

Report to Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel



Date of meeting: 19 June 2012

Portfolio: Planning

Subject: Key Performance Indicator measure and target for KPI 51, KPI 52 and KPI 53

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That, subject to the concurrence of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee:

(1) That the following performance measure be agreed:

- 1. KPI 51: Major Applications – the means of measuring remains unchanged.**
- 2. KPI 52: Minor Planning Applications – Delegated Decisions only**
- 3. KPI 53: Other Planning Applications – Delegated Decisions only**

(2) That the following performance target for 2012-13 be agreed:

- 1. KPI 51: Major Planning Applications – 81%**
- 2. KPI 52: Minor Planning Applications (Delegated) – 89%**
- 3. KPI 53: Other Planning Applications (Delegated) – 94%**

Executive Summary:

1. (Director of Planning and Economic Development) The purpose of this report is to seek an agreement on the performance measure and target for 2012-13 in respect of KPI 52 (Processing of **minor** planning application types within target time of 8 weeks) and if agreed, whether the same approach should be applied to KPI 51 (Processing of **major** planning application types within target time of 13 weeks) and KPI 53 (Processing of **other** planning application types within target time of 8 weeks).

Reason for Proposed Decision:

2. As part of the Council's duty to secure continuous improvement, the Council each year adopts a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which are regarded as crucial to the Council's core business and its corporate priorities.
3. At its meeting on 19 March 2012, the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee were informed that the move from a three to a four week area planning committee cycle had negatively impacted on the turnaround performance of planning applications in respect of Minor category types (KPI 52) for 2011-12. The target was not going to be achieved and it was suggested that a report be put in front of this Panel to look at measuring only those decided under officer delegated powers, where decision making is not time bound by a 4-week cycle.
4. That Committee felt that any application referred to a Planning Sub-Committee was

controversial and that perhaps KPI 52 (Minor types) should only refer to applications determined by Officers under delegated powers. If agreed, Officers also consider the same should apply to KPI 53 (Others) as the majority of applications in this category are delegated decisions. Whilst the delegated Major applications also looks high performing, it is only because there are only a few compared with the greater proportion of all Major applications dealt with at planning committees. For this reason, it is considered that the Major application should remain as a performance of both delegated and committee as existing.

Other Options Considered

5. Extending the time taken to determine and decide a planning application so that it is more than the statutory 8 weeks is an option. This also could improve performance but the planning application software system default is set to the DCLG 8 and 13 week requirement and cannot run two performance systems. It therefore would no longer adhere to the quarterly reporting of performance to the DCLG and also not be comparable with other Council's performance.
6. Make no changes to the current measure of performance indicators. This is an option, but unless the targets were also to be reduced, then it is very unlikely that KPI 52 and KPI 53 will be achievable.
7. Reverting back to the 3-week planning committee cycle appears not to be an option, and in any case would only be an option for 2013-14 at the earliest.

Report:

8. There are three categories of planning application types (Major, Minor and Other) which are measured as part of the Council's KPI's. These categories (Major, Minor and Other) continue to be used for the reporting of planning application turnaround times to the Dept of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on a quarterly basis as well as for the KPI's. They therefore measure all planning applications whether they are committee or delegated decisions.
9. KPI 51 measures the turnaround time of Major type planning applications before the 13 week period from receipt of a planning application expires. The target was just missed last year – 78.38% (target 81%) – but most of these type of planning applications are dealt with at planning committees.
10. KPI 52 measures the turnaround time of Minor type planning applications (which includes planning application for residential developments between 1 and 9 houses) before the 8 week period from receipt of a planning application expires. This target was also missed last year – 71.68% (target 81%) – compared to the previous year (2010-11) when the planning committees met on a 3-week cycle, the outturn was 80.55%.
11. KPI 53 measures the turnaround time of Other type planning applications (which includes the largest volume of planning application, including householder extensions) before the 8 week period from receipt of a planning application expires. This target was also missed last year – 90.3% (target 93%) – compared to the previous year (2010-11) when the planning committees met on a 3-week cycle, the outturn was 92.21%.
12. The table below breaks down, for each of the three planning application categories, the percentage dealt with under senior officer delegated powers, committee and a combination of both, for last year (2011-12). It reveals that a higher outturn would have been achieved if only delegated, not committee, decisions were counted. It also reveals that a more realistic measure of performance by officers could be achieved compared with a performance that includes committee decisions. The problem with

applications that need to go to a planning committee is that the 4 week cycle is too long for an officer to assess an application (including registering, making a site visit, consulting, assessing third party comments and objections and writing a report and having it agreed) and meet the two week lead-in time for the committee meeting. Deferring applications at committees means that an application has no chance of achieving its target, but thankfully this is a very small portion.

TYPE/ TARGET – 2011/12	% in time of DELEGATED	% in time of COMMITTEE	% in time of DELEGATED & COMMITTEE
MAJOR – 13 week (81%)	100%	55.56%	78.38%
MINOR – 8 week (81%)	89.34%	17.86%	71.68%
OTHER – 8 week (93%)	94.06%	38.37%	90.30%

13. In terms of setting a target, delivering the turnaround of planning applications in any case will be hampered by the current recruitment restriction whereby the Development Control section is two planning case officers down, but it is considered that the targets for Minor and Other should be in line with the above delegated performance, whilst the Major target be held as proposed.
14. Members of the Committee considered that KPI 52 (Minors) should be for delegated decisions only given those reported to planning committees were more controversial and therefore more likely to miss being reported to the first available 4-week cycle of meetings. Whilst KPI 53 (Others) is not as controversial in development scale terms, the large majority are household extensions dealt with under officer delegated powers. It is appropriate therefore that KPI 53 should measure delegated only. KPI 51 (Majors) should remain as existing because few are dealt with under delegated powers.
15. This report will also be considered by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee at its meeting on 25 June 2012, and the views of the Scrutiny Panel will be reported to the Committee.

Resource Implications:

N/A

Legal and Governance Implications:

There are no legal implications or Human Rights Act issues arising from the recommendations in this report, which ensure that performance management processes are in place to review and monitor performance.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None

Consultation Undertaken:

Discussions at Development Control Management Meeting.

Background Papers:

Data collected from Northgate M3 Development Control PS2. Final year KPI performance submissions for 2011/12 held by Performance Improvement Unit.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

N/A

Equality and Diversity:

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications?

No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?

N/A

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?

N/A