

Planning Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 4 December 2014

Planning Applications Performance

Item number	6.3
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All

Executive summary

This report provides an update on performance in dealing with planning applications in response to the request made by Committee at its meeting on 2 October 2014. Committee called for a further report to provide more up to date statistics and to compare Edinburgh's performance with that of its benchmarking partners.

Links

Coalition pledges	
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Single Outcome Agreement	

Planning Applications Performance

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- (i) notes the contents of this report; and
 - (ii) agrees to discharge the remit set by the Committee on 2 October 2014.

Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 2 October 2014 Committee considered a report on planning applications performance for the period January to June 2014 and called for a further report on performance to provide more up to date statistics and to compare Edinburgh's performance with that of its benchmarking partners.

Main report

- 3.1 Performance statistics on dealing with planning applications are reported quarterly to the Scottish Government. The factors affecting performance are described in the annual report "Planning Performance Framework" which is produced annually to summarise all aspects of the planning authority's work and forms the basis of the Scottish Government's assessment of each planning authority. This Council's Planning Performance Framework was submitted to the Scottish Government following Planning Committee's approval of it in August 2014. Feedback is expected by the end of December.
- 3.2 This Council has a long standing development management benchmarking partnership with the city councils of Aberdeen, Dundee and Glasgow. Performance is compared on a six monthly basis and discussed by the relevant senior managers to share experience of improvement opportunities in management practices and customer service. Over a period of more than 15 years, all four authorities have benefitted from this arrangement and performance across the authorities has improved. The last benchmarking meeting took place in August 2014.

Performance Update

- 3.3 Planning application performance update: the table below shows the latest statistics for the four monitoring categories to the end of October 2014.

	Jan-Mar 2014	Apr-Jun 2014	Jul-Sept 2014	Oct 2014	Target
% of non-householder planning applications dealt with within 2 months	68.6%	72.1%	75.1%	66.0%	80%
% of householder planning applications dealt with within 2 months	89.2%	88.5%	86.8%	88.0%	90%
% of major planning application decisions within target with processing agreements*	87.5%	100%	50%	100%	80%
% of major planning application decisions within target without processing agreements	33.3%	60%	50%	0%	80%

**most major planning applications are dealt with according to a programme set out in a processing agreement with the applicant. The target timescale is dependent on the type and complexity of the proposals and the site. Pre 2009 applications have been excluded from these figures.*

- 3.4 Since the period of economic recession, the workload of planning applications has risen over the last 18 months. See table below.

Year	Number of Planning Applications	% increase/decrease on previous year
2012/13	3935	-7.2%
2013/14	4172	+6.0%
2014/15 Q1 and Q2	2647	+6.0%

- 3.5 The table above does not include pre-application advice, tree applications and enforcement casework. If quarters 3 and 4 of 2014/15 show the same numbers of planning applications as quarters 1 and 2, this would represent a 26.9% increase from 2013/14. The planning case officer resource has fluctuated as a result of turnover of staff.
- 3.6 In the transitional 4 month period before the service's team restructuring at end of October 2014, a temporary task force team was established with some additional temporary case officer resource to address falling performance in dealing with householder applications and to relieve the local development teams so that an increased focus on non-householder applications could provide an improved customer service. This related to dealing with enquiries

and pre-application advice. The full effects of this arrangement were not evident until early autumn due to the impact on performance statistics of dealing with legacy applications (i.e., those which had already passed their target determination date).

Benchmarking

- 3.7 Benchmarking performance is now based on the figures submitted on a quarterly basis to the Scottish Government and included in the Planning Performance Framework. Figures are available for the last full reporting year (April 2013 to March 2014) and the first quarter of 2014/15. It is set out in the table below for the non-householder and householder monitoring categories.

April 2013 to March 2014	Edinburgh	Range of benchmarking partners
% of non-householder planning applications dealt with within 2 months	65.9%	42% to 70.3%
% of householder planning applications dealt with within 2 months	89.1%	60% to 95%
Q1 April 2014 to June 2014	Edinburgh	Range of benchmarking partners
% of non-householder planning applications dealt with within 2 months	56.6%	37.9% to 89.1%
% of householder planning applications dealt with within 2 months	88.9%	54.4% to 89.4%

- 3.8 Major developments are monitored on number of weeks and applications with processing agreements are separated from the figures as the timescale for these is agreed with the applicant. The table below sets out the performance on major applications.

April 2013 to March 2014	<i>Edinburgh</i>	Range of benchmarking partners
<i>% of processing agreements meeting target</i>	<i>87.5% (32 cases)</i>	<i>100% (3 cases)</i>
<i>Average weeks (excluding major applications with processing agreements)</i>	<i>27.9 weeks</i>	<i>12.5 to 45.9 weeks</i>

Q1 April 2014 to June 2014	<i>Edinburgh</i>	Range of benchmarking partners
<i>% of processing agreements meeting target</i>	<i>100% (5 cases)</i>	<i>Our benchmarking partners had no processing agreements this quarter</i>
<i>Average weeks (excluding major applications with processing agreements)</i>	<i>24.1 weeks</i>	<i>13 to 54.4 weeks</i>

- 3.9 The benchmarking comparisons show Edinburgh performing well in relation to its peers. All authorities experienced an increase in application workload during this period.

Measures of success

- 4.1 This report provides detail on Council performance against delivery of Planning outcomes.

Financial impact

- 5.1 The financial impact is set out within the Council's performance framework.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no significant risks associated with this report. Impact is integrated with the Council's Performance Framework.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 Reducing poverty, inequality and deprivation is integrated within the Council's Performance Framework.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The sustainability impact is set out within the Council's Performance Framework.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 There is no requirement for consultation on the contents of this report. Priorities and outcomes have been developed in consultation with the service's stakeholders and set out the service plan approved by Planning Committee for 2014-15.

Background reading/external references

The Council's Performance Framework approved by Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on 3 December 2013.

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/3166/corporate_policy_and_strategy_committee

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Links

**Coalition
pledges**

**Council
outcomes**

CO14

**Single
Outcome
Agreement**

Appendices

None

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