Overview and Scrutiny Board 16th March 2015

Planning Applications data

At the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 19th January Members requested further information in order to allow constructive scrutiny of the matter. That information is provided below.

Whilst not part of a formal shared service, the Officers from Bromsgrove and Redditch involved in determining Planning Applications (Development Control/Development Management staff) have been informally working together whilst undertaking the transformation project. This has been the case since the summer of 2014 and has enabled the sharing of skills and provision of support with learning. Within this structure three sub teams exist; each working on different types of applications.

Planning demands for both Councils whether they be pre-application requests for advice, informal enquiries or planning applications for development proposals are all recorded in date order and retained as a single flow of work. The teams then take work from this work source.

- **An explanation of what qualified as a backlog**

Any demand that doesn't have a dedicated case officer working upon it is effectively a demand. Even in a perfect system there would still be some outstanding demands awaiting allocation to a Case Officer.

- **Explanation as to the term data cleansing**

In order to understand our system and improve the way we work we collect data to inform decisions. That data is collected via a spread sheet that all Officers update when required. It is also possibly to physically count the outstanding demands as a double check.

There had been some scenarios which had led to errors within the spread sheet. The data cleansing process involved a direct cross check of the two data collection systems to remove the errors and create sound reliable data going forward.

- **Clarification regarding action being taken to address to the issues**

See attached Action Plan.

- **Breakdown of data by size and length of delay**

As the nature of the demands shifts daily, a snap shot of the backlog as it existed on 2nd March 2015 has been taken.

	Bromsgrove	Redditch
No of demands in backlog	43	14
Date of submission of oldest demand in backlog	4th Feb 2015	4th Feb 2015
Type of demand;		
Discharge of condition	0	0
householder	17	5
Commercial	5	1
Minor dwellings	10	5
Pre -app	6	2
Time sensitive	3	1
Permitted development	2	0

- **An explanation as why combined data has been provided for Bromsgrove and Redditch**

As referred to above the Planning Team is working together. This has increased resilience and skill base as well as providing a good support network for learning. Given that all staff are working on demands across both authorities the data used for monitoring the demands and managing work flow on a daily basis is not separated out by authority.

Both Councils retain their own back office system of logging applications (Uniform system) and still submits the necessary returns to central government independently, however on a daily basis the data is not separated out.

- **Comparative data for Redditch Borough Council's planning applications**

See table above.

- **Other authorities that are undergoing transformation.**

Rugby Council and Wolverhampton City Council have both undergone a specific transformation of their Planning Services and the Council's planning team has visited both these authorities. Wyre Forest has also done similar work. The degree to which Councils have followed the transformation ideas will vary as will the exact way of working.

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2nd March 2015