

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Development Control Committee	
MEETING DATE:	11 February 2015	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
TITLE:	Quarterly Performance Report Oct - Dec 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 Oct – 31 December 2014.

In 2014, Bath & North East Somerset Council was one of the top five performing council planning departments in the UK, in terms of dealing with the largest volumes of major applications most quickly. This was according to the Annual Planning Survey 2014, produced by GL Hearn and the British Property Federation. As a result, the Group Manager for Development Management, Mark Reynolds, was invited to No 10 Downing Street in November, to meet with the other top-performing councils to discuss ways to share best practice and make further improvements to the planning system.

The Council is intending to implement the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in April 2015, subject to council decision in February. CIL is a new tariff system that will allow the council to raise funds from development to contribute to the costs of providing some of the infrastructure needed, like new or safer road schemes, education contributions or park improvements. Therefore CIL levy is expected to have a positive economic effect on communities and development across the area. Development Management has started a communication programme to inform developers of potential future CIL liability. This means that any applications approved after April 6th may be subject to CIL. Because some of the lead times for deciding applications are 13 weeks, we have started to let developers know if an application they submit may incur CIL. Further information can be found at www.bathnes.gov.uk/cil.

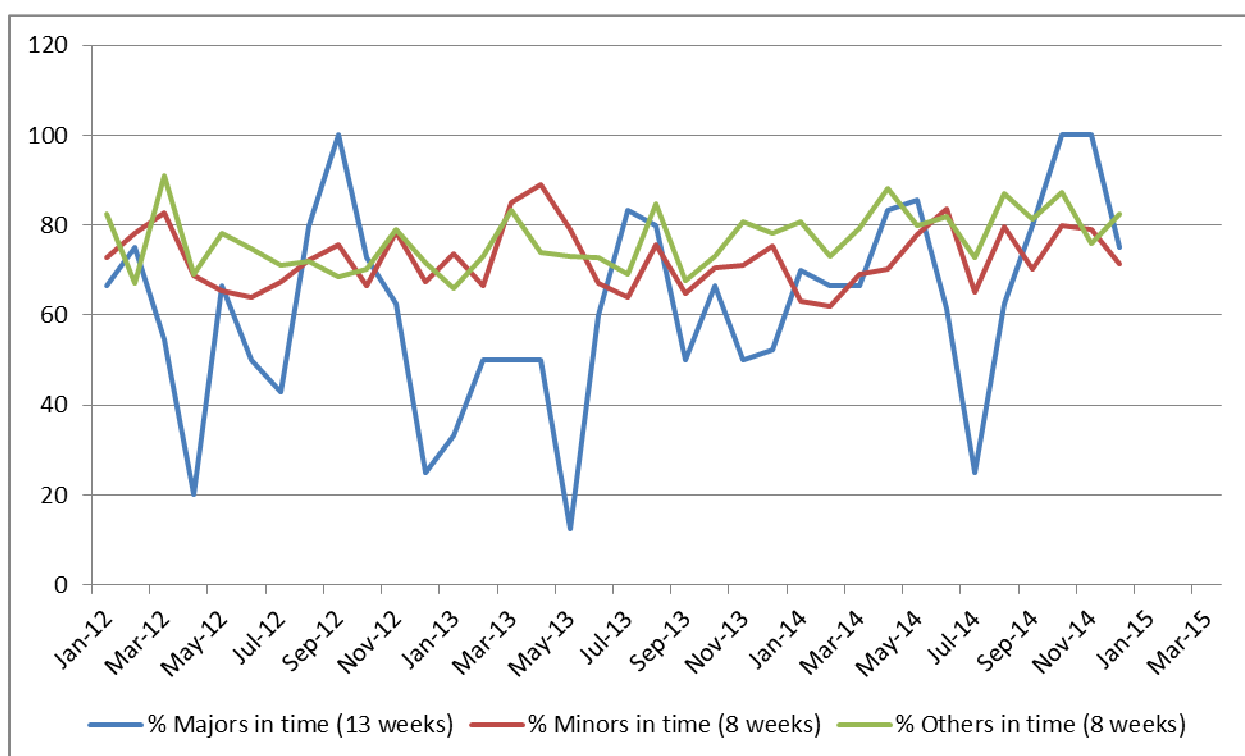
2 RECOMMENDATION

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

3 THE REPORT

Tables, charts and commentary

Table 1 - Comparison of applications determined within target times



% of planning applications in time	2013/14				2014/15			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
% Majors in time	32%	77%	52%	68%	73%	64%	80%	
% Minors in time	78%	68%	75%	65%	77%	72%	77%	
% Others in time	73%	74%	78%	78%	83%	80%	82%	

The table above shows there has been above target performance on all planning application types in Oct – Dec 2014.

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.	2013/14				2014/15			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Received	650	600	614	650	645	589	605	
Withdrawn	62	58	63	66	43	45	59	
Delegated no. and %	538 (95%)	556 (96%)	528 (95%)	527 (95%)	532 (96%)	540 (95%)	443 (95%)	
Refused no. and %	71 (13%)	62 (11%)	60 (11%)	64 (12%)	52 (9%)	76 (13%)	42 (9%)	

Table 2 highlights include:

- Contrary to national trend B&NES have shown a 4% rise in planning application numbers in the year to Sept 2014. The national trend is only a 1% rise.
- The current delegation rate is in line with the last published England average of 94% (July to Sept 2014).
- Percentage of refusals on applications remains very low when compared with the last published England average of 12% (Year ending Sept 2014).

Table 3 – Dwelling numbers

Dwelling numbers	2013/14				2014/15			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Major residential (10 or more dwellings) decisions	8	3	9	14	13	9	1	
Major residential decisions granted	3	2	8	6	7	2	1	
Number of dwellings applied for on Major schemes			617	698	543	463	982	
Number of dwellings permitted on Major schemes			417	929	212	120	145	
Number of dwellings refused on Major schemes			166	389	299	292	32	

Table 3 highlights include:

- Numbers of major residential decisions (10 or more dwellings) were down when compared to the same Oct – Dec quarter a year ago.

Table 4 - Planning Appeals summary

	Jan – Mar 2014	Apr – Jun 2014	Jul – Sep 2014	Oct – Dec 2014
Appeals lodged	22	30	24	22
Appeals decided	38	24	22	18
Appeals allowed	5 (17%)	9 (45%)	6 (35%)	3 (19%)
Appeals dismissed	25 (83%)	11 (55%)	11 (65%)	13 (81%)

Highlights:

- Recent appeal costs in association with applications overturned at committee amount to £39,512 for the financial year so far. This was mainly spent on legal & consultants fees
- In the year to 31 Dec 2014 there has been a 18% drop in appeal numbers
- Over the last 12 months our performance on appeals allowed is better than the national average at 28% (national average approx. 35%)

Table 5 - Enforcement Investigations summary

	Jan – Mar 2014	Apr – Jun 2014	Jul – Sep 2014	Oct – Dec 2014
Investigations launched	318	273	114	197
Investigations on hand	275	275	220	301
Investigations closed	293	253	150	154
Enforcement Notices issued	3	0	0	2
Planning Contravention Notices served	1	6	2	4
Breach of Condition Notices served	0	0	0	0

The figure shown in **Table 5** indicate a 73% increase in the number of investigations received this quarter, when compared with the previous quarter. However, this volume is now more in line with quarterly 2013 figures. The increases early in 2014 were due to the new process to licence more HMOs which required an investigation by our enforcement team. This was a one-off exercise which skewed the figures for the first half of 2014. 6 notices have been served during this quarter.

Table 6 – Other areas of work (application handled but not included in national returns)

The service also has formal procedures in place to deal with pre-application advice, householder development planning questionnaires, discharging conditions on planning permissions, prior approvals, prior notifications and non-material amendments to list a few. **Table 6** below shows the total number of these types of procedures that require resource to action and determine.

During the last quarter the volume of these procedures received in the service is still significantly above the 2013 figures (21% increase on the same quarter in 2013).

Table 6

	Apr – Jun 2014	Jul – Sep 2014	Oct – Dec 2014
Other types of work	541	547	527

Table 7 – Works to Trees

- There has been a continuation of the seasonal trend of the expected rise in the number of TPOs and Notifications during Autumn.

Table 7 below shows the number and percentage of tree applications and notifications determined. During Oct - Dec 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 excellent.

Table 7

	Apr – Jun 2014	Jul – Sep 2014	Oct – Dec 2014
Number of applications for works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)	15	17	25
Percentage of applications for works to trees subject to a TPO determined within 8 weeks	93%	100%	96%
Number of notifications for works to trees within a Conservation Area (CA)	158	173	206
Percentage of notifications for works to trees within a Conservation Area (CA) determined within 6 weeks	99%	98%	92%

Table 8 - Customer transactions using telephone

Table 8 below details the number of incoming calls to the service for the Development Management function. Calls to the Planning & Conservation Team have steadily decreased since 2013. However the increase in the last quarter is partly due to a reorganisation of the service's teams. Recent changes to the automated voice response selection options ensures that calls reach the correct team in the first instance without being transferred via the Planning Information Officers.

Table 8

	Apr – Jun 2014	Jul – Sep 2014	Oct – Dec 2014
Planning Information Officers	3266	2724	1987
Planning Officers	1658	2061	1720
Planning Administration	785	927	1099
Planning & Conservation Team	506	295	418
Enforcement Team	435	495	588

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 15,000 hits per month) and ‘Apply for Planning Permission’ (average of 1,200 hits per month). The former is the most popular web page after the council’s home page.

Table 9 below shows a continuing upward trend in online submissions via the Planning Portal. 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.

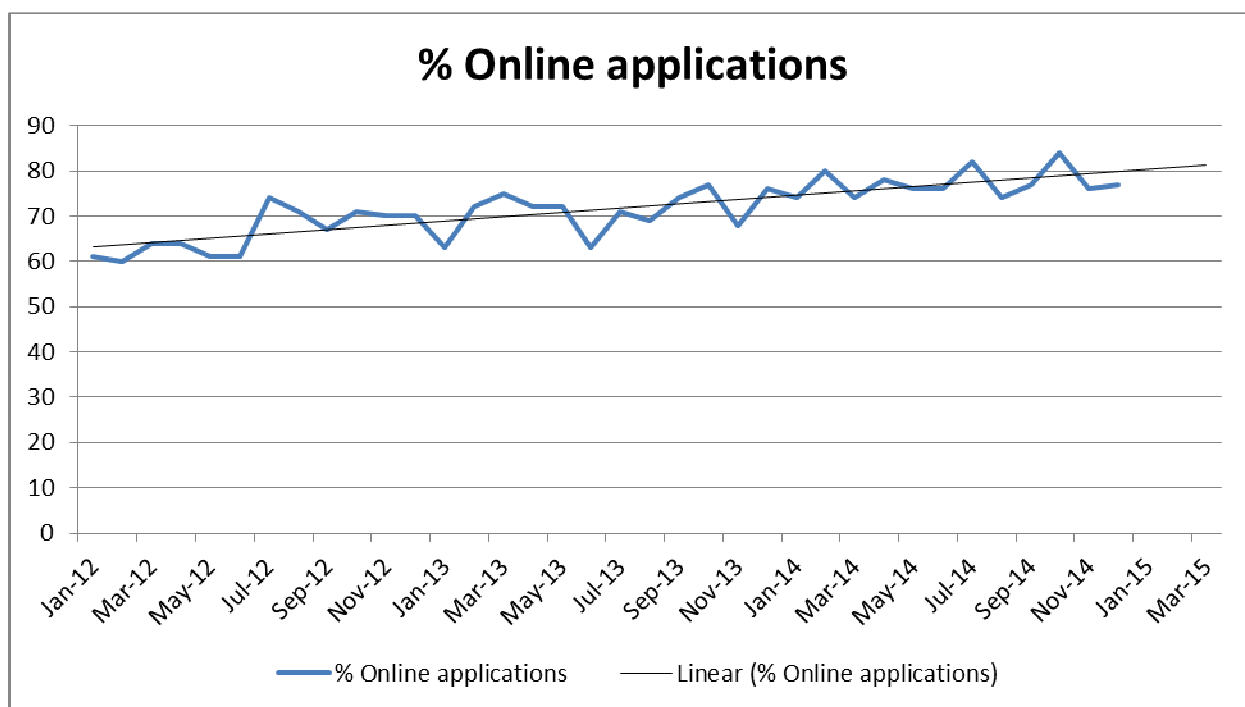


Table 10 - Customer Feedback

During the quarter Oct - Dec 2014, the Council has received the following feedback in relation to the planning service. The number of complaints **not** upheld still remains good and there has been a rise in compliments recorded.

Table 10

Customer Feedback	Apr – Jun 2014	Jul – Sep 2014	Oct – Dec 2014
Compliments received	6	5	10
Complaints received	9	12	12
Complaints upheld	0	0	1

Complaints Not upheld	7	12	3
Complaints Partly upheld	1	1	4

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. There has been one upheld complaint in the last year.

Table 11

Ombudsman Complaints	Jan – Mar 14	Apr – Jun 14	Jul – Sep 14	Oct – Dec 14
Complaints received	5	2	1	2
Complaints upheld	0	0	1	0
Complaints Not upheld	2	1	1	1

Table 12 – Section 106 Agreements

Members will be aware of the Planning Obligations SPD published July 2009. Planning Services have spent the last few 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 Oct and Dec. Also detailed is the outstanding balance for agreements signed between July 2009 and Dec 2014. Members should be aware that the figures are for guidance only because of the further work still being undertaken in the S106 monitoring role.

Table 12

Section 106 Agreements	Jan – Mar 2014	Apr – Jun 2014	Jul – Sep 2014	Oct – Dec 2014
Funds agreed	£3,342,798.75	£175,000.00	£136,076.09	£88,863.10
Funds received (may include monies received for agreements made prior to Jul '09)	£108,493.75	£169,684.06	£28,700.61	£157,844.33
Outstanding funds balance (Jul '09 – Dec '14)	£17,518,176.54	£17,933,575.36	£17,593,552.42	£17,400,200.91

Table 13 – Accredited Agents

A list of current Accredited Agents is displayed on the [council website](#). 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

	Jan – Mar 2014	Apr – Jun 2014	Jul – Sep 2014	Oct – Dec 2014
Numbers of Accredited Agents	19	23	23	24
Numbers of householder applications submitted by Accredited Agents	18	40	28	44

Contact person	John Theobald, Project/Technical and Management Support Officer, 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	