



Leicester
City Council

All wards

Planning & Development Control Committee

19 December 2006

PLANNING APPLICATION STATISTICS

Report of the Service Director, Planning & Policy

1 Purpose of Report and Recommendation

1.01 This report gives performance information on the speed of determining planning applications. It contains:

- A summary of planning application statistics for Leicester for the July to September 2006 quarter.
- Information on the Statistical Release from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG): "Planning Applications – April to June 2006".
- A report on a News Release from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG): "Planning grant study shows further performance improvements".

1.02 Members are asked to note and comment on this report to help the performance monitoring and management process.

2 Financial Implications

2.01 The amount of fee income recorded for planning applications during the July to September quarter was approximately £308,000.

2.02 The budget allowance for 2006-2007 is £1,268,600. The amount received in the first two quarters of the financial year is approximately £600,000; thus slightly below budget. However, £123,000 was brought forward from last year, and the budgeted figure is expected to be achieved.

3 Report

Local Performance (July to September 2006)

- 3.01 488 planning applications were received during the quarter. This compares with equivalent quarterly figures of 527 last year and 575 in 2004. Numbers received each quarter have varied from 488 to 550 over the last two years; and the last quarter's figure for applications received is the lowest since the fourth quarter of 2002.
- 3.02 504 applications were determined during the quarter, of which 87.5% were dealt with within eight weeks. In the same quarter of 2005, 70.8% were dealt with within eight weeks. The overall 'eight-week' figure for the last two years is 78.7%; the quarterly figure has not fallen below 70% for the last fourteen quarters.
- 3.03 416 applications (82.5%) were approved during the quarter, compared with 89.0% in the same quarter of 2005. The proportion of applications approved in the last four quarters is 82.0% compared with 86.3% in the previous four quarters.
- 3.04 The Government has set targets for performance depending on the type of application. These targets, and figures for Leicester are:

Category	Government target	July-September 2006		July-September 2005		Year ending September 2006
		Leicester's %	Number of decisions	Leicester's %	Number of decisions	
Major applications	60% in 13 weeks	72.73%	33	43.75%	32	55.08%
Minor applications	65% in 8 weeks	87.50%	136	71.43%	112	85.71%
All other applications	80% in 8 weeks	94.59%	333	75.48%	367	87.65%

- 3.05 I am pleased to report that in the third quarter of 2006, the targets were met in all categories. The percentages for the comparable quarter of 2005 are also shown in the table, and show a substantial improvement for all categories over the year.
- 3.06 For the full year ending September 2006, we almost made the target for 'Major' applications, and were above target in the other two categories.
- 3.07 Members have requested an explanation for the delay on those Major applications determined in the "Over 13 weeks" period. The table at Appendix A lists these 9 applications and the reasons for delay, which were a combination of:
- Negotiating and waiting for amendments or information
 - Section 106 agreements
 - Consultation and notification issues

- 3.08 133 decisions in the quarter involved amendments, 26.4% of the total. Ten (7.5%) of the amended applications were refused. If amended applications are excluded, 93.3% would have been dealt with in eight weeks, but 21.0% would have been refused.
- 3.09 230 householder applications were determined during the quarter, 39.9% of total decisions. 88.3% of householder applications were approved, and 95.2% were dealt with within eight weeks.
- 3.10 The Government has set a target that at least 90% of decisions on planning applications should be delegated. We consistently achieve this target, and determined 92.8% of applications under delegated powers in the quarter. Over the last two years, the relevant statistics are:
- Proportion Delegated : Committee 92.4% : 7.6%
 - % in 8 weeks Delegated 83.3%
 - % in 8 weeks Committee 22.9%

Appeals

- 3.11 15 appeals were received in the July to September quarter, of which one was an enforcement appeal. Sixteen appeals were decided, of which four were against enforcement notices. Two appeals were allowed:

Allowed	2	13%
Dismissed	12	75%
Mixed/other decision	0	0%
Withdrawn	2	13%
Total decided	16	

- 3.12 The two successful appeals were as follows:
- 20068018A - 20052145 - 254 MERE ROAD - CHANGE OF USE FROM TRAINING CENTRE (CLASS D1) TO EIGHT SELF CONTAINED FLATS (CLASS C3) - MR M MOHAMMED
 - 20068028A - 20060357 - 25-31 RAW DYKES ROAD - TWO INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED FREE STANDING DISPLAY SIGNS AT FRONT OF SHOPS (NUMBERED NEL015 AND NEL017 ON THE PLANS) - STREET BROADCAST LTD

4 National Statistics (April to June 2006)

- 4.01 In England as a whole, the number of applications submitted in the second quarter of 2006 was one percentage point lower than for the equivalent period of 2005, although in the East Midlands there was a slight increase.
- 4.02 The total number of decisions nationally was five percentage points lower than the same period of 2005.

- 4.03 Householder decisions decreased by 5% nationally, but these applications accounted for 53% of all decisions. The number of decisions relating to new dwellings decreased by 6% compared with the previous year, and accounted for 13% of all decisions.
- 4.04 82% of planning applications nationally were granted, one percentage point lower than in the equivalent quarter of 2005.
- 4.05 83% of all decisions nationally were made within eight weeks, two percentage points higher than the equivalent quarter of 2005.
- 4.06 In April to June 2006, 279 authorities (76 per cent of all authorities) made at least 60 per cent of their decisions on major applications within the 13 week period; 314 authorities (85 per cent) made at least 65 per cent of their decisions on minor applications within the statutory 8 week period; and 332 authorities (90 per cent) made at least 80 per cent of their decisions on other applications within the statutory 8 week period. The number of authorities meeting the performance target in April to June 2006 compared with performance in the same quarter a year ago, represents a 7 percentage point improvement on major applications, a 4 percentage point improvement on minor applications and a 6 percentage point improvement on other applications.

5 DCLG News Release

- 5.01 The Department for Communities and Local Government issued a News Release on 14 September: "Planning grant study shows further performance improvements". It states:

Local Authority delivery of planning services continues to improve according to the latest evaluation of the Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) published today by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The DCLG grant, valued at £155m for 2005/06, seeks to stimulate local planning authorities to process applications as swiftly and effectively as possible.

Spending patterns show that the PDG is being used more and more to help in the creation of Local Development Frameworks and to improve the quality of the whole planning service, including customer satisfaction. The funding is being used to invest in IT and staff across the country and there has been a high retention rate of the grants both in local planning authorities (94 per cent) and in county councils (91 per cent).

DCLG minister Angela Smith said:

"It is excellent to see so many planning departments making full and effective use of the PDG. The funding is helping councils and local authorities across the country to invest in staff and IT, raising standards in the quality of service offered as well as the speed of delivery. I would like to assure local authorities, businesses and other users of the planning system that we are listening to their concerns and that we are taking note of where and why services get better. By working together, we can ensure

that the PDG will continue to offer benefits and improvements to the planning system”.

Also published today is a study which provides an insight on the private sector’s view of the grant’s impact and of the planning system as a whole. It shows that business feels that local planning authorities have made improvements in the processing of planning applications, but also highlights areas where further work should be undertaken.

The introduction next year of the Standard Application Form and revised guidance on how to validate planning applications will help to bring more clarity to the process. DCLG is also preparing a more developed survey of the private sector for next year.

6 Implications for Leicester’s Planning Service

- 6.01 This is the fourteenth consecutive quarter that the overall figure for determinations within eight weeks has been over 70%. Additionally, in the last quarter, we achieved government targets in all three bands.
- 6.02 The staff in Development Control are continuing to meet the challenge of improving their performance indicators and case by case performance on major applications is closely scrutinised. The detailed analysis provided in appendix A shows that our weak-spots continue to be Section 106 agreements and consultation response times (generally from other bits of the Council). These areas are being urgently addressed.
- 6.03 Actions are continuing to maintain a high level performance. The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) (Government consultants) has made some further suggestions to streamline our planning processes and improve our performance. Similar to our own analysis, PAS refer to the need to speed up our handling of Section 106 developer contributions. The all-party Member and Officer Task and Finish Group, established to deal with this, have made recommendations for changes in procedures within the council. These were reported to committee in October and considered by full Council on 30th November.
- 6.04 PAS are working with development control staff setting up new procedures and guidance and are providing training for staff.
- 6.05 One of the knock-on effects of tightening procedures and streamlining processes is that more applications are refused. This results in more appeals so we predict our appeals workload will continue to rise in the short term. The increase in formal enforcement actions authorised is also affecting the appeals workload.
- 6.06 The new Planning and Policy Division has just carried out its staffing review to deliver the budget savings in the 2006/7 Budget Strategy. The Service Director has used that opportunity to enable the Planning Service to take a more performance management orientated approach. That review will be implemented over the next three months. Recruitment to a large number of vacant posts will also take place over that period.

- 6.07 Despite all of our improvements over the last several months the DCLG have declared that based on our poor performance last year we are very likely to be declared a Planning Standards Authority next year, this could affect the Council's overall CPA assessment next year. We are in the process of drafting a letter to the DCLG to point out all the improvements we have carried out and the perversity of penalising a service using statistics that are 18 months out of date whilst currently that same service is significantly improving and in the process of positive transformation.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 7.01 Equal opportunities information about applications considered by the Committee is presented at each meeting, and the relative refusal rates by ethnic group are monitored separately.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.01 None.

9 Background Papers - Local Government Act 1972

- (a) Reports on the handling of planning applications to previous Committees. Back copies retained in file R22A1.
- (b) Statistical Release 2006/0110 (29 September 2006) from the Department for Communities and Local Government: Planning Applications, April to June 2006.
- (c) News Release 2006/0097 (14 September 2006) from the Department for Communities and Local Government: "Planning grant study shows further performance improvements".

Papers (b) and (c) are available on the Internet from the DCLG web site: www.communities.gov.uk.

10 Officer to contact

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APPENDIX A: MAJOR APPLICATIONS DETERMINED IN "OVER 13 WEEKS"

Reason for Delay	App No and PPRN	location	proposal	Decision & Date	applicant	Days taken
Negotiations on the planning application and section 106 agreement.	20021703 LPM7321	FILBERT STREET, FORMER LEICESTER CITY FOOTBALL CLUB GROUND	RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT (CLASS C3): RETENTION OF 5 TO 12 STOREY BUILDING CONTAINING 196 FLATS, WITH ANCILLARY FACILITIES AND PARKING; 4 TO 12 STOREY BUILDING FOR 242 FLATS, WITH BASEMENT & SURFACE PARKING AND LANDSCAPED COURTYARD; 3 TO 4 STOREY BUILDING F	CO - 18/08/2006	DOWNING DEVELOPMENTS	1270
Sought additional information, but the applicant not prepared to submit this, nor to amend or withdraw the application.	20050468 JTN7090	DISRAELI STREET, (TIPIDEN)	SIX HOUSES, THREE & FOUR STOREY BLOCKS OF THIRTY FLATS, (CLASS C3)	RF - 04/08/2006	WESTLEIGH DEVELOPMENTS LTD	508
Initially subject to section 106 agreement which took it over 13 weeks. However, subsequent amendments mean that contributions could be conditioned.	20050548 LOQ6858	EASTERN BOULEVARD, FORMER KARADIA TRIMS BUILDING	CHANGE OF USE FROM FACTORY (CLASS B2) TO 19 FLATS (CLASS C3); 5 LIVE/WORK UNITS (NO USE CLASS) (AMENDED PLANS)	CO - 29/09/2006	KINGSBURY SPECIAL VENTURES	554
Negotiations on the planning application and section 106 agreement.	20051300 MJW5872	ABBAY PARK ROAD, BOSTON HOUSE	CHANGE OF USE OF FACTORY (CLASS B2) TO 44 FLATS (CLASS C3) (12x1-BED AND 32x2-BED), WITH THREE AND FOUR STOREY EXTENSIONS TO FRONT AND REAR AND TWO STOREY ROOF EXTENSION; BASEMENT PARKING; LANDSCAPING (SUBJECT TO A S.106 AGREEMENT) (AMENDED)	CO - 27/07/2006	METROPOLIS ARCHITECTURE LTD	385
Delays due to waiting for the applicant to submit amendments.	20052437 NNG4243	2 CHURCH STREET, 142 CHARLES STREET	SIX STOREY MIXED USE BUILDING COMPRISING GROUND FLOOR TO FOURTH FLOOR OFFICES (CLASS B1), FIFTH FLOOR RESTAURANT (CLASS A3), BASEMENT CYCLE PARKING AND BIN STORAGE (AMENDED PLANS)	CO - 16/08/2006	BABBLING BROOK LIMITED	91

Reason for Delay	App No and PPRN	location	proposal	Decision & Date	applicant	Days taken
Mix of uses and floorspace renegotiated - requiring re-consultation and re-advertising.	20060198 THV6794	LEWISHER ROAD EXTENSION, GIPSY LANE BRICKWORKS	DEVELOPMENT OF LAND FOR INDUSTRIAL USE (CLASS B1/B2); PUBLIC HOUSE/RESTAURANT (CLASS A4/A3); MIXED USE RETAIL (MAX 603 SQM.) WITH EITHER HOTEL (CLASS C1), COFFEE SHOP (CLASS A3) OR CRECHE/CHILDRENS NURSERY (CLASS D1); CAR SHOWROOM (NO USE CLASS) (OUTLINE	CO - 13/07/2006	GLEESON PROPERTIES LTD	161
Delays in obtaining comments from Emergency Services; request to report to Planning & DC Committee.	20060258 KPO0415	UPPERTON ROAD, (FREEMAN MEADOWS - BEDE ISLAND SOUTH)	VARIATION OF CONDITIONS 5 & 6 OF PLANNING PERMISSIONS 20001710 & 20031950 TO ALLOW THE OCCUPATION OF 200 DWELLINGS INSTEAD OF 100 PRIOR TO THE APPROVAL OF HIGHWAY WORKS ON UPPERTON ROAD INCLUDING BRIDGE AND THE OCCUPATION OF 250 DWELLINGS INSTEAD OF 150 P	CO - 17/08/2006	BARRATT HOMES LTD	167
Amendments were requested that required additional publicity.	20060300 MRQ4732	SAFFRON LANE, SPORTS STADIUM (VELODROME)	TEN 5 AND 6 STOREY RESIDENTIAL BLOCKS COMPRISING 391 SELF-CONTAINED FLATS (136 ONE-BEDROOM, 220 TWO- BEDROOM & 35 THREE-BEDROOM); NINE 3-STOREY HOUSES (FOUR-BEDROOM (CLASS C3); ACCESS OFF SAFFRON LANE; PARKING; OPEN SPACE; LANDSCAPING; PARKING FOR SPORT	RF - 19/09/2006	LYDIAN (SAFFRON) LTD	211
Error in neighbour notification - requiring re-notification.	20060472 NHJ3748	9 BATH STREET	18 SELF- CONTAINED FLATS (12 X 1-BED, 2 X 2-BED, 4 X 3-BED) (CLASS C3) (AMENDED PLANS)	CO - 20/07/2006	MAXKNIT FABRICS LTD	125