

AGENDA ITEM:
SUMMARY



Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	8 September 2015
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Quarter 1 2015-2016 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 first quarter of 2015/16.
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>Steve Clark, Interim 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 2013-2015</p> <p>Performance information held on the CorVu system.</p>

1. This is the first of four reports the Committee will receive this year providing information and analysis of the agreed performance measures for the Planning, Development and Regeneration Service.
2. The quarterly report from the CorVu system is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' information. The style of these covering reports to the Committee is to focus on exceptions to performance – mainly where targets have not been met, but particularly good performance over a quarterly period will be highlighted to the Committee's attention also.
3. These reports are set out by specific service areas within the wider service grouping.
4. Starting with Development Management, the end of year report for 2014/15 to the Committee on 9 June 2015 explained there had been a 40% rise in planning and related applications over that year. This level (DMP02) remains high at 659 applications this quarter and only marginally down on that for Q4 of the previous year.
5. Speed of processing planning and related applications (DMP04,05,06) has been varied. Though there has been a big improvement in the processing of major planning applications (DMP04), the 'minor' and 'other categories (DMP05 and 06 respectively) remain below target.
6. For minor developments, the position from end of year 2014/15 is largely unchanged with performance 13% below target, though this is an improvement on Q4. The 'others' category is 16.5% below target.
7. In the end of year report it was explained that the Development Management service had undergone a high degree of staff turnover, but was now fully staffed following successful recruitment. New staff are understandably taking time to settle into an efficient turnaround of case work in a new environment, with a degree of this inherent delay falling into Q1 of this year.

8. Also, efforts have been made to clear the backlog of a number of historic cases, which has now been largely cleared. This will help the performance of the service in the rest of the coming year.
9. Other measures of note are as follows. There has been a rise in the number and proportion of planning refusals being appealed against to the Planning Inspectorate (DMP03), being just over the target level of 30%. This is not an indicator that the Council can directly control, but it does illustrate the appetite for applicants to exercise their right to appeal and is a reflection in part on the quality and soundness of decision making. Historically this has not been an issue for Dacorum BC, as our appeal success rates are very good, but this is a measure that needs to be kept under review.
10. The validation of planning applications upon their receipt by the Council (DMP08) is performing relatively well but a little under the target of 75% being processed in 3 working days at 70%. Workload remains very high and there were IT problems in June which contributed to the slight dip in performance.
11. In terms of planning fee income (FIN16) this is only slightly below the targeted profile of income trajectory by some £8,500. At this early stage in the year it is my view this is not a cause for concern.
12. For Building Control, performance remains strong though this is a service subject to staff shortages and high levels of turnover. This is a result of a strong building industry at the current time and shortage of professionals in this part of the employment market. Income levels for Building Control (FIN15) are over £10k above profiled target.
13. In Local Land Charges, casework (LC03) continues to grow with 703 searches submitted as opposed to 633 in Q4 of 2104/15. Search fees income (FIN17) is over £6,000 in excess of budget profile. High workloads are still impacting on speed of processing (LC04) which ran at 3 days over target being just over 13 days per case on average. This has since improved and I am hopeful that this should be within target for Q2.
14. Finally for Planning Enforcement, performance remains high as usual (PE01, 02,03), with only marginal deviations from the 100% targets for priority 2 and 3 cases (the DBC Local Enforcement Plan refers, see) due to more attention needing to be given to the top priority (priority 1) cases, which came in on target at 100% being visited within one working day.