

Overview & Scrutiny Board – 23rd November 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. Further information was provided for the August meeting and this report is a further update.

Members will soon be able to access the Measures Dashboard where all measures can be found. Under the heading of 'Operational Measures' Members are able to see data on:

- 1) The number of Planning Applications in the Box (the number of Planning and associated Applications waiting to be picked up by an Officer (i.e. the number of applications forming the backlog))
- 2) The number of Applications received and,
- 3) The number of Applications determined

This data is expressed as totals across both Council's; the proportions being approximately 65% Bromsgrove Applications to 35% Redditch Applications.

Since August 2015 two key trends have been observed. Firstly the backlog (which peaked at 56 in June for Bromsgrove Applications) has fallen to an average of 15 and for a period of six weeks, fell as low as just 13 Applications awaiting a Case Officer. Whilst there was a reduction in the number of applications received during this period, the taking of annual leave in August can have an impact on work capacity. It is positive therefore that the department managed to keep outstanding work at a low point for this amount of time.

During the month of October however there has been a rise in the backlog from 6.5 to 28 Applications with respect to Bromsgrove cases. This is as a result of an Officer taking up an alternative role elsewhere within the Council, another Officer leaving and one Officer being on extended sick leave. Recruitment has been successful in attracting one replacement Officer, who starts with the Organisation on 30th November 2015, with further interviews being scheduled this week.

Members requested additional specific data around Bromsgrove Applications. On 10th November the backlog was made up of the following applications;

	Bromsgrove
No of demands in backlog	35
Date of submission of oldest demand in backlog	16 th October 2015
Type of demand;	
Discharge of condition	1
Householder	18

Full	7
Listed Building Consent	2
Pre -app	5
Lawful Development Certificate	2

In terms of addressing the issue of the backlog, Members should be aware that Officers continue to work through The Action Plan. 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.

Constant adjustments to working practices have improved efficiencies within the team and when fully staffed the data shows that the backlog can be maintained at an acceptable level. Members will soon have improved access to data via the Measures Dashboard enabling direct understanding of the current position. In addition the Head of Service and colleagues are always available to respond to queries and discuss working practices with Members should any questions arise

HELENA PLANT

11th November 2015