
REPORT TO:	Environmental & Development Services Committee	AGENDA ITEM: 6(a)
DATE OF MEETING:	5th October 2006	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Community Scrutiny Committee	
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Councillor Ron Lane – Chair of Community Scrutiny Committee	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Achieving Targets – 2006/09 – Planning Applications	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 It is recommended that:

- a) The Committee, endorse the proposals outlined in the Head of Planning Services report, which will be considered at this meeting
- b) The proposals outlined in the Head of Planning Services report includes the following:
 - Streamlining existing processes
 - Introduces measurable milestones to enhance performance
 - Enables fast tracking of certain applications
 - Makes best use of Customer First
 - Strengthens the approach to urban design
 - Maximises the use of existing resources
- c) That a post implementation review of the Planning Service is undertaken in April 2008, to ensure that the stated outcomes for the service are being delivered

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To respond to the request from the Environmental & Development Services Committee to examine the issues around the achievement of the Best Value Performance Indicator targets for the processing of planning applications. In particular BVPIs 109a-c (time taken to determine planning applications) which are expected to be in the second quartile by March 2009

3.0 **Detail**

- 3.1 At the meeting of 13 July 2006, the Environmental & Development Services Committee resolved to refer the issue for more detailed examination to the Community Scrutiny Committee viz:

'That the Community Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider the recommendations from the Improvement Panel and to submit a report to a future meeting of this Policy Committee, ideally before the next performance report'

4.0 **Consideration by the Community Scrutiny Committee**

- 4.1 The Community Scrutiny Committee have considered this matter on five occasions, as summarised in the table below:

Date / Minute Ref	Detail
31 July 06 CYS/4	To consider the request from Environmental & Development Services Committee
10 Aug 06	Presentation by Consultants on business re-engineering exercise undertaken
14 Aug 06	Informal meeting to consider a briefing note prepared by the Head of Planning Services
11 Sep 06 CYS / 13	Progress report
25 Sep 06	Special Meeting to endorse the proposals in the Head of Planning Services report and make recommendations to E&DS Committee

5.0 **Community Scrutiny Committee's Findings**

- 5.1 The Planning Service has undertaken a review of the 2003 Customer Satisfaction survey and has consulted staff regarding user requirements.
- 5.2 The experience of other local authorities has been investigated and similar processes have been undertaken by other exemplar authorities
- 5.3 There has been an exhaustive staff appraisal of the system which Members have been able to challenge
- 5.4 A comparison made with other local authorities has concluded that this Council offers a good service, giving Value For Money in the Best Value Review inspection in 2001
- 5.5 The Planning Service is currently meeting its planned performance targets

- 5.6 This Committee notes that the Planning Service review revealed the need to obtain the skills of a qualified urban designer to support our attainment of BVPI109a-c
- 5.7 This Committee notes that BVPI205 (Quality of Planning Service checklist) is also a priority indicator where top quartile will not be achieved without the proposals in the Head of Planning Services report being met.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 This Committee fully endorses the steps taken by the Head of Planning Services, in order to make the necessary changes to improve performance with regard to the determination of planning applications in the context of a sustainable departmental structure.
- 6.2 This Committee would like to thank all the Officers and Members who prepared reports and contributed to the discussions, in making this report possible

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 None directly from this report

8.0 Background Papers

- 8.1 Environmental & Development Services Committee, '*Performance 2005/06 & Targets 2006/09: Recommendations from Improvement Panel*,' 13th July 2006
- 8.2 Community Scrutiny Committee, '*Achieving Targets 2006/09: Waste Management & Planning*,' 31st July 2006
- 8.3 Community Scrutiny Committee, '*Achieving Targets 2006/09: Planning Applications*,' 11th and 25th September 2006
- 8.4 Other supporting papers in relation to this Special Project held by the Policy & Economic Regeneration Section