

STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD

Date of meeting: 23rd December 2009
Report of: Philippa Lowe, Development Manager
Title: Performance Management Framework

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In September 2009, a Service Improvement Group was set up and now forms the Executive Steering Group for the Development Management Transformation Project. The Group's remit is to monitor delivery of the Project and the realisation of the benefits as well as scrutinising the support needed to deliver the benefits.

The core membership of the Group is as follows:

Cllr Rod Menlove (Chairman)	Philippa Lowe – Development Manager
Cllr Barry Moran	David Malcolm – South Area Manager
Cllr John Narroway	David Garratt – North Area Manager
Cllr Jackie Weatherill	Lorraine Rossiter – Business Lead –
Julie Williams (Project Manager)	Planning Support
Nick Hulland (Project Support)	Gareth Pawlett – IT Strategy

The Service Improvement Group meets on a monthly basis and has been presented with a significant amount of detail regarding the Transformation Project; cause and effect of performance issues and action required to ensure robust reporting of data.

The Group confirmed its support for the format and content of the Performance Management Framework report and the draft Local Performance Indicators and recommended their approval by the Strategic Planning Board.

The following report is divided into four main sections covering:

1. Purpose and Background;
2. Performance Management Information and Reporting;
3. Key issues identified as impacting on performance;
4. The proposed measures, resources and actions required to deliver sustainable improvements and feed into Service Plan.

1.1 Decision Required

- 1. That the format and content of future performance reports to Strategic Planning Board be approved;***
- 2. That the proposed Local Performance Indicators as a measure of service delivery be approved.***

1.2 Financial Implications

The performance of the Development Management service will have a direct impact on the amount of Housing and Planning Delivery grant the Council receives in future awards. Furthermore, the Transformation Project is resource intense and bids for additional resources are likely to be needed to ensure timely delivery of the efficiency savings.

1.3 Legal Implications

Since April 2008 Councils have been reporting planning performance against National Indicators NI 157a, 157b, 157c and 157d. The performance figures are now accessed by the Audit Commission directly from quarterly statistical returns to Communities and Local Government (CLG).

1.4 Risk Assessment

Failure to meet National Targets and performance Indicators will adversely affect the Council's award of Housing and Planning Delivery grant and impact negatively on its Comprehensive Area Assessment.

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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND TO REPORT

The purpose of the report is to set out the basis for a new Performance Management Framework and in doing so to consider issues surrounding the current performance for Development Management and the measures being put in place to improve and sustain levels of performance.

The framework forms part of the Development Management service Transformation Project. This improvement project has been running since June 2009 with the objective of moving the service towards a Development Management Approach. A fundamental review of the way the service is currently being provided is being undertaken with a view to drive improvements and deliver more effective and efficient working practices.

This project is being run using Prince2 principles and is led by Philippa Lowe, Development Manager and a Project Board. The project is resource intensive from the service point of view and is addressing 7 key areas of work, as set out below:-

TASK	TITLE	LEADS
1	Integrated Single Planning IT Systems	David Malcolm
2	Customer Access and Accommodation	Lorraine Rossiter
3	End-to-end planning process	Ben Haywood
4	Performance Management Framework and Employee Development Protocol	David Garratt
5	Planning Website	Martin Lomas
6	Development Team Approach for major developments	Paul Moore
7	Market Development and Income maximisation	David Snelson

2. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

As a front line, customer facing service it is essential to establish a 'measurement' of the performance of Development Management, and that relevant information is identified, collected and reported.

Information can be collected covering the following, and as set out in more detail below:

- a) National requirements;
- b) Local requirements;
- c) Throughput of work;
- d) Customer satisfaction; quality of service and outcomes.

A robust performance management framework is a key element of the day to day performance and operational management of the service. Together with driving service improvement it is also an integral part of the overall objective of providing a more efficient, effective and transparent planning system. This supports and facilitates the aims of delivering sustainable development,

including the Government's objectives in relation to housing growth, infrastructure delivery, economic development and climate change.

2.1 RELEVANT INFORMATION

a) National requirements

National Indicator 157 measures the percentage of planning applications by type determined in a timely manner, which is defined as:

- Within 13 weeks for Major applications;
- Within 8 weeks for Minor and Other applications;
- Within 8 weeks for Other applications and
- Within 13 weeks for all County Matter applications.

Note: Applications that are part of a Planning Performance Agreement and the timetable agreed with developers is adhered to will be excluded from the calculations.

Definition of categories is as follows:

Major applications = e.g. new housing over 10 dwellings; industry and retail over 1,000 sq metres or/hectare,

Minor applications = e.g. new housing, commercial, retail under thresholds for major'

Other applications = e.g. change of use, householder, adverts, listed buildings,

County Matters = e.g. minerals and waste applications

Details of the performance of the Development Management service, since 1 April 2009, against this Indicator are set out in Table 1 in the Appendix.

Performance against NI 157 is a key performance measure in the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), however Communities and Local Government (CLG) has consulted on options to replace performance targets based around Council's traditional 8 and 13 week determinations. The Government's intension is to revise the current approach to performance targets, to move away from a narrow focus on the time taken to decide an application once submitted, to an approach which measures performance in a more holistic way. The options are contained in '**Taking Forward the Government's response to the Killian Pretty Review: Progress Report**' (31 July 2009). See:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/killianprettyprogress>

b) Local requirements

As noted above, the principal aim of the National Indicator is to measure the timeliness of the decision. They do not however measure the quality of the decision, outcomes delivered or the satisfaction of the customer and therefore they provide little indication as to the overall performance of the service.

In order to provide a better measure of service delivery, Task Group 4 of the Transformation project was established with the objective of developing a Performance Management Framework based on national targets but also developing Local Indicators based on application stages and costs. The

Group were also tasked with developing a template and process for quarterly reporting to Members through the Strategic Planning Board.

The Task Group completed a customer/value matrix which identified the most important things customers want from our service and then explored ways of measuring these. The results of their work are summarised in Table 2 in the Appendix which sets out the recommendations in terms of the proposed new Local Performance Indicators.

c) Throughput of work

The day to day Statutory Functions of the service focus around the following main areas:

- Planning Applications, Listed Buildings, Conservation, Advert consents, Appeals as well as;
- Planning Obligations & Unilateral Undertakings; and
- Enforcement Investigations.

In addition a large volume of work is received and undertaken by the service in connection with:

- Permitted Development Enquiries;
- Pre-application Enquiries and Advice
- Discharge of Conditions; and
- Consultations from neighbouring authorities and Notifications.

There is currently no integrated system for recording much of this work, or method for monitoring or reporting on performance. Options are being explored to purchase a new module for the computer system to allow recording and monitoring but this is tied up with implementation of the single integrated system and awaits resolution of the outstanding IT issues.

d) Quality of Service, Outcomes and Customer Satisfaction

As part of the Transformation Project, the Task Group 2 has been leading work to gather information about the services customers and also to gain a better understanding as to how and why customers contact the service.

This type of information plays a crucial role in the transformation process as it will provide a better understanding as to where to focus attention and resources to maximize benefits in the service and for the people of Cheshire East.

To support the Transformation Project a number of data gathering exercises have been carried out. The data is now being analysed and will inform the service about how customers are engaging with the service and how effectively the service responds to their needs. The data will also give an indication of where staff resources are being spent dealing with failure demand and avoidable contact.

2.2 REPORTING PERFORMANCE

Having established what information is available for collection, the process for reporting needs to be established.

a) **National requirements**

Local Planning Authorities are asked to report to members at quarterly intervals on the number of applications by category of development decided during the quarter, the number of applications on hand and not yet decided and a list of all applications over 13 weeks old and still awaiting a decision. This is in accordance with the Code of Practice in Circular 28/83 (Publication by Local Authorities of Information about The Handling of Planning Applications).

Draft figures are attached but these are subject to on-going scrutiny. However, what is clear is that performance on Majors is significantly off target and in conjunction with work on delays in connections with the completion of S106 Agreements, further analysis is being undertaken to determine the cause of delay.

Whilst it is recommended that reports are produced for Strategic Planning Board on a Quarterly basis (at the end of January, April, July and October), the first priority is to ensure that the performance information is suitably robust. The work undertaken to date to rectify the matter and ensure their accuracy, prior to formal reporting and this has been considered in more detail by the Service Improvement Group.

b) **Local requirements**

The proposed Local Performance Indicators, as set out in Table 2 of the Appendix, will be developed to provide a better measure of service delivery and to enable the reporting of performance these indicators.

Further work is on-going by the Task Group 4 to gather the relevant baseline information and to set out appropriately challenging targets to drive improvement, all of which will be subject to future report to the Service Improvement Group, in their role as Executive Steering Group to the Transformation Project.

Set out below is an example of the suggested format for reporting, see also Table 2.

LOCAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (LPI)	BASELINE INFORMATION	TARGET	ACTIONS TO MEET TARGET
LPI 1: The percentage of applications made invalid of the total number submitted.			

c) **Throughput of work**

Applications:

Under National Indicator 157, not all the applications determined by the Service have to be reported nationally, as set out in the Note under Table 1.

Those dealt with by the Service, but not reported include applications for works to Trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders and in Conservation Areas; Agricultural and Telecommunication operations, for example.

Table 1 therefore includes further figures of the total number of applications to accurately record the full extent of application work. This information can be reported to Strategic Planning Board (SPB).

Appeals:

Performance information can be gathered on appeals such as percentage of successful appeals or number of member over-turns. It is important to monitor performance to ensure consistent application of policy which safeguards character and appearance of area and therefore liaison with colleagues in Spatial Planning needs to be part of the Performance Management Framework. A separate report is included on the agenda which sets out the proposed format for reporting appeal decisions, for approval by the Strategic Planning Board.

Planning Obligations & Unilateral Undertakings:

Work is currently being carried out, in conjunction with colleagues in Legal Services to establish full data sets on outstanding Obligations awaiting completion as well as the monitoring of completed Agreements.

The impact on performance of the service with regard to major applications is being adversely affected by reason of those requiring S106 Agreements. A more detailed report will be presented to a future meeting of the Strategic Planning Board to set out the priorities for improving performance in this area of work.

Enforcement:

Prior to the 1 April 2009, an Enforcement Protocol was adopted by Cheshire East which set out the Council's approach to investigating Planning Enforcement matters in terms of priorities and timescales for investigation.

A separate report is included on the agenda which includes details of live enforcement cases, amount of work done over last quarter, number of complaints received and closed and performance against targets set out in the Protocol.

Permitted Development Enquiries; Pre-application Enquiries; Discharge of Conditions; and Consultations from neighbouring authorities and Notifications:

As noted in Section 2.1 c) above there is no single system in place to record and monitor workloads in terms of the above. This matter is to be investigated as part of the IT Task Group work and the implementation of a single integrated IT System for planning. Until that is in place no formal reporting can take place.

d) **Quality of Service, Outcomes and Customer Satisfaction**

In order for the service to fulfil its Place Shaping function it is vital to drive improvements in the quality of all development. There is a new national requirement to report on Building for Life Assessments, and at present there are no staff resources available to carry out this function. A resource bid is being prepared to deal with this matter.

There is also a desire to raise standards by the development of a local Design Award, where excellence is celebrated and promoted.

In addition review of new development is also a good measure of the services performance and this can take the form of annual review, attended by Members and Officers. All these matters are subject to on-going work and progress will be monitored by the Service Improvement Group.

Further work is also needed to develop service standards which respond to our customers needs and this work will include mechanisms for measuring customer satisfaction.

3. KEY ISSUES IMPACTING ON PERFORMANCE

An essential element of any robust Performance Management Framework is to identify the causes for delay and to set out what action needs to be taken to improve performance.

Since the aggregation of the four Councils in April 2009, not all service standards have been met and this is of great concern to the service and wider organisation.

A cause and effect exercise has been carried out considering "Why is the Service not meeting its Statutory Targets". The output from this analysis was considered by the Service Improvement Group at its last meeting and has informed the work and priorities of the Transformation Project Task Groups.

4. THE PROPOSED MEASURES, RESOURCES AND ACTIONS

The main driver for tackling performance is through the Transformation Project and the work of the individual Task Groups which is focused on the areas already identified as contributing to poor performance.

The project was scheduled to begin delivering benefits early in 2010 however this may not be soon enough to meet the desire to bring service targets back on track.

The IT Group have experienced difficulty initially in receiving the required support to deliver the objectives of their task. However, support is now in place and work must now accelerate in terms of producing an IT implementation plan and associated target dates.

The Processes Group are well on the way to producing a high level “Perfect” Process. This will be the starting point for changing the way that the service works and will eliminate waste and failure from the system. However, the complexity of implementation should not be underestimated. Quick wins will be identified but achieving the new ways of working completely will require a great deal of time and effort.

Similarly the Development Team Approach Group are at a similar point. The same caveats apply to this project.

At this point it is difficult to state with certainty whether Service Standards will be back on track at the end of the financial year. This will depend on how far away the service is currently.

Speeding up the delivery

The service has been delivering the improvement project using existing resources. This has not only resulted in delivery taking longer but has also taken key staff away from day to day delivery.

The project is being run according to Lean principles which is the method supported by Cheshire East. Lean principles rely on using the people who carry out the work and know customers to redesign service delivery. A project run on Lean principles relies heavily on support from operational staff.

Short-term additional resources to “back-fill” those involved in the project would result in earlier realisation of benefits. This is particularly important at the implementation stage which is notoriously difficult without back-fill.

Resource Issues

The failure to meet service standards has had a number of contributory factors including inefficient working practices, staff resources and the stability and capacity of the IT system to deal with the volume and complexity of data.

Significant bottlenecks have occurred across the service as a result of a number of major and controversial planning application and these have adversely impacted on performance.

Changing practices and procedures to ensure that they meet the purpose, minimises waste and failure and have efficient flow is underway but is hampered by lack of resources. This will be magnified once projects reach the implementation stage.

Without additional support there is a high risk that the projects will not be able to fully realise the potential benefits in time to avoid the service failing to meet all national requirements.

The service has been running a large improvement project wholly from within the service since June 2009. The benefits expected from the project are now high priority for both the Department and Cheshire East Council due to the effect of not meeting statutory targets. The service now requires additional support to deliver those benefits.

Conclusions

Whilst performance on Minors and Other applications is currently meeting National Targets, performance on Majors is failing against NI 157. Intensive work is being undertaken and the Performance Management Framework will be used to help priorities action and drive service improvement.

The Service Improvement Group, as Executive Steering Group to the Development Management Transformation Project will continue to monitor the delivery of the project and the realisation of benefits.

APPENDICES

TABLE 1

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION FOR CHESHIRE EAST DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE

	Quarter 1		Quarter 2		Rolling figure	
National Indicator 157	Apr-Jun 2009		Jul-Sept 2009			
	No. of apps determined	Percentage within target % (target)	No. of apps determined	Percentage within target % (target)	No. of apps determined	Percentage within target % (target)
(a) Majors (13 weeks)	14	42.86 (60%)	17	52.94 (60%)	31	48.39 (60%)
(b) Minors (8 weeks)	259	67.57 (65%)	285	74.74 (65%)	544	71.32 (65%)
(c) Others (8 weeks)	487	78.44 (80%)	611	81.51 (80%)	1098	80.15 (80%)
(d) County matters (13 weeks)	4	50				

List of (outstanding applications beyond the target date i.e. 8 or 13 weeks)

	Apr-Jun 2009	Jul-Sept 2009	Yearly figure (to date)
No. of applications received	940	961	1901
Total no. of applications determined	760	912	1672
No. of applications withdrawn, called in or turned away	55	68	123
No. of applications on hand at end of quarter	1083	1064	N/A (or 1064)

Note figures above do not represent all the applications received – only those required to be reported nationally. In addition, the following types of application have been processed:

- Tree Preservation Orders applications, issues of TPOs, applications to fell under TPOs, and applications to fell in conservation areas; Hedgerow removal notices under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997; High hedges; 'Wasteland' Notices under s215 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.
- Applications, determinations and approvals for the erection or significant alteration etc of agricultural and forestry buildings in National Parks;
- Applications, determinations and approvals under Parts 6 and 7 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (agricultural and forestry buildings and operations);
- Applications, determinations and approvals under Part 24 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (development by telecommunications code system operators);
- Applications, determinations and approvals under Part 31 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (demolition of buildings);
- Applications for Hazardous Substances Consents under the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 1992.

TABLE 2

LOCAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Issue to be addressed	Performance Indicator	Constraints	Action
Accuracy Need to improve accuracy and compliance with validation requirements of submitted applications. Need to reduce waste and failure in terms of numbers of invalid applications	LPI 1: The percentage of applications made invalid of the total number submitted.	Whilst this performance measure is not an indication of our performance, the task group strongly argued that there is a need to reach out to applicants and agents to influence their behaviour to the good of the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set target for validation process Hold Agents forum Get agents accredited Tackle key accuracy/information issues
Accessibility Need to reduce avoidable contact Need to provide good quality and accessible information	LPI 2: The number of hits to our website.	Need measuring/recording tool for web site Limited measurement unless define specific pages and link to improving data/information/layout of those pages to encourage self serving by customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to specify which page and why Need to be clear about what improvement this is intended to make Measure if felt satisfied with information i.e. use online questionnaire
Communication Need to address climate change issues by reducing paper and printing Need to improve speed of contact with applicants	LPI 3: The percentage of agents communicated with via email or sms (text) as a default.	Limitations from Portal Limitations from computer system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need single email address/contact point for agents rather than multiple addresses Need to target agents Need to communicate benefit of this form of contact

<p>Timeliness</p> <p>Need to drive sustainable improvement in performance by spreading out current peaks at start & end of process</p>	<p>LPi 4: The average determination time. LPi 4a - Major LPi 4b – minors LPi 4c - others LPi 4d - County LPi 4e –requiring S106</p>	<p>Potential skew when very old majors come through</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to assess data gathered on how long it takes for each stage of an application ▪ Need to complete field in APAS to indicate reason for delay ▪ Need to divide into categories: major, minor, others, county apps, plus category for applications requiring S106 Agreement
<p>Quality 1: Outcomes</p> <p>Need to maximise development opportunities and quality of design.</p>	<p>LPi 5: The percentage of applications approved with and without pre-application advice.</p>	<p>Potentially too broad as could include applicants who have just had advice on how to complete a form</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to consider more focused measure