

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD 24th AUGUST 2015

Planning Applications Backlog Data

In March 2015 information was provided to Members with respect to the number and type of planning applications forming the backlog. This report is an update to that information.

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 Council's, 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 part of the backlog. 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

Data was cleansed in November 2014 (i.e. a direct cross check was made between the two data collection systems (a physical count of the backlog and a cross reference with the spread sheet) to remove errors and create sound reliable data going forward. On the 1st July 2015 the team ceased to use the spread sheet to record demands as it was requiring significant duplication of work. Since this time the backlog has just been counted manually.

- Clarification regarding action being taken to address to the issues

The Action Plan identified areas for improvement with specific actions and impacts. Areas of note that have improved performance include; working with applicants to secure Extension of Time agreements on applications, working with stakeholders to improve speed of consultation responses and continued work with colleagues from Wolverhampton with respect to customer focused service delivery.

- 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 3rd August 2015 has been taken.

	Bromsgrove	Redditch
No of demands in backlog	12	43
Date of submission of oldest demand in backlog	17 th July 2015	17 th July 2015
Type of demand;		
Discharge of condition	0	0
Householder	6	27
Commercial	0	4
Minor dwellings	0	3
Pre -app	3	8
Time sensitive	3	1

- 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 your 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.

Wolverhampton City Council has continued to support the team with small groups of staff working on applications using transformation principles. Other staff, including newly appointed Officers, are being trained in this way alongside more experienced Officers.

Ruth Bamford
Head of Planning and Regeneration

4th August 2015

Appendix

**PLANNING APPLICATION BACKLOG DATA (Bromsgrove and Redditch)
January – August 2015**

Date	No of demands
<i>29.12.14</i>	<i>60</i>
05.01.15	No record
12.01.15	53
19.01.15	52
26.01.15	53
02.02.15	44
09.02.15	50
16.02.15	49
23.02.15	52
02.03.15	56
09.03.15	64
16.03.15	59
23.03.15	62
30.03.15	61
06.04.15	77
13.04.15	69
20.04.15	59
27.04.15	50
04.05.15	30
11.05.15	26
18.05.15	40
25.05.15	65
01.06.15	77
08.06.15	86
15.06.15	60
22.06.15	62
29.06.15	67
06.07.15	61
13.07.15	61
20.07.15	68
27.07.15	84
03.08.15	55

Figures in Italics; last reported data count on previous report

NOTE:

- The date represents the day the backlog was counted – Monday mornings.
- No of demands – all planning applications and pre app enquiries we physically had in the box waiting to be considered. This number represents the backlog for both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils combined.