



Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	30 September 2020
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Planning, Development and Regeneration Quarter 1 Performance Report 2020-21
Contact:	Cllr Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure Author/Responsible Officer: James Doe, Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regeneration Sara Whelan, Group Manager – Development Management and Planning
Purpose of report:	To set out the performance outturn for the service for Quarter 1 of 2020-21
Recommendations	That the report is 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 Planning fees and Local Land Charges report an under recovery of income against target levels.
'Value for money' implications	<u>Value for money</u> None arising from this report.
Risk implications	None arising from this report. Risks addressed through service level risk register.
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.

1. This report presents the performance outturn for the Planning, Development and Regeneration service for the first quarter (April-June) of the business year 2020-21. The full performance report is at Appendix 1.
2. Of 13 indicators, seven are running at green; three at red; and three are for information only.

Income

3. Planning fees income (FIN 16). As mentioned in the last report to the Committee on 16 June 2020 on Q4 2019-20 performance, the Covid-19 pandemic and consequent national lockdown from late March has significantly impacted on the number of planning applications being submitted in Q1 2020-21 and fee receipts. As the performance report at Appendix 1 shows, fees received amounted to just over £236,500 for the quarter against the profiled income target of just over £301,000, representing an under-recovery of 21%. For April, the volume of planning applications received was down by about a quarter on typical levels.
4. Since May though, the level of new applications has begun to rise and for the time being is currently at levels pre-lockdown. With this, fee receipts have bounced back to what was expected when the budget for 2020-21 was set. The decline in income in Q1 will however adversely impact on the end of year position despite this. Initially, an under recovery of £300,000 was anticipated. This has been revised, with some caution, down to a £200,000 shortfall by the end of year. The situation could well change as things develop, so the levels of income are being monitored very closely.
5. Land Charges Income (FIN17). The economic effects of the Covid-19 situation have been proportionately more marked on receipts for property search fees, as house purchase transactions fell sharply in Q1. There was an

under-recovery against expected income of some 61% with just over £22,000 received.

6. The drop in income is mirrored by a steep decline in the number of searches received by the Council; 179 requests were received in Q1 against the 417 requests made in Q1 of the previous year.
7. A degree of improvement is expected in Q2 with the easing of lockdown and the introduction of the stamp duty land tax holiday with a zero rate for sales transactions of up to £500,000 in value (until the end of March 2021) as introduced by the Government.

Development Management Performance

8. The only exception to performance in the Development Management service relates to the speed at which minor planning applications are dealt with (DMP05). From the target of 70% to be determined within eight weeks of receipt, performance in Q1 was at 59%.
9. The report to the Committee on 16 June of this year referred to a programme of ongoing improvements in the service, including improved reporting arrangements and enhanced case management regimes, with the objective bringing down the average time that cases are being held in the system as work in progress, and reductions in the use of extensions of time agreements.
10. This work has involved clearing some of these longer-term cases, and this is the primary reason for performance being low for this indicator for Q1. Performance is now on a rising trajectory for DMP05. From a low of just 37% of cases being determined on time in March 2020, this has risen progressively on a monthly basis with the figures for April at 45%, May 59%, and June 75%.
11. Performance elsewhere in the service has been good in Q1. 100% of major applications were determined on time (DMP04) and almost 75% of applications in the other category on time (DMP06). The validation of planning applications was at 94% within three days, against the target of 70% (DMP08) and 100% of planning appeals were defended successfully with nine out of nine appeals going the Council's way (DMP30).