



Haringey Council

Report for:	Regulatory Committee 21 September 2015	Item Number:	
Title:	Development Management and Planning Enforcement Work Report for 2015/16		
Report Authorised by:	Stephen Kelly – Assistant Director – Planning		
Lead Officer:	Emma Williamson – Head of Development Management		
Ward(s) affected: All	Report for Key/Non Key Decisions: Noting report – no decision required		

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 To advise the Regulatory Committee of performance on Development Management and Planning Enforcement so far in 2015/16, together with progress on the Development Management Improvement Plan as well as challenges faced by the service with regard to changes to national policy and resourcing and the service's response to these.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3. 2015/16 Development Management performance

- 3.1 The service continues to meet the national and local standards for the processing of major, minor and other planning applications and is in the top quartile for the processing of major applications and minor applications despite the increase in applications and staff resources remaining the same. The risk that the service would fall to be designated as a standards authority is considered low. The service continues to report performance measured by a suite of performance indicators reflecting the service's stretch targets to be top quartile for speed, cost and quality to the corporate performance board (and from there to Cabinet) quarterly.



4. Development Management Improvement Project

- 4.1 Work on the Planning Advisory Service's Resources Review continues and the final report is expected by the beginning of October. The pilot is designed to assist Councils to consider resourcing options and opportunities and understand and evidence them. Haringey has been focussing on:
- Budget and cost recovery
 - Consultation – internal and external in relation to the Statement of Community Involvement
 - Enforcement
- 4.2 The engagement has provided strong evidence to suggest that efforts to improve productivity and move the service closer towards its ambition of full cost recovery have been positive – with some ¾ of the cost of the development management service now being covered by income. However, given the limited discretion in fee setting (and national fee determination in respect of all planning applications) the fulfilment of this aspiration will remain challenging without more radical changes to process and approach.
- 4.3 Work has therefore continued on the exploration of how the planning process might be re-configured to reduce the impact and costs of “failure demand” on productivity and efficiency. A successful bid for transformation funding to introduce a pilot project building upon recent exploration of a “system” review using LEAN thinking is to commence shortly. The expectation is that a revised work-flow system will bring forward officer decision making (thereby responding to customer aspiration), reduce costs per application caused by failure demand and application handling costs. Subject to staff deployment being achieved, the project is expected to begin in the autumn with a team of 3 staff dealing with around 25% of the caseload. The rest of the team will be ‘rolled’ in to this system in 3 month steps over a year.
- 4.4 Progress on project delivery will be reported to the next meeting of the regulatory committee.

5 Issues and challenges

- 5.1 The service continues to face a number of delivery challenges – highlighted in the earlier report to this committee. These arise as a result of external and local factors, including changes in policy and legislation and changing local circumstances (and opportunities) and are listed below.
- 5.2 Staffing – the service has a number of non permanent employees in key roles within the planning teams. Whilst benefiting from the broad range of skills and from the commitment that these officers have shown to Haringey's planning service, the service is accordingly less resilient in the case of staff turnover and local members and community leaders are less able to build relationships with individual officers within their areas. The service is undertaking consultation on new structures, new role profiles and has begun advertising for permanent staff. Successfully attracting (and retaining) staff in a competitive market place will be challenging. The importance of retaining the existing high quality agency resource through this process is nevertheless also central to maintain service delivery and performance targets.
- 5.3 The personal caseloads of officers remains high, including significant pre-application interest and the implications of extended permitted development. Whilst application



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volumes have increased, income (because fees do not cover the full processing cost) has failed to keep pace. These record workloads (and associated failure demand costs) are an important driver – alongside a need to move towards budget self sufficiency – behind the imminent system re-design.

- 5.4 The extension of pre-application services for householders has been well received. Feedback from officers and applicants about the process and post meeting paperwork suggests that evolution of this service to reduce booking times (and staff work associated around this) and simplify and streamline the delivery of prompt responses is an area for focus in the autumn.
- 5.5 The ambitious programme for the delivery of an up to date Local Plan for the Borough reaches a new phase in the autumn, with the planned publication of the “regulation 19” submission drafts of four DPD’s (see agenda item elsewhere). In addition, the Policy team are developing the early proposals for the Wood Green Area Action Plan (also for later this year) and the West London Waste Local Plan (which is out for consultation at the current time). Helping communities and members across the Borough engage with the far reaching, long term proposals within these documents will remain a challenge – and officers from the Planning and Communications team are seeking to apply learning from the recent consultation rounds in an effort to improve the engagement process. Members support and participation in that process will be central to fulfilment of the ambition set out in the recently revised Statement of Community Involvement.
- 5.6 National policy changes (around important topics such as affordable housing and the definition of travellers) and the successful judicial review of such policy, together with legislative change to permitted development has created uncertainty within the planning process. There is also growing media focus around the consideration of development viability in the planning process which risks undermining the communities’ confidence in the planning process. To assist in addressing local unease, it is noted that the planned work of Scrutiny Committee over the coming months includes consideration of will shortly viability assessments. Officers are also reviewing the Council position in respect of access and scrutiny of viability reports in an attempt to open up the process as far as possible – whilst having regard to the sometimes commercial sensitivity of information contained within such appraisals.
- 5.7 The fruits of the Councils investment in regeneration in Tottenham and more recently in Wood Green regeneration programmes will bring in a number of significant planning applications forward. Whilst staffing impacts can be partly addressed through the deployment of planning performance agreements, the pipeline of projects, and complexity of issues engaged means that the “workload” of the Planning Committee through both pre-application and decision making roles is likely to be significant.

6 Comments of the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance and legal implications

- 6.1 The Assistant Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted in the preparation of this report. As a noting report there are no specific legal implications which arise.

7 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 7.1 Planning staff, application, appeals and enforcement case files are located at 6th floor, River Park House, Wood Green, London N22 8HQ. Application details are available to view, print



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and download free of charge via the Haringey Council website: www.haringey.gov.uk. From the homepage follow the links to 'planning' and 'view planning applications' to find the application search facility. Enter the application reference number or site address to retrieve the case details.

- 7.2 The Development Management and Building Control Support Team can give further advice and can be contacted on 020 8489 5504, 9.00am-5.00pm Monday to Friday.