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# Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report for:</b>	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Title of report:</b>	Planning, Development and Regeneration Quarter 3 Performance Report 2021-22
<b>Date:</b>	16 March 2022
<b>Report on behalf of:</b>	Cllr Alan Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure
<b>Part:</b>	I
<b>If Part II, reason:</b>	N/A
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Performance Report
<b>Background papers:</b>	
<b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b>	

### Report Author / Responsible Officer

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<b>Corporate Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</li> <li>- Building strong and vibrant communities</li> <li>- Ensuring economic growth and prosperity</li> <li>- Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need</li> <li>- Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery</li> <li>- Climate and ecological emergency</li> </ul>
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	1. To set out the performance outturn for the service for Quarter 3 of 2021-22.
<b>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</b>	1. That the report is noted.
<b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>	

## 1. Introduction

1.1 This report presents the performance outturn for the Planning, Development and Regeneration service for the third quarter (October – December) of the business year 2021-22. The full performance report is at Appendix 1. Members will note that the appendix report follows a new format following the Council's change to using the new InPhase performance management software from the previous Rocket system.

## 2. Review of Performance

2.1 The performance report at appendix 1 shows a total of 34 indicators, twelve of which are performance measures; the remainder are for information and provide context to the performance outcomes for quarter 2.

2.2 Of the twelve performance measures, five are at red for this quarter, two at amber and four at green.

### Income

2.3 Planning fees income (FIN 16) remains strong with actual income being 8% above target income for this time of year. This is a continuation of a trend which saw income 12% above target in Q2. At the end of Q3 planning income is around £240k ahead of trajectory at £3.155m at the end of Q3.

2.4 Caseload of planning and related applications remains high, though slightly down on Q2 with 730 cases received compared to 854 previously.

2.5 Land Charges Income (FIN17) remains strong at Q3 with actual income 4% higher than targeted with receipts for land charge searches at £480,342.

2.6 Activity in Land Charges continues to be high but the average time taken to process local searches (LC04) is 7.85 days compared to the target of ten days and therefore is at green for Q3.

2.7 Trends in both planning and land charges income will continue to be monitored closely as activity here has a strong correlation to the local and national economic climate.

### Development Management Performance

2.8 This quarter there were 4 major applications (DMP04) due for determination, down from 8 in Q2. Two of these were determined on time, resulting in performance of 50% which is outside of target and therefore at red. This is down from 62.5% in Q2.

2.9 There were 93 minor applications due to be determined in the period, this is a drop from 114 applications in Q2. Of the 93 applications 62 were determined within the 8 week period. As a result the percentage of minor applications due to be determined in 8 weeks (DMP05) dropped to 66.67% compared to 67.54% in Q2. This is around 3% short of the target of 70%.

- 2.10 Performance the 'others' category remains at green but did fall from 91.97% in Q2 to 88.79% in Q3. The target remains at 70%. Caseload has decreased slightly from 361 in Q2 to 332 applications in Q3. This category includes the smallest scale cases such as house extensions and other domestic development, where the service has put in place fast track arrangements for processing.
- 2.11 The slippage in performance has been impacted by several departures of Planning Officers in the period and the inability, despite several rounds of recruitment, to recruit replacement staff, particularly those with suitable levels of experience for the Major and Minor planning applications. This is not unique to Dacorum with many authorities across Hertfordshire experiencing similar issues. Unfortunately, it is likely that performance is likely to remain outside of targets in future monitoring periods. Officers are currently looking at what other measures can be implemented across the service to address these challenges, and there is a County-wide action to address this, of which DBC is a part.
- 2.12 Performance on the Council's success rate in defending planning appeals in Q3 (DMP30) sits at 50%, which is an improvement from 22% in Q2. Members will note that this measure does not take into account appeals that are withdrawn or split decisions. Whilst this may initially cause some concern, the outturn for Q3 has to be seen against the context of appeal caseload. Furthermore, the number of appeals dismissed in the period increased to 5 in Q3 (up from 2 in Q2.). The Development Management Committee received a report on the details of cases at its meeting on 21 October and this can be seen at [Appeals update October 2021 FINAL.pdf \(dacorum.gov.uk\)](#). The reporting period is slightly different, but the Inspectors' reasonings are explained in summary form.
- 2.13 Performance in the validation of planning applications (DMP08) has dropped over the last quarter with 60% of planning applications validated within 3 working days, this is a drop from 77% in Q2. The overall number of planning applications due for validating in the period fell to 795, down from 877 in Q2. There are growing pressures on the validation team which is a combination of staff turnover in the period, the time needed to train new staff and computer systems being down for extended periods.

### Enforcement

- 2.14 The Council had a single Priority 1 site visit due in Q3 which was undertaken in time (PE01). A total of 51 Priority 2 site visits were required to be undertaken of which 57% were undertaken in time (PE02). This is an improvement of 7% from Q2 despite a significant increase in the number of Priority 2 cases due a site visit in the period (up 70% from Q2). Although there had been a significant drop in Priority 3 sites due a visit in Q3 only 13% of sites were visited compared to 43% in Q2.
- 2.15 The service continues to work to the twelve-month improvement plan, known as the 'Enforcement 400 Plan' to tackle the issue of working through the combination of backlog from the inability to carry out site visits during lockdown and restriction periods and rising workloads. However, resourcing pressures remain acute in the service with vacant posts unable to be filled (again a particular issue for higher level posts) and significant workloads for each case officer.
- 2.16 The Service's management is in the process of developing options for the service to address the recruitment issues.

## **3. Options and alternatives considered**

3.1 Not applicable.

## **4. Consultation**

4.1 James Doe – Strategic Director (Place

4.2 Philip Stanley - Interim Group Manager Development Management and Planning

**5. Financial and value for money implications:**

Financial

5.1 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

5.2 None arising from this report.

**6. Legal Implications**

6.1 None arising from this report.

**7. Risk implications:**

7.1 None arising from this report. Risks addressed through service level risk register.

**8. Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:**

8.1 Community Impact Assessment - Not applicable for this report.

8.2 Human Rights – There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

**9. Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)**

9.1 None arising from this report.

**10. Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)**

10.1 None arising from this report.

**11. Conclusions:**

11.1 Not applicable

**12. Appendix 1 - Performance Report (attached separately)**