



Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	20 March 2018
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Quarter 3 2017/18 Performance Report – Planning, Development and Regeneration
Contact:	Cllr Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration James Doe, Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regeneration
Purpose of report:	To report on service performance for the third quarter of 2017/18, and to provide an update on the Operational Risk Register.
Recommendations	That the report be noted.
Corporate objectives:	The report focuses on the service plan for the area and key performance indicators. All corporate objectives are therefore relevant.
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> None arising directly from this report.
'Value For Money Implications'	<u>Value for Money</u> None arising directly from this report.
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment completed as part of the service plan.
Equalities Implications	None arising from this report.

Health And Safety Implications	None arising from this report.
Consultees:	<p>Cllr Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration.</p> <p>Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director for Housing and Regeneration</p> <p>Andrew Horner, Group Manager for Development Management and Planning</p> <p>Chris Taylor, Group Manager for Strategic Planning and Regeneration</p>
Background papers:	<p>Planning and Regeneration Service Plan 2016-18</p> <p>Performance information held on the Rocket system.</p>

Introduction

1. The report provides information on performance of the Planning, Development and Regeneration service for the third quarter of the business year 2017/18, from the start of October to the end of December.
2. In summary, performance remains good, though there are exceptions in respect of Building Control and Local Land Charges fee income, and lower quarterly performance in one area of planning enforcement and planning appeals. Planning validation, which has been under-performing for some time now, is improving though still registering red for this quarter.

Performance Indicators

3. Building Control. The service is undergoing a transitional phase as experienced staff left for other positions at the end of 2017, with the vacancies occupied by agency staff. Since January interim management of the service has been provided on a part-time basis by the Watford Borough Council Building Control Manager through a service level agreement. In addition, there are three trainees within the service who are directly employed by DBC.
4. The key indicator results were just below target at 96% of building regulations applications determined within two months of receipt (BC01).
5. Income from the Building Control service is remains running below target by around £41,000, though the gap has narrowed from quarter 2 when it stood at £53,000. (FIN15). Generally, the number of applications submitted to the service continues up, but with less larger, higher value work.
6. Development Management. Workload (DMP02) continues to remain high with 532 applications received during the quarter, up from the 474 applications received in quarter 2.

7. Planning fee income (FIN16) remains very strong with just over £698,000 collected this quarter, over £126,000 ahead of target. This continues to be due to the receipt of major planning applications which attract large fees.
8. Processing times for planning applications (DMP04, 05 and 06) continues to remain strong.
9. For major planning applications, 75% of applications determined were processed within the statutory timescale or with agreed extensions of time, considerably above the target of 60%, reflecting well on the need to process the larger developments efficiently (please note this as an update to the performance report attached at Appendix 1).
10. Just under 79% of Minor applications were approved on time – ahead of the 65% target and up for last quarter's performance of 72%.
11. The 'other' category of applications – the bulk of the service's workload – ended the quarter at 89%, again with the 80% target met and up from 84% last quarter.
12. The refusal rate for planning applications continues to remain low, with only 5.67% of applications refused, well ahead of the 10% target (DMP07).
13. There was a dip in quarter three for planning appeals, with the success rate at 60% of cases dismissed (DMP30), below the 70% target. There were only five cases determined at appeal this quarter, compared to 13 cases in quarter 2 and ten in quarter 1. A lower base level will always make the indicator result more volatile, and the end year performance will be the most important. For the year to date, a total of 22 out of 27 cases have been dismissed by Planning Inspectors making a success rate for DBC of 81%.
14. The time taken to validate planning applications (DMP08) has improved but remained in the red category for quarter 3. For the quarter, against a target of validating 70% of applications within 3 days, 41% was achieved, but up from 34% in the previous quarter. Changes have been made to the processing of applications for validation with efforts to clear the backlog since the start of 2018 there has been a sustained improvement. The monthly outcome for February was at target with 70% of applications validated within 3 days of receipt.
15. Planning Enforcement. By way of update to the performance report at Appendix 1, 100% of Priority 1 cases were visited within one working day of notification (PE01). Workload in the service has risen quite sharply at 144 cases up from 118 cases in quarter 2. This has impacted on performance on visiting Priority 2 cases within 10 working days (83% against a target of 100%) and Priority 3 cases within 15 working days (97% against the same target).
16. The budget for 2018/19 for the Planning service contains proposals for additional resource within the enforcement team to help meet increasing demands on the service. A service objective for next year will be to review the Local Enforcement Plan which sets out the Council's approach to, and services standards for, planning enforcement. This will be a matter for Cabinet to approve in due course.

17. Land Charges. Performance remains within target at 8.28 days to process property searches against the target of ten days. Income is however approximately £41,000 below anticipated target at the end of December 2017 at just over £177,000 received in search fees (FIN15).
18. The decline in income is due to a slowing of the property market, with officers receiving feedback from other authorities in the County over a decline in workload. Monitoring carried out by the service confirms that business is not being lost to the private sector through personal search companies, and if anything in January and February 2018, their market share has declined whereas the Council's has increased.

Operational Risk Register

19. The risk register is at appendix 2, and this remains unchanged. Questions on the register are invited at the meeting.