



## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monday, 9 September 2019

### DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the planning performance of the Development Management Team in terms of the timescales for determining planning applications.

Is the report Open or Exempt?	Open
Wards Affected:	All
Cabinet Member:	Councillor David Ritchie Cabinet Member for Planning and Coastal Management
Supporting Officer:	Liz Beighton Planning Development Manager 01394 444778 <a href="mailto:Liz.beighton@eastsoffolk.gov.uk">Liz.beighton@eastsoffolk.gov.uk</a>

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides details on the determination timescales for all planning applications at East Suffolk Council when tested against the government set timescales as well as the East Suffolk Council stretched targets.
- 1.2 The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are reported on a quarterly basis and included within the East Suffolk Council performance report and tested against the Council's Business Plan.

## 2 PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

- 2.1 The breakdown for Q1 (April through to end of June 2019) is reported as follows:

	Q1 Percentage	Q1 Total	Targets
Major Development	100%	13/13	60% national 65% stretched
Minor Development	67%	104/154	65% national 75% stretched
Other Development	85%	437/516	80% national 90% stretched

- 2.2 In respect of these statistics, it is reported that all the government benchmarks were met in all areas, but the performance was slightly below the stretched targets for the District Council in regards to minor and other development. In response mechanisms have been instigated in the teams to promote swifter decision making on all applications and reduce any reliance on the use of Extensions of Time to maintain performance targets.
- 2.3 The Q2 period expires at the end of September 2019 and therefore it is felt useful to update Members on the current statistic levels for July and August. The figures are reproduced below:

### Statistics for July 2019

	Q1 Percentage	Q1 Total	Targets
Major Development	100%	2/2	60% national 65% stretched
Minor Development	87%	33/38	65% national 75% stretched
Other Development	99%	103/104	80% national 90% stretched

### Statistics for August 2019

	Q1 Percentage	Q1 Total	Targets
Major Development	100%	11/11	60% national 65% stretched
Minor Development	81%	64/79	65% national 75% stretched
Other Development	95%	215/227	80% national 90% stretched

- 2.4 The figures show a marked improvement in speed of determinations in both the minor and other classifications with the Council meeting both the national benchmark figures and the locally stretched figures.
- 2.5 It is also important to report that of these applications the approval rates sit at 75% in July and 84% in August demonstrating that the Councils takes a positive and proactive approach to determining applications in line with guidance contained in the NPPF. Where applications are refused Officers seek to defend those refusals strongly. Members will note the separate appeals report on the SPC agenda which demonstrates confidence that applications are being refused correctly and those decisions are for the most part upheld at appeal.

#### Testing against 2018/2019

- 2.6 As a benchmark, it is officers have sought to test performance against the previous year (until the end of March 2019). The combined figures across the formerly Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Council areas are as follows:

	Year End	Targets
Major Development	84%	60% national 65% stretched
Minor Development	75%	65% national 75% stretched
Other Development	79%	80% national 90% stretched

The figures show that whilst the national performance indicators were met in major and other categories, the performance on other applications fell below the government standard. The figures show that to date there has been a significant and continual improvement in determination timescales.

- 2.7 This uplift in performance sits alongside a review of the use of Extensions of Time (EOT) for applications. Whilst these remain a useful and important mechanism to secure appropriate development, the department is taking a more rigorous review of the use of EOTs and justification needs to be provided to ensure it is appropriate. The decision on whether to accept an EOT lies with the case officer in conjunction with senior officers. This seeks to ensure that applications move through the process, instilling confidence from customers that decisions are made in a timely manner and that individual officer's case list can be appropriately managed. EOTs should not be used to delay determination unnecessarily, avoid making difficult decisions or allow the continuation of negotiation on applications which should be done outside of the formal process.
- 2.8 In the 2018/2019 reporting period the Council determined 2727 planning applications broken up into:
- 74 major proposals  
782 minor proposals  
1781 other proposals
- 2.9 To date, the Council has determined 1144 planning applications in a period just under five months. This is broken up into:
- 26 major proposals

271 minor proposals  
847 proposals

- 2.10 If this level was to be extrapolated across the reporting timescale the Council is likely to determine more applications in 2019/2020 than it did the previous year.

#### Income Levels

- 2.11 In the 2018/2019 financial year the combined Authorities of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils generated a net income of £2,348,326 within the department (planning application and pre-application charging). In the five months from April through to July the income within that period was £721,457.
- 2.12 To contrast, in the same five month period, April through to July, in the 2019/2020 financial year, the net income from the Development Management functions is £1,008,029. The level of income generation therefore exceeds last years income by £286,572 and also exceeds the predicted income in the budget.

### **3 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 This report is for information only.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the contents of the report, updating the Strategic Planning Committee on the performance of the Development Management Team, be noted and endorsed.

#### **APPENDICES – None**

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS – None**