

Report for: Regulatory Committee

Item number:

Title: Planning Services 2015/16 and April 2016/17 update

Report authorised by : Stephen Kelly

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Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** for information

1. Describe the issue under consideration

A report on the work of the Planning Service in 2015/16 and April 2017

2. Recommendations

- a) That this report be noted; and
- b) that the committee agree to the change to the scheme of delegation proposed to allow for Chair's discretion for Council own applications to be delegated decisions; and

3. Reasons for decision

In order to ensure that there is sufficient time on the Committee Agenda to deal with major and contentious applications.

4. Alternative options considered

Most of this report is for noting and as such no alternative options were considered for these elements. In relation to the scheme of delegation the alternative of leaving the scheme as it is now was considered however was not followed due to the need to ensure that the committee has time to consider major and contentious applications. Consideration was also given to specifying categories of applications that could be delegated however it was felt that this was too restrictive.

5. 2015/16 and April 2017 work report

Development Management

- Applications to date **2015/2016: 3907 & April 2016: 330**
- Applications in same period **2014/2015: 3479 & April 331**
- Number of cases on-hand end **2015/2016: 729 & April 2016: 686**
- Appeals decided **2015/2016: 64 & April 2016: 15**
- Appeals dismissed **2015/2016: 36 (56%) & April 2016: 11 (73%)**
- Cumulative performance
 - Majors **2015/2016: 100% (19/19) & April 2016: 100% (2/2)**

- Minors **2015/2016: 81% (356/438) & April 2016: 93% (39/42)**
- Others **2015/2016: 90% (1540/1707) & April 2016: 93% (102/110)**
- PSO **2015/2016: 84% (1273/1515) & April 2016: 83% (123/149)**
- Validation- **2015/2016: 3 days average & April 2016: 7days**

Performance overview

5.1 Performance has improved on determination of applications in time despite the increases in the number of applications over the year. Inroads have also been made into the backlog with the number of applications on-time reducing. The workloads of officers, although reduced through the new systems thinking approach and by recruiting an additional officer do still remain high. Performance on validation has dropped significantly in April. This is due to the support team being short staffed following the resignation of a member of staff and delays in subsequent recruitment as well as annual leave and the impact of the planning solutions work.

Pre-application advice

5.2 In 2015/16 there were 258 pre-application meetings generating a total of £194,000 of income and in April 2016 demand has remained consistent with 2015/16 and there have been 23 pre-application meetings generating a total of £23,000 of income. In 2015/16 there were 222 householder pre-application meetings generating £35,000 of income and again demand has remained consistent with 2015/6 and there have been 23 householder pre-application meetings on April generating £4,000 of income.

5.3 The use of Planning Performance agreements has continued to increase and in 2015/16 the service received £148,000 in income from these agreements on 14 schemes, with a further £70,000 due to be paid. In April 5 further PPA's have been agreed with developers amounting to approximately £180,000 although the income has yet to be received.

5.4 Meeting the 10 day deadline following pre-application meetings for providing responses has proved challenging and this target has now been increased to 21 days following the meeting. In some cases this has still proved challenging due to staff workload on planning applications and the service is looking at ways to combat this. This includes shortening the length of responses, which developers have indicated they support and implementing systems for officers and managers to be reminded of deadlines. Where complaints have been made regarding lateness of responses partial refunds of the pre-application fee have been offered.

Systems Thinking (Planning Solutions Team)

5.5 The Planning Solutions team was established in December 2015 with 2 members of staff and a team leader and has now been expanded to 3 members of staff with a team leader with another member of staff to join shortly. It is currently operating in Woodside, Noel Park, St Ann's, Harringay, Bounds Green and West Green wards. It is expected that this system will roll out across the borough by December 2016.

5.6 The key principles of this approach are:

- Aiming to assess an application on day 1 rather than just validating it
- Not validating an application if it is not acceptable
- Making a decision as soon as possible after consultation ends

5.7 This means that the metrics used to measure the data differ to that in the conventional system. The application end to end time (ie date deemed valid to date of decision) is the key metric rather than the % of applications determined in-time.

5.8 The PST team has received 213 applications of which 165 have been decided. In January and February the average days to a decision were 29 and 33 respectively and in March and April these have risen to 42 and 41 respectively. These end to end times are significantly lower than those in the rest of service. However we had hoped to reduce end to end times to 30 days. Performance has been influenced by a number of factors including the inability to stop sending consultation letters because of a delay in adopting the amended Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) that would allow for this due to a Judicial Review which was unsuccessful, IT and data management issues, the inclusion of some cases with section 106 agreements that have increased decision times and expanding the geographical scope of the team too quickly as well as a bulge in submitted applications. The Corporate Delivery Unit are assisting the service in reviewing the roll-out so far and putting in place measures to assist in managing performance going forward.

Planning Quality Framework

5.9 Haringey is taking part in the Planning Quality Framework which is coordinated by Planning Advisory Service. This provides us with an opportunity for us to compare our performance data with other similar local authorities and also for us to gather customer satisfaction data. We are awaiting the comparable data however the data for Haringey is set out below:

AGENTS SATISFACTION RATES 2015/2016: 79%

APPLICANTS SATISFACTION RATES 2015/2016: 67%

NEIGHBOURS SATISFACTION RATES 2015/2016: 58%

Planning Decisions

5.10 The planning Committee met 15 times over 2015/2016 and considered a total of 38 applications. It has approved 35 and refused 3. Of the applications refused, 1 was subsequently the subject of an appeal, which was withdrawn (St Anns Police Station) after a revised application was approved by committee. In one of these cases partial costs were awarded against the Council.

Planning Enforcement

- Complaints received 2015/16 **952**
- Complaints received April 2016 **70**
- Enforcement notices served 2015/16 **115**

- Enforcement notices April 2016 **15**
- 5.11 Improvement of the planning enforcement team is ongoing and performance has improved significantly over the year with notifications of decisions within 8 weeks as follows: 2015/2016: 96% (943/986) & April 2016: 100% (53/53).
- 5.12 In 2016/17 the consultation on, and subsequent adoption of, a new Enforcement Plan which sets the priorities for the Borough with regards to enforcement action is a priority.

PLANNING POLICY

Haringey Local Plan

- 5.13 2015 has seen steady progress being made on Haringey's emerging Local Plan, which includes the alterations to the Strategic Polices DPD, and replacements for the saved UDP polices with a Development Management Polices DPD, Site Allocation DPD and Tottenham Area Action Plan.
- 5.14 Consultation took place on the preferred option versions of the document early in the year (January – February 2015). This required significant engagement with a range of land interests, community groups and infrastructure providers. In addition, we held six 'drop-in' sessions across the borough and presented at a further 18 public events over the consultation period. In total, we received almost 700 individual representations making in excess of over 6,000 individual comments/proposed changes to the Plan. Much of the year was therefore taken up with reviewing and responding to the comments received, gathering further evidence, and firming up the position for certain sites and policies.
- 5.15 The revised documents - the pre-submission versions - gained full Council approval in November and were published for Regulation 19 consultation in January – March 2016. The Pre-submission documents, along with the representations received (424 in total) and the Council's response to each, are to be submitted to the Secretary of State in May for Examination in Public. The public hearings are likely to take place over the summer and, if found sound, all four documents will be reported back to Full Council towards the end of the year for formal adoption.
- 5.16 In addition to the above documents, work has also commenced on a Wood Green Area Action Plan (AAP) with Issues & Options consultation taking place in February – March 2016. 27 statutory responses were received, along with over 1000 other responses to drop-ins jointly organised by the Council and Soundings in Wood Green over the consultation period. The AAP recognises the development potential of the area, which includes significant Council landholdings, and the opportunities therein to strengthen the status of the Wood Green Metropolitan town centre. Four broad development options were promoted for consultation based around different levels of intervention, including a single more centrally located Crossrail 2 station to serve the area. Further analysis of the comments received and evidence gathering is underway, with a Preferred Option draft of the AAP due towards the end of summer 2016.

- 5.17 The service also continues to support the preparation of the Joint North London Waste Local Plan, which under went preferred option consultation in July 2015 and which is due to come forward for pre-submission consultation in Summer 2016. The service is also responding to Government proposals for the implementation of planning and housing reforms, including the proposals for 'Starter Homes'.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 5.18 The policy team have also supported the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum in the progression of the Highgate Neighbourhood plan which was published at the end of 2015 for consultation prior to submission to the Council – expected in mid 2016. The policy team have also provided advice and support for the recently recognised Neighbourhood Forum for Crouch End, who are expected to begin work on the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for that area in 2016. Public consultation could take place towards the end of 2016.

Other work

- 5.19 An Article 4 Direction restricting rights to convert warehouses to residential is currently being consulted on.
- 5.20 Planning Policy has processed 1 unsuccessful nomination for an Asset of Community Value, and two are currently pending decisions. In 2015 there were five successful ACV nominations, and no unsuccessful ones.
- 5.21 Additional evidence on open space, Gypsies and traveller needs, to support the production of the Wood Green AAP, and Tall Building SPD will be completed. Additionally input from Planning Policy will be required into other corporate documents, notably: the Housing Strategy, Affordable Housing Enabling, Housing Infill/Small Sites, Estate Renewal and Development Vehicle, Upper Lee Valley DIFS, Upper Lee Valley OAPF Update, Cultural Strategy, Economic Development Strategy, and Masterplans for Tottenham Hale, High Rd West, and Northumberland Park. It is anticipated that there will be work undertaken to support the production of the next version of the London Plan. This includes in 2016 updating the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, and Town Centre Healthchecks.

S106/CIL

- 5.22 The service took part in the 'Scrutiny in a day' on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and these findings are being reported by the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel to Cabinet on May 16. One of the recommendations is for the CIL to be reviewed in 2016 and this will be reported to the Scrutiny Panel in due course.

Viability

5.23 The Service recently took part in the 'Scrutiny in day' on Housing Viability and will incorporate the outcomes and findings of this review in its work programme going forward.

Conservation

5.24 A brief update is below:

Noel Park

- Recently adopted the new appraisal and management plan and amended CA boundary
- Will now seek to extend the relevant Article 4 direction to cover the whole estate

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for the Tottenham High Road Historic Corridor

- 6 conservation areas: North Tottenham, Scotland Green, Bruce Grove, Tottenham Green, Seven Sisters/Page Green, and South Tottenham
- Cabinet to approve public consultation on all 6 in September
- Work being carried out by our consultants

Complete Review of Local List

- Working in Conjunction with the CAACs
- Currently in the early stages of project

Transportation

5.25 The team has made major contribution to supporting planning officers in dealing with their very high number of planning applications as well as providing input at the pre-application stage. The team provided comments to over 400 applications.

5.26 The team has supported the delivery of regeneration in Tottenham and Wood Green through the provision of transport planning advice and participation in a range of delivery groups. It has led on the Council's input to Crossrail 2 which, if approved, would transform access and capacity across much of the Borough. In addition the team has worked to secure improvements to the Barking Gospel Oak line and to support enhancements to the West Anglia main line through Tottenham Hale and Northumberland Park.

5.27 The team has worked with the Smarter Travel team to deliver personalised travel planning in the Harringay/St Ann's area of the borough. The team is leading on measures to mitigate the impact of motor traffic such as setting up a car club contract, supporting the use of electric vehicles through BluePoint London and point to point car hire through Drive Now.

5.28 Following a successful bid in October TfL has allocated £2.3m LIP funding for transport projects in December for delivery in 2016/17. Transport planning has

led on planning of cycle routes, provided input to bus service planning and commenced work on developing a Transport Strategy.

BUILDING CONTROL

- Fee earning Applications received 2016 - 1252
- Fee earning Applications received 2015 - 1322
- Fee income from applications 2015 – £569k
- Fee income from applications 2016 – £637k

5.29 Against a challenging background, the Building Control Service has continued to provide valued customer services. Although applications over the year have slightly decreased the reach of the service has continued to increase, (following a protocol for BC across London) with the service inspecting and considering 38 applications for development beyond the Borough boundary. Fee income has also increased, partly due to larger projects, such as St Lukes, Hornsey Depot and THFC being on site. Work on the THFC stadium continues apace and the coming 12 months will be very difficult balancing the new building works whilst maintaining the safety at the existing stadium. Building Control continue to issue the Safety Certificate and monitor compliance on a match by match basis.

5.30 Dangerous Structures have again been ever prevalent, both within normal office hours and outside office hours (including seven callouts on Easter Monday!), with the team has been “called upon” over 230 times this year, from emergencies including partial demolition of buildings by vehicles to rectifying poor workmanship where adequate temporary support was not provided. Notable enforcement cases have included the need to mass fill an unauthorised and unsafe basement in South Tottenham to removing partially collapsed scaffolding.

5.31 BC consult continues to grow in stature providing affordable expert advice to other Council services. This advice ranges from party wall agreements to feasibility studies to structural surveys to structural repairs to bridge inspections and strengthening to highways related works and so on. The consultancy work continues to grow and is widely used by colleagues in Homes for Haringey and is now well respected throughout the Council. This growth has also been reflected in the fee income for this service.

MEMBERS

5.32 A member training programme is currently under development.

Revised scheme of delegation

5.33 A revision to the scheme of delegation is proposed to be taken to Standards Committee in June, for recommendation to full Council thereafter. This is in respect of applications made by the Council. The Scheme of Delegation was amended in 2014 to add a requirement that all applications where the Council is the applicant be required to be taken to committee for determination. An amendment is proposed such that the Chair can agree that a delegated

decision can be taken on applications made by the Council. Council applications where delegated decisions are proposed will be recorded on a form for discussion with the Chair at regular liaison meetings. The decision will be made by the Chair and the decision recorded on the form and the form will be saved to the case file This change is proposed in order to ensure that the committee has enough space on its agenda for major and contentious applications. A tracked changed version of the scheme of delegation is appended in Appendix three.

STAFFING

5.34 Advertisements for 17 posts across the service were placed in Jobs Go Public and Haymarket on 12 April 2016 as well as on the Haringey Website in 8 April. The closing date for application was 1 May 2016. 117 applications were received and 25 people have been shortlisted. It is anticipated that interviews will take place in the last week of May and the first two weeks of June.

PERFORMANCE AND CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT

5.35 The service has committed to be top quartile in London for speed, quality and cost. The service is top quartile for Majors and Minors. The attached appendix explains how the service is progressing in the realisation of this objective and reflects reporting undertaken to the corporate performance board. (see appendix 1 and 2). These figures cover 2015/16 and April 2016.

5.36 The service has refreshed its Improvement Plan to ensure continuous improvement and is currently working up a Transformation Funding bid in order to fund some of its activities. Notable items in this plan include design and delivery of a training programme for staff at all levels and further improvement activity in the Enforcement Service.

6. Contribution to strategic outcomes

The Planning Service contributes to outcomes in Priority 4 and 5.

7. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)

The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance has been consulted in relation to changes to the Planning Committee scheme of delegation. Changes to the Planning Committee scheme of delegation require a change to the Council Constitution. Any proposed change will therefore need to be referred to Standards Committee and then full Council for approval.

8. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 and 2 Development Management and Planning Enforcement performance data
Appendix 3 Proposed amendment to Scheme of Delegation

9. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Planning Applications are on the Planning Register on the Council's website and the Local Plan Documents are also on the Council's website.