommendation

That planning committee note this quarterly performance report.

Background

1. There are a range of National Indicators (NI) against which the performance of the Council will be assessed, Planning being directly responsible for 3, (NI 157, 159 and 170) and having 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 relates to the processing of planning applications against targets which the local authority sets itself for major, minor and other applications and 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. For LAA purposes it was necessary to set annual targets (for a three year period) to show the ambition to have the service improving year-on-year from a baseline position. The expectation of GONE was for ambitious and stretching targets since we are an “excellent” Council
3. The targets that have now been set for the 3 year period 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, although CLG has recently announced that HPDG will be reduced by £75million over the remaining grant period.
5. The reporting timeframe for the NI targets remains and runs from 1st April-31st March. This report presents the performance of the first quarter in that period, 1st April -30th June 2009.

Current performance position

6. The NI indicator is reported on the annual year-end results, and the first quarter's results are now available. Performance results achieved for that period are 100% for major applications, 87.84% for minor and 92.09% for others, achieving above performance in all 3 categories. Table 1 and the chart highlight performance over the first quarter of the current year.

Table 1 First quarter results

Determined	April/June 2009/10 within period	percent
Major-14	14	100.00%
Minor-74	65	87.84%
Others-215	198	92.09%

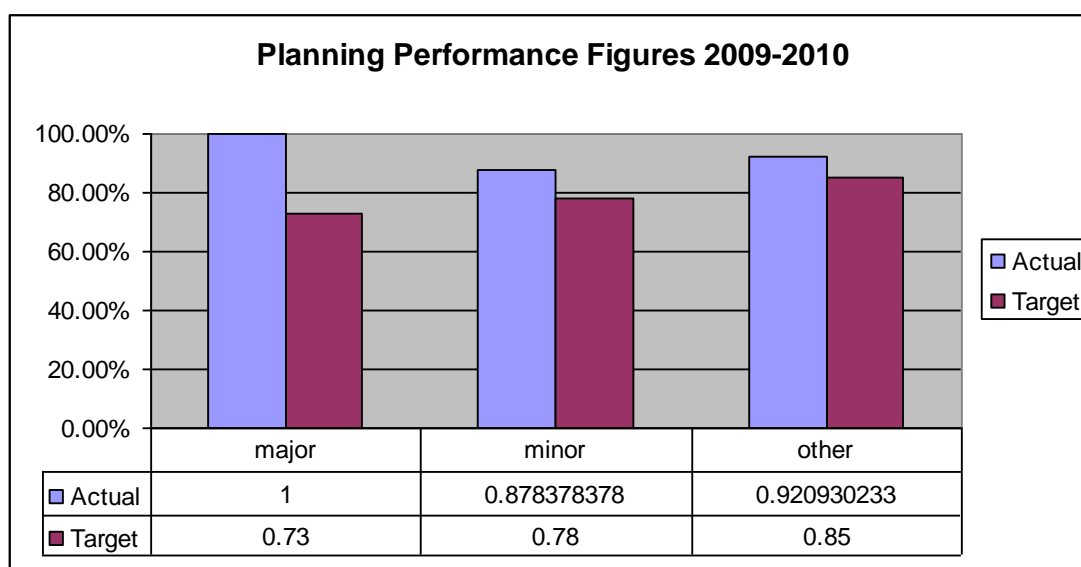


Chart of planning performance for the first quarter 2009/10

7. Performance in all categories has exceeded NI standards in the first quarter of the year, with all majors being determined in time. However the impact of the reduction in staff within Development Services is being felt by each

officer, with the workload having to be spread across fewer people. An area Team Leader has since left Development Services and has been redeployed to Spatial Planning.

English Heritage 2009 Heritage Award

8. English Heritage announced the launch of the Heritage at Risk campaign from Stockton High Street on 23rd June. The campaign is to raise awareness of how little changes to our conservation areas like paving over front gardens and using uPVC windows can cumulatively harm the character and appearance of the conservation areas. At the same time, they also announced that Stockton-on-Tees had won both the regional and national 2009 Heritage Award, with a ceremony being held in London with Baroness Andrews to mark the launch and to present Stockton with the award, a large framed print of Holy Trinity Church. The award was in recognition of our strategic approach and active commitment to promoting the wider benefits of heritage through management of the historic environment, with particular reference to Holy Trinity Church, the Forum and the SHiP project.

Recommendation

9. That planning committee note this 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 against the background of the current difficult economic circumstances and low morale.

Corporate Director, Development & Neighbourhood Services

Contact Officer: Carol Straughan

Tel: 01642 527027

carol.straughan@stockton.gov.uk

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.