



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

Title of report:	Planning, Development and Regeneration Quarter 1-2 Performance Report 2018-19
Contact:	Cllr Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure Author/Responsible Officer: James Doe, Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regeneration
Purpose of report:	To set out the performance outturn for the service for Quarters 1 and 2 of 2018-19
Recommendations	That the report be noted.
Corporate objectives:	All Corporate Objectives are relevant with this annual review of service performance.
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> None arising from decisions on this report though the financial indicators for Building Control and Local Land Charges report an under recovery of income against target levels, and an over-recovery for planning fee income.
'Value for money' implications	<u>Value for money</u> None arising from this report.
Risk implications	Risk register currently under review.

Community Impact Assessment	Not applicable for this report.
Health and safety Implications	Not applicable for this report.
Consultees:	Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration Chris Taylor, Group Manager Strategic Planning and Regeneration Sara Whelan, Group Manager Development Management and Planning
Background papers:	Performance report (appendix 1)
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	None.

Executive Summary

1. This report presents the performance outturn for the Planning, Development and Regeneration service for the first two quarters of the business year 2018-19. The full performance report is at Appendix 1.
2. Of 17 indicators, nine are running at green; two at amber; three at red and three are for information only.

Key Issues

3. Performance remains broadly strong in the service, with targets exceeded for the processing of planning applications within statutory timescales, a low level of planning applications refused and planning enforcement visits carried out on time (with one exception) and greatly improved performance on the validation of planning applications.
4. The exceptions to good performance are as follows.
5. Building Control Income (FIN15). Against projected expectations to the end of Q2, fee receipts are just under £39k below target. The end of year outturn for 2017/18 reported to the Committee in September was £90k below target, and that report set out the combined issues of high staffing costs within the service and loss of business to Approved Inspectors who are in competition with the Council.
6. The September report explained that a number of improvements have been achieved in the Building Control service which is beginning to win back business. Income targets were met in September and exceeded in October of this year. Income levels are being monitored closely and the next report to the

Committee for income received in Quarter 3 should give a better indication of the anticipated final outturn for the 2018-19 business year.

7. On a positive note, the service has signed up a number of partnership arrangements with customers, largely in the form of architectural practices to use the Dacorum Building Control Service which will help to bolster fee income.
8. Building Control application processing times (BC01). The service aims to process all building control applications within two months of receipt. Against the run of form, Quarter 2 performance was just under 74% of applications processed in this timescale, which was due to efforts by the service to sign off a number of older cases. This should therefore be only a temporary dip in performance.
9. New processes, which have been brought in over the past few months, aim to provide a same day service to dramatically improve performance and offer a competitive edge. Again, this indicator will be monitored closely and the Q3 position will be critical to begin to judge the effectiveness of the changes in service delivery that have been brought in recently.
10. Land Charges Income (FIN17). The slowdown in the property market continues to affect income from property searches requested by solicitors and conveyancers which are dealt with by the service; as such the income received by the end of Q2 is around £30k below target. The level of work is being monitored closely and it is likely that the expectations for income from property searches will be revised downwards in preparing the budget for 2019/20.
11. Planning Enforcement (PE02) This indicator, which measures the percentage of visits by officers to priority 2 cases in the Local Enforcement Plan within in ten days of notification, is running at amber at just under 95%. The workload of the enforcement team is now running at in excess of 600 cases per year, whereas around 400 cases was the norm in the past. Both other categories, priority 1 and 3, achieved 100% of cases within timescale.
12. Planning Appeals (DMP30) The Council's performance in defending its decisions to refuse planning cases is consistently strong, with the target of 70% of appeals dismissed – as such, the Inspector upholding the Council's decision - usually met or exceeded.
13. Performance by quarter 2 fell just below the target at 68.75%, and is therefore running at amber. There were 16 cases decided at appeal, of which 11 were dismissed, but five allowed.
14. One of the cases related to the temporary planning consent for motorsports at Runways Farm on Bovingdon Airfield. This was a complex case related to the extent of use of the site for performance car activities and noise and disturbance to the local community.
15. The other four cases all related to small-scale residential developments, three of which were in Berkhamsted and one in Tring. The trend among these cases were that reasons for refusal put forward on essentially grounds of overdevelopment and design – and in one case the effect on the privacy of nearby residents – were not accepted by the deciding Inspector in each case.

Conclusions

16. Overall, performance by Q2 in the service remained strong. The issues with the Building Control service were set out in the report to the Committee in September, and whilst there are pressures on the income budget, there are improvements overall.
17. The issue of appeal performance needs to be monitored closely as this is a key indicator, and where grounds of overdevelopment and effects on neighbouring properties are being put forward as reasons for refusal, they will need close and clear evidencing for the detrimental effects they would bring.

Recommendations

18. That the report be noted.