

Committee: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Agenda Item

Date: 23RD NOVEMBER, 2005

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Title: **Quarterly report on Development Control performance (June-September 2005)**

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Item for decision

Summary

As part of the move towards better performance management Members agreed to receive quarterly reports on speed of decision in Development Control. The attached graphs show quarterly performance for each of the three Best Value targets for speed of decision over the last three years. In addition the charts show the trajectories for performance improvement that are necessary to meet the Best Value targets by 2006/7, and performance in relation to those trajectories. The BV targets are to determine: 60% of major applications in 13 weeks, 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks and 80% of all other applications in 8 weeks. Members should be aware that the Council continues to be a standards authority for poor performance in determining major planning applications in the financial year from 2003-4, when we determined only 43% in 13 weeks. This means the Council continues to be under scrutiny from ODPM. However, our improvements in performance have been noted by ODPM and we are no longer required to send in quarterly updated trajectories and a self-assessment of performance to the Government Office. Officers do not anticipate that the Council will be a Standards Authority for 2006/7.

Recommendations

1. That the report be noted

Background Papers

The following papers are referred to by the author in the preparation of this report.

1. Trajectories attached to this report

Impact

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None.
Equalities	None
Finance	None.

Human Rights	None.
Legal Implications	None.
Ward-specific impacts	All.
Workforce/Workplace	See report

Situation

- 1 As part of the move towards better performance management Members agreed to receive quarterly reports on speed of decision in Development Control. The attached graphs show quarterly performance for each of the three Best Value targets for speed of decision over the last three years. In addition the charts show the trajectories for performance improvement that are necessary to meet the Best Value targets by 2006/7, and performance in relation to those trajectories. The BV targets are to determine: 60% of major applications in 13 weeks, 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks and 80% of all other applications in 8 weeks. Members should be aware that the Council continues to be a standards authority for poor performance in determining major planning applications in the financial year from 2003-4, when we determined only 43% in 13 weeks. This means the Council continues to be under scrutiny from ODPM. However, our improvements in performance have been noted by ODPM and we are no longer required to send in quarterly updated trajectories and a self-assessment of performance to the Government Office. Officers do not anticipate that the Council will be a Standards Authority for 2006/7.

- 2 The trajectories start from the last quarter of the financial year 2003-4, and the start point represents the average of performance up to that point, rather than the actual performance in that quarter. Members will note that the Council no longer has to share these trajectories with GoEast. It will be noted that performance exceeds the trajectories in all three categories, and continues to exceed the Best Value targets for all three categories of application. This follows the improvements in handling major applications by this Committee together with the changed delegation arrangements and improved performance management.

- 3 Members are reminded that in future it is likely that PDG will only be awarded to Councils that meet the Best Value targets. It is vital therefore that commitment of staff and Members to speed of decision – without sacrificing quality - remains a priority.

- 4 After a period of relative stability there has recently been an increase in staff turnover, and in particular three experienced planning officers have taken jobs elsewhere. As with all local authorities, the recruitment of experienced senior

staff remains a major problem and in the circumstances the efforts of all staff and Members involved in the delivery of development control services is to be congratulated.

