

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Development Control Committee	
MEETING DATE:	7 May 2014	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
TITLE:	Quarterly Performance Report Jan – Mar 2014	
WARD:	ALL	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
None		

1 THE ISSUE

At the request of Members and as part of our on-going commitment to making service improvements, this report provides Members with performance information across a range of activities within the Development Management function. This report covers the period from 1 January – 31 March 2014. Starting from this quarter onwards the DC Quarterly Performance Report will be updated as and when to include measures relevant and current to performance monitoring in the service today. In addition, some of the measures previously reported as tables will now be represented in graphical form for a more illustrative representation of trend. Further measures will also be introduced in subsequent months to reflect the statutory reporting changes being introduced by central government from this April onwards.

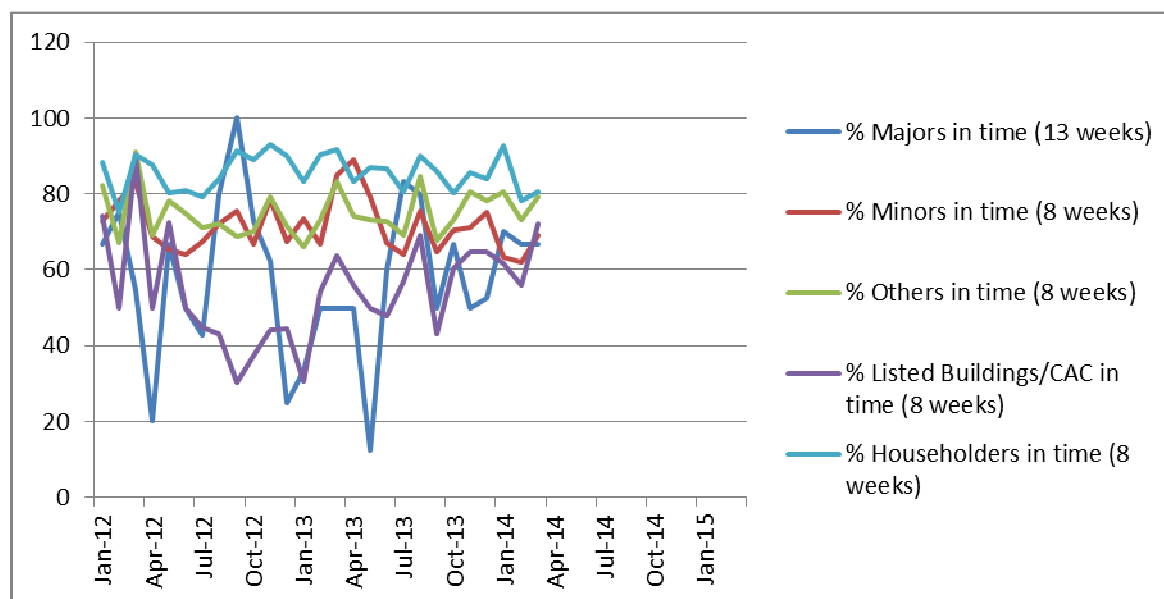
2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the performance report.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 Tables, charts and commentary

Table 1 - Comparison of applications determined within target times



The graph above shows there has been improvement in the performance of ‘Major’ applications in Jan – Mar 2014. An improvement in Listed Building application decision times has contributed to maintaining good performance in ‘Others’.

Overall, 2013/14 performance on planning application determination has slightly improved compared with 2012/13 percentage figures – Majors: 52% to 57%, Minors: 71% to 72%, Others: 73% to 76%.

Note: Major (10+ dwellings/0.5 hectares and over, 1000+ sqm/1 hectare and over); Minor (1-10 dwellings/less than 0.5 hectares, Up to 999 sqm/under 1 hectare); Other (changes of use, householder development, adverts, listed building consents, lawful development certificates, notifications, etc).

Table 2 - Recent planning application performance statistics

Application nos.	2012/13				2013/14			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Received	594	608	556	607	650	600	614	650
Withdrawn	61	49	56	67	62	58	63	66
Delegated no. and %	537 (97%)	516 (96%)	545 (96%)	441 (97%)	538 (95%)	556 (96%)	528 (95%)	527 (95%)
Refused no. and %	90 (16%)	96 (18%)	67 (12%)	67 (15%)	71 (13%)	62 (11%)	60 (11%)	64 (12%)

Table 2 highlights include:

- During the last three months, the number of new applications received and made valid increased by 7% when compared with the corresponding quarter last year. This figure

is also 12% up on the same period two years ago and 13% up on three years ago. Applications are up by 6% when compared to the previous financial year.

- The current delegation rate is 95% of all decisions being made at officer level against cases referred for committee decision. The last published England average was 91% (Year ending Dec 2013).
- Percentage of refusals on applications remains low at approx. 12%. The last published England average was 12%.

Table 3 – Dwelling numbers

Dwelling numbers	2012/13				2013/14			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Major residential (10 or more dwellings) decisions	5	3	4	5	8	3	9	14
Major residential decisions granted	4	3	3	5	3	2	8	6
Number of dwellings applied for on Major schemes							617	698
Number of dwellings permitted on Major schemes							417	929
Number of dwellings refused on Major schemes							166	389

Table 3 highlights include:

- Numbers of major residential decisions (10 or more dwellings) were significantly up when compared to the same quarter a year ago. This is in line with the national trend.

Table 4 - Planning Appeals summary

	Apr – Jun 2013	Jul – Sept 2013	Oct – Dec 2013	Jan – Mar 2014
Appeals lodged	30	29	25	22
Appeals decided	25	24	30	38
Appeals allowed	9 (47%)	6 (33%)	7 (26%)	5 (17%)
Appeals dismissed	10 (53%)	12 (67%)	20 (74%)	25 (83%)

Highlights:

- 14% less appeals this quarter and overall 13% less in the last year
- Over the last 12 months our performance on appeals allowed is 29% (compared to national average of 35%)
- Although no recent appeal costs have been awarded against the council, it should be noted however that for 2013/14 £132,438.40 was spent on room hire, and legal & consultants fees with regards to appeals for planning applications overturned at DC Committee.

Table 5 - Enforcement Investigations summary

	Apr – Jun 2013	Jul – Sep 2013	Oct – Dec 2013	Jan – Mar 2014
Investigations launched	140	182	123	318
Investigations on hand	203	241	227	275
Investigations *closed	170	135	120	293
Enforcement Notices issued	4	6	2	3
Planning Contravention Notices served	1	2	3	1
Breach of Condition Notices served	0	1	0	0

The figures shown in **Table 5** indicate a 159% increase in the number of investigations received this quarter, when compared with the previous quarter. This due to a new process to licence more HMOs which requires an investigation by our enforcement team. This is a one-off exercise. There was a 11% increase overall in cases received for 2013/14. *The main reason for enforcement cases being closed was because, following investigation, they were deemed that no breach had actually occurred. 4 legal notices having been served during this quarter. 23 legal notices were served in the last financial year.

Table 6 – Other areas of work

The service not only deals with formal planning applications and general enquiries, but also has formal procedures in place to deal with matters such as pre-application proposals, Householder Development Planning Questionnaires, procedures for discharging conditions on planning permissions and the newly introduced Householder Permitted Development prior notifications. **Table 6** below shows the numbers of these types of procedures that require resource to action and determine.

During the last quarter there has been a 31% increase in the overall volume of these procedures received in the service when compared to the previous quarter. This is mainly due to an increase in householder permitted development enquiries and pre-applications received which is not unusual in the spring to early summer period.

Table 6

	Jul – Sep 2013	Oct – Dec 2013	Jan – Mar 2014
Number of Household Development Planning Questionnaires	115	92	144

Number of pre-application proposals submitted	198	182	237
Number of 'Discharge of Condition' requests	109	123	128
Number of pre-application proposals submitted through the 'Development Team' process	9	5	4
Applications for Non-material amendments	37	20	28
Householder Permitted Development prior notifications	9	6	20

Table 7 – Works to Trees

Another function that the Planning Service undertakes involves dealing with applications and notifications for works relating to trees. **Table 7** below shows the number and percentage of these applications and notifications determined. During Jan - Mar 2014, performance on determining applications for works to trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders and performance on dealing with notifications for works to trees within a Conservation Area remained good.

Table 7

	Jul – Sep 2013	Oct – Dec 2013	Jan – Mar 2014
Number of applications for works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)	11	26	22
Percentage of applications for works to trees subject to a TPO determined within 8 weeks	100%	96%	73%
Number of notifications for works to trees within a Conservation Area (CA)	166	219	157
Percentage of notifications for works to trees within a Conservation Area (CA) determined within 6 weeks	99%	98%	97%

Table 8 - Customer transactions using telephone

On 2 September 2013, all Planning calls went back to Development Management from Council Connect This has led to higher rates of resolution for the customer at first point of contact (50%) and there has been a decrease in calls being double handled by other officers. **Table 8** below details the number of incoming calls to the service for the Development Management function.

Table 8

	Oct – Dec 2013	Jan – Mar 2014	
Planning Information Officers	2070	3234	
Planning Officers	1462	1680	
Planning Administration	916	770	
Historic Environment Team	717	462	
Enforcement Team	552	607	

Table 9 - Electronic transactions

The Planning Services web pages continue to be amongst the most popular across the whole Council website, particularly 'View and Comment on Planning Applications' (an average of 16,000 hits per month) and 'Apply for Planning Permission' (average of 1,000 hits per month). The former is the most popular web page after the council's home page.

As mentioned in the last report, the Council has recently launched its own Listed Buildings map layer web page, which links up with the full statutory listing description at English Heritage. This web page has averaged 320 hits during its first 3 months following promotion on the Council's latest news web page and email communication to regular planning agents.

Around 75% of all applications are now submitted online through the Planning Portal link on the Council website, and **Table 9** below shows that the authority received in the region of **76%** of applications online during Jan – Mar 2014. The benefits to agents and applicants include an online help function, immediate delivery and acknowledgement, and savings on printing and postage costs. Secure fee payments can also be made online through the Planning Portal facility.

Table 9 - Percentage of planning applications submitted electronically (through the national Planning Portal)

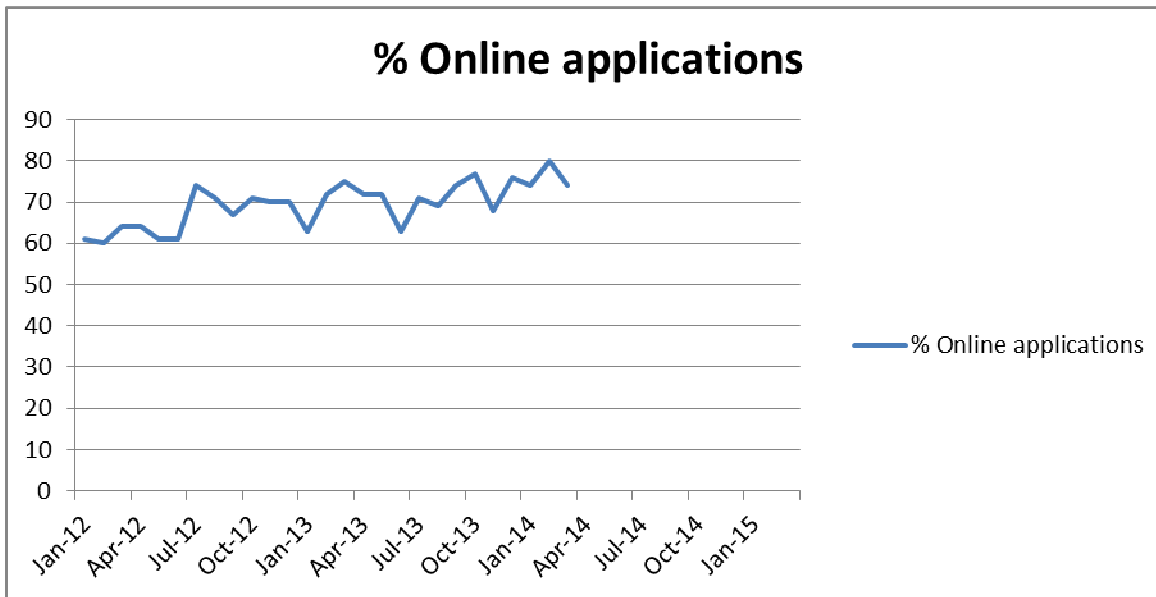


Table 10 - Customer Feedback

During the quarter Jan – Mar 2014, the Council has received the following feedback in relation to the planning service. The number of complaints **not** upheld remains good.

Table 10

Customer Feedback	Jul – Sep 2013	Oct – Dec 2013	Jan – Mar 2014
Compliments received			6
Complaints received	9	11	9
Complaint upheld	1	0	0
Complaint Not upheld	9	10	5
Complaint Partly upheld	1	1	1

Table 11 - Ombudsman Complaints

The council has a corporate complaints system in place to investigate matters that customers are not happy or satisfied about in relation to the level of service that they have received from the council. However, there are circumstances where the matter has been subject to investigation by officers within the authority and the customer remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation. When this happens, the customer can take their complaint to the **Local Government Ombudsman** for him to take an independent view. **Table 11** below shows a breakdown of Ombudsman complaints lodged with the Local Government Ombudsman for the previous four quarters.

Table 11

Ombudsman Complaints	Apr – Jun 13	Jul – Sep 13	Oct – Dec 13	Jan – Mar 14
Complaints received	0	4	0	5
Complaints upheld	0	0	0	0
Complaints Not upheld	0	2	3	2

Table 12 – Section 106 Agreements

Members will be aware of the Planning Obligations SPD published July 2009. Planning Services have spent the last two years compiling a database of Section 106 Agreements. This is still a work in progress, but it has now enabled the S106 Monitoring Officer to actively progress in monitoring delivery of agreed obligations. **Table 12** below shows a breakdown of S106 Agreement sums agreed and sums received between Jan - Mar. Also detailed is the outstanding balance for agreements signed between July 2009 and Mar 2014. Members should be aware that the figures are for guidance only because of the further work still being undertaken in the S106 monitoring operation.

Table 12

Section 106 Agreements	Apr – Jun 2013	Jul – Sep 2013	Oct – Dec 2013	Jan – Mar 2014
Funds agreed	£159,693.14	£433,463.77	£564,310.33	£3,093,325.52
Funds received (may include monies received for agreements made prior to Jul '09)	£251,226.00	£34,154.93	£364,722.89	£106,026.73
Outstanding funds balance (Jul '09 – Mar '14)	£14,040,164.17	£13,454,038.54	£14,081,186.82	£17,518,176.54

Table 13 – Accredited Agents

As part of our commitment to promote the submissions of high quality planning applications, Planning has been trialling an Agent Accreditation Scheme, details of which are on the web page –

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-advice-and-guidance/planning-agents>

The list of current Accredited Agents is displayed on the web page. These agents have shown they fully understand how to submit a properly prepared planning application which means they are easier for us to process and reduce the potential of any delays.

Table 13

	Apr – Jun 2013	Jul – Sep 2013	Oct – Dec 2013	Jan – Mar 2014
Numbers of Accredited Agents	-	12	17	19
Numbers of householder applications submitted by Accredited Agents	-	13	29	18

Contact person	John Theobald, Data Technician, Planning and Transport Development 01225 477519
Background papers	CLG General Development Control statistical returns PS1 and PS2 + Planning applications statistics on the DCLG website: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-applications-statistics
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	