

**Report To:** Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013

**Lead Member / Officer:** Lead Member for Public Realm

**Report Author:** Head of Planning and Public Protection/  
Development Control Manager

**Title:** Planning Applications

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**1. What is the report about?**

This report is about the performance in terms of the speed of determining planning applications.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

This report was requested by Members in order to identify emerging trends or pressures that will affect the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities in relation to ensuring access to good quality housing and developing the local economy.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

The report is for Members information and comment.

**4. Report details.**

4.1 This report was requested by Members following the inclusion of the Annual Performance Report onto the Performance Scrutiny agenda on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

4.2 Members requested figures for comparison purposes for the financial years 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 (to date) as they felt that clarification was required as to why Denbighshire was not performing in the top quartile in Wales in relation to the speed of determining householder applications within 8 weeks. This report provides Members with sufficient information for them to comment on the Council's performance in terms of the speed of dealing with all types of planning applications.

4.3 The only statistics relating to this issue within the Annual Performance Report is in relation to the percentage of householder applications determined within 8 weeks. Although this provides a good indication of how the authority is performing against all other authorities in Wales within a certain type of application, Members have asked for a broader explanation of performance relating to all types of planning applications.

- 4.4 Attached as Appendix 1 are tables that provide the information on speed of determining a range of planning applications between 2011/12 up to the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter (Apr-Jun) of this year. The detail in Appendix 1 then goes on to compare our performance against the all Wales data.
- 4.5 Appendix 1 therefore provides a comprehensive analysis of the performance in terms of speed on determining planning applications. Overall performance is considered to be good with the main performance issues for 2012-13 being:
- 9<sup>th</sup> in Wales in terms of % of applications approved (above the median)  
 7<sup>th</sup> in Wales in terms of speed of determining 'major' applications (above the median)  
 17<sup>th</sup> in Wales in terms of speed of determining 'minor' applications (below the median)  
 15<sup>th</sup> in Wales in terms of speed of determining 'household' applications (below the median)  
 9<sup>th</sup> in Wales in terms of speed of determining 'other' planning applications (above the median)
- 4.6 In terms of areas for improvement therefore we should look at speed in determining 'minor' and 'householder' applications.
- 4.7 For both categories our performance was better in 2011/12 than it was in 2012/13

	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>
Minor	70%	57%
Householder	90%	82%

So there is clearly scope to make more improvements this year. Early indications show we are on track to make these improvements by comparing 2012/13 performance against the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter for this year

	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> quarter this year</b>
Minor	57%	67%
Householder	82%	86%

- 4.8 Obviously performance will vary year on year dependent on a number of variables such as staff resources, sickness, complexity of applications etc and our comparative position in Wales will also vary dependent on how other authorities are performing.
- 4.9 In the end the performance in terms of speed of determining applications comes down to how important and how much emphasis each authority puts on speed compared to engagement with the community and quality of the decision actually taken. Officers consider we generally strike the right balance between speed and engaging with Members, being closer to our community and quality of decision, although clearly these latter issues are far harder to quantify and are far more subjective than speed. While speed is easier to measure than the more subjective issues, Officers consider speed to be a crude method of judging how planning contributes to the 2 Council priorities of housing and the economy.

**5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The Planning sections contribute to meeting the Council priorities in ensuring access to good quality housing and developing the local economy.

**6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

This report has no cost implications and will not affect other services.

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

Not relevant.

**8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

There has been no consultation carried out in order to compile this report.

**9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

**10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

The current levels of performance present no risks to the Council.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

Articles 6.1 and 6.3.4(b) of the Council's Constitution stipulate the Committee's role and powers with respect to performance management and monitoring service delivery.

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