

PLANNING COMMITTEE

DATE: 21ST MAY 2014

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND REGENERATION

PLANNING PERFORMANCE 2013/14

Cabinet Holder Cllr Richard Chesterton
Responsible Officer Head of Planning and Regeneration

Reason for Report: To provide the Committee with information on the performance of Planning Services 2013-14.

RECOMMENDATION: For information and discussion.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: Planning decision making is relevant to key objectives within the Corporate Plan of thriving economy, better homes, empowering our communities, caring for our environment and managing our finances.

Financial Implications: Return of planning fees for applications that are undetermined and over 26 weeks old where submitted after 1st October 2013. Loss of planning fees if the Council fails to meet the performance thresholds over speed and quality of decision making as applicants would be able to apply direct to the Planning Inspectorate.

Legal Implications: Poor speed and quality of planning decision making that does not meet the set thresholds would result in identification as a Local Planning Authority that is not performing adequately. Applicants would be able to apply for planning permission directly to the Planning Inspectorate. Government intervention in poor performing Councils.

Risk Assessment: Maintaining planning performance with reducing budgets is becoming increasingly more challenging. Service performance is carefully monitored and is reported to the Planning Committee. The long term performance levels of applications determined within 8 and 13 weeks are set out in this report which demonstrate the reducing performance levels as a result of reduced resources, staff changes and the introduction of a programme of reform to the Planning system that have needed to be accommodated. A further risk introduced as part of the Planning Guarantee (see below) is the return of the planning fee for any planning application not determined within 26 weeks and where there is no agreed extension of time in writing. Poorly performing authorities not meeting thresholds for the speed and quality of decision making can also be bypassed by applicants. In such cases applicants can choose to submit direct to the Planning Inspectorate, thereby removing decision making from the local level.

Consultation carried out with: None.

1.0 PLANNING PERFORMANCE

1.1 Development Management.

Attached to this report are the Planning Service performance figures for year 2013/14. Performance data is published quarterly on the Council's website.

The performance within the first and second quarters of this financial year showed most targets had been missed for 2013/14. Major planning application performance was particularly poor with determination rates of 0% and 33% within the first two quarters but performance has significantly improved to 57% in quarter four for major applications and other areas also show signs of improvement.

The period in question saw the introduction of significant planning reform, staffing changes, the service dealing with other strategic work such as seeking to progress the urban extension for Tiverton and delays with S106 agreements – the latter of particular relevance for major application performance.

The Secretary of State views a Local Planning Authority that is not adequately performing its function of determining applications will be designated for special measures. The performance of each authority in terms of speed and quality of decision making is monitored. The measure to be used to assess the speed of decision making is the average percentage of major application decisions within the statutory determination period (13 weeks, or 16 weeks if subject to environmental impact assessment), or within an extended period as agreed with the applicant in writing. Local Planning Authorities need to determine greater than 40% of these applications within these requirements over the previous two years. Whilst major application performance has met this threshold so far (55% taken over a two year period), the poor performance over the first 6 months of the last financial year was a cause for concern and the poor performance for major applications has been improved. Part of the reason for the reduction in performance processing times is a direct result of a shift in emphasis from process times to delivery of development. Rather than focus on the thirteen week target and refusing applications for lack of information or uncompleted 106 agreements, the focus has been on resolving issues to enable consents to be issued, albeit in a longer timescale in agreement with the applicant, to ensure development can be delivered. The Service has shown improvements in performance for quarters 3 & 4. Clearly with the introduction of the Planning Guarantee the focus is returning to process periods.

Unless there is an agreed written extension of time, the planning fee must now be returned where any planning application submitted after the 1st October 2013 is not determined within 26 weeks, unless an extension of time is agreed. This could have significant financial implication upon the budget of the Planning Service. Determination periods are carefully monitored to ensure the 26 week deadline is not exceeded unless agreed with the applicant.

While there was a poor start to the year generally performance in most measures has improved in 13/14 since the first quarter

1.2 Forward Planning.

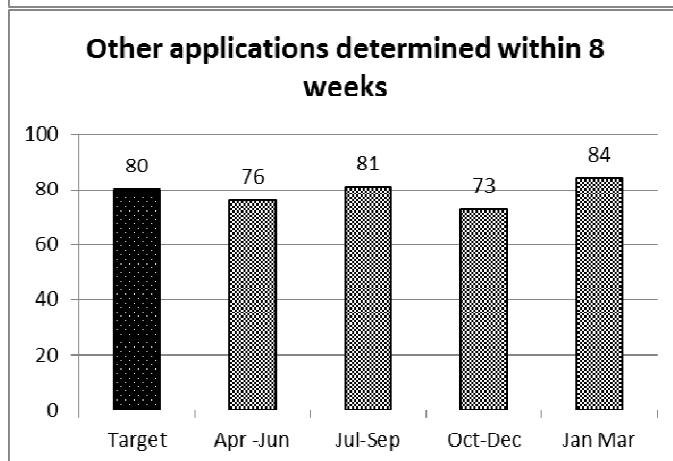
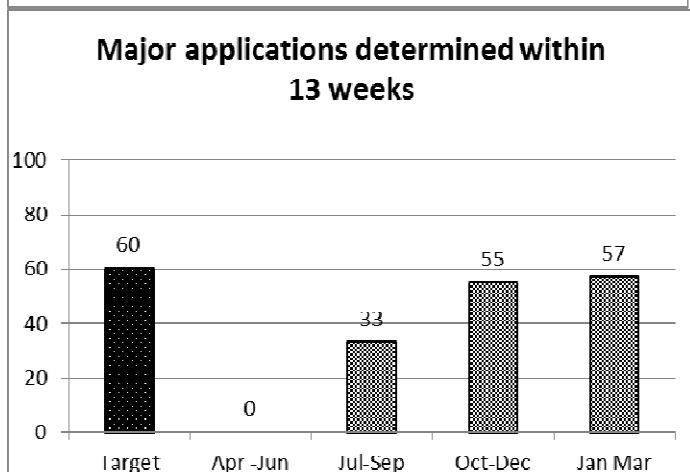
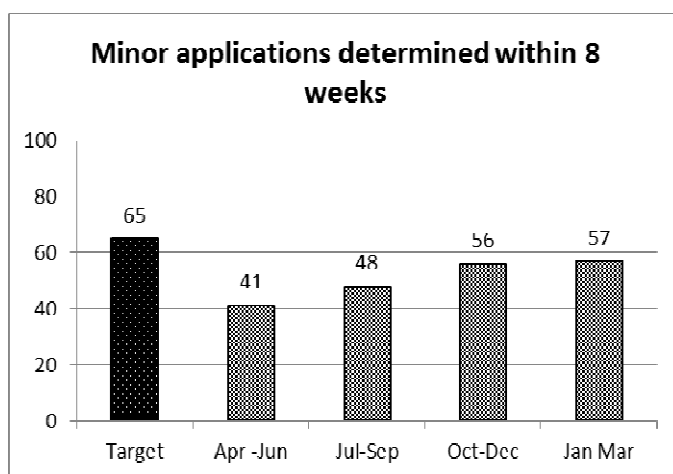
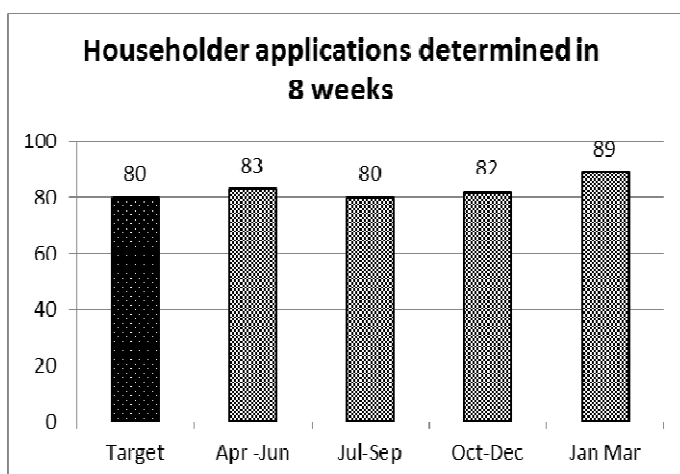
Document	Anticipated Presentation
Development Management DPD (LP3)	Adopted October 2013
Landscape Sensitivity Assessment	Cabinet Report to consider public consultation to make it a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) December 2013 Work in progress by consultants to create the (SPD) for public consultation.
Community Infrastructure Levy	Charging Schedule Adopted Instalments Policy Approved Regulation 123 list published Target for commencement 2014 Cabinet and Council to re-consider CIL implementation
Annual Monitoring Report	Published December 2014
Heritage Assets Register	Published February 2014
Core Strategy and Allocations and Infrastructure Review (Local Plan Review)	Commenced summer 2013 Scoping consultation July 2013 Consultation on options February/March 2014
Parking Supplementary Planning Document	Adopted June 2013
Eastern Urban Extension Masterplan	Adopted April 2014
North West Cullompton Masterplan	Commenced October 2013 First stage public consultation due June/July 2013
Blundells Conservation Area	Consultation commenced April 2014

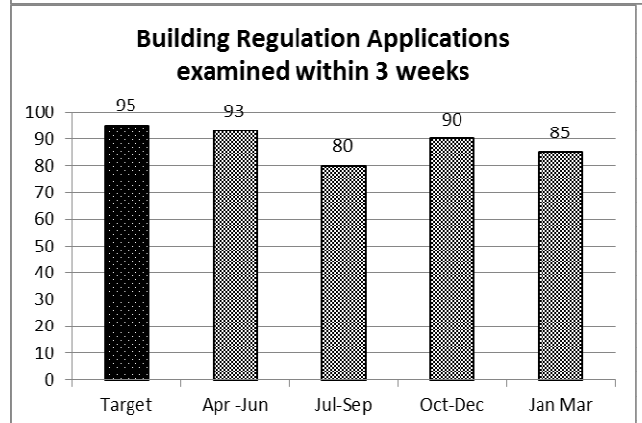
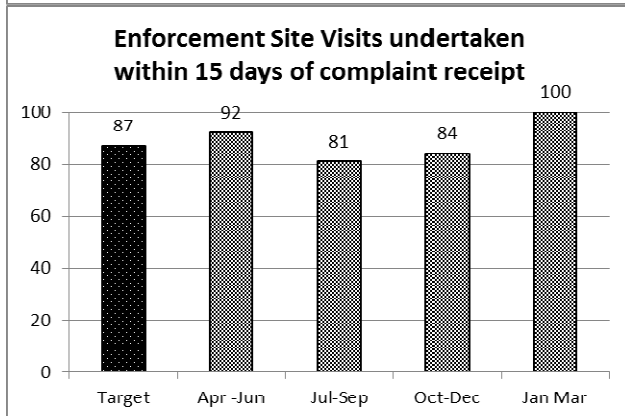
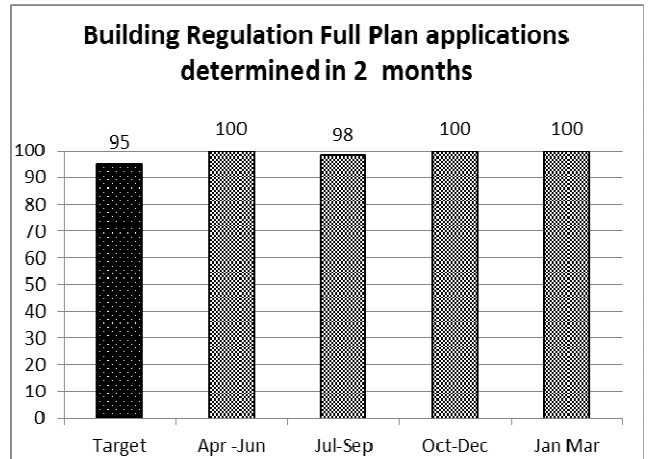
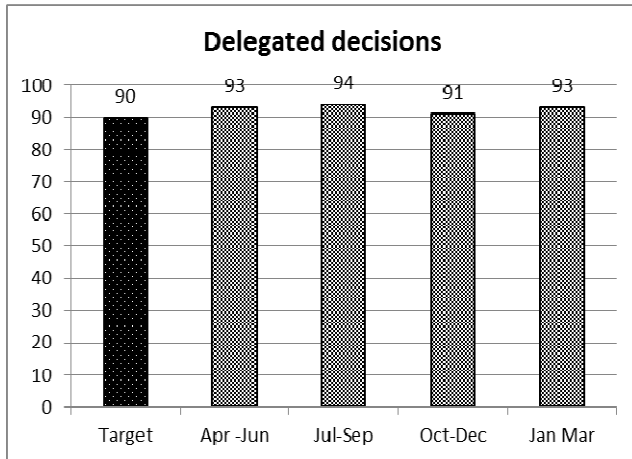
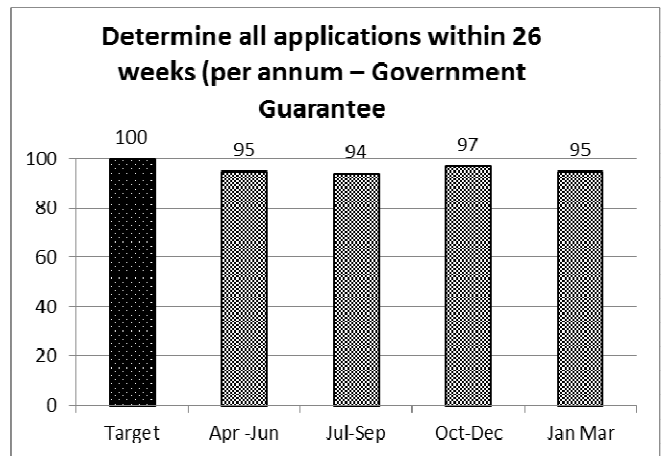
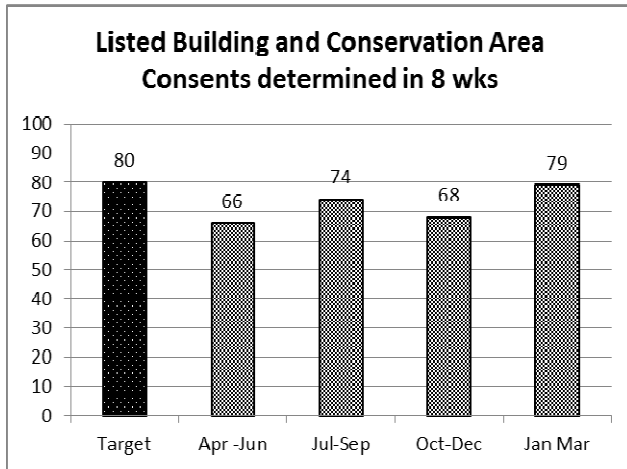
1.3 Building Control.

Figures for building control performance set out below. In order to improve the three week plan check figures working processes are currently under review.

1.4 Performance figures.

PLANNING SERVICE PERFORMANCE	Target	Apr -Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan Mar	Year 13/14
Major applications determined within 13 weeks	60	0	33	55	57	37
Minor applications determined within 8 weeks	65	41	48	56	57	54
Other applications determined within 8 weeks	80	76	81	73	84	77
Householder applications determined in 8 weeks	80	83	80	82	89	84
Listed Building and Conservation Area Consents determined in 8 wks	80	66	74	68	79	71
Major applications determined within 13 weeks (over last 2 years)	above 40%	N/R	N/R	55	55	55
Delegated decisions	90	93	94	91	93	93
Determine all applications within 26 weeks (per annum – Government Guarantee)	100	95	94	97	95	95
Enforcement Site Visits undertaken within 15 days of complaint receipt	87	92	81	84	100	89
Building Regulation Full Plan applications determined in 2 months	95	100	98	100	100	99
Building Regulation Applications examined within 3 weeks	95	93	80	90	85	87
Planning applications over 13 weeks old without a decision	45	50	64	53	34	50





Contact for any more information	Head of Planning and Regeneration 01884 234938
Background Papers	PS1 and PS2 returns
File Reference	None.
Circulation of the Report	Members of Planning Committee, Cllr Richard Chesterton.

