

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 9

meeting date: THURSDAY, 14 JANUARY 2016  
 title: PLANNING APPLICATION STATISTICS REPORT  
 QUARTER 1 – 1 APRIL 2015 – 30 JUNE 2015 AND  
 QUARTER 2 – 1 JULY 2015 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2015  
 submitted by: JOHN MACHOLC – HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES  
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## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The report covers two quarters – Quarter 1 from 1 April 2015 – 30 June 2015 and Quarter 2 from 1 July 2015 – 30 September 2015.
- 1.2 The report covers two quarters – Quarter 1 from 1 April 2015 – 30 June 2015 and Quarter 2 from 1 July 2015 – 30 September 2015.

## 2 APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AND DETERMINED DURING QUARTERS 1 AND 2

- 2.1 The table below shows the number of applications received and determined during the first two quarters of the year 2015/16.

	QUARTER 1 01/04/15 – 30/06/15	QUARTER 2 01/07/15 – 30/09/15
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	159	161
APPLICATIONS DETERMINED	159	157
% OF DELEGATED DECISIONS	93%	92%

## 3 CATEGORY OF APPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Applications are put into categories Major, Minor and Other. Below is a description of how the applications are categorised:

Major applications are applications which fall into the following categories:

Dwellings - 10+ dwellings or cover a site area of 0.5ha+

Offices/Retail & Distribution/Light Industry -cover over 1,000m<sup>2</sup> or floor space or a site area of 1ha+

General Retail Distribution and Servicing – 1,000m<sup>2</sup>+ or floor space or site area of 1ha+

Gypsy and Traveller sites – 10+ pitches

All other major developments – all other uses, whether in a use class or sui generis uses – 1,000m<sup>2</sup>

Minor applications are applications which fall into the following categories:

Dwellings – 1-9 dwellings. Or site area of less than 0.5ha

Offices/Retail & Distribution/Light Industry – less than 1,000m<sup>2</sup> floor space or less than 1 ha site area

General Industry and Distribution and Servicing – less than 1,000m<sup>2</sup> floor space or less than 1ha site area

Gypsy and Traveller sites – 1-9 pitches

All other minor developments – less than 1,000m<sup>2</sup> floor space or less than 1ha site area

#### Other Developments

Minerals Processing

Change of Use – going from one class use to another

Householder developments - extensions, conservatories, garages etc within the domestic curtilage of the property

Advertisements

Listed Building Consent

## 4 TARGETS

- 4.1 Performance has traditionally been measured in terms of time taken to determine a planning application. Targets (Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 157a, b, and c) were as follows:

'Major' developments: 60% within 13 weeks from valid submission to despatch of decision notice. 'Minor' developments: 65% within 8 weeks from valid submission to despatch of decision notice. 'Other' developments: 80% within 8 weeks from valid submission to despatch of decision notice. The Councils own determination targets for the year 2015/16 are as follows:

35% of Major Applications within 13 weeks  
62% of Minor Applications within 8 weeks  
80% of Other Applications within 8 weeks.

It is clear that the Council will need to review its own targets to ensure compliance with DCLG and be mindful of future changes.

Recently DCLG has advised that one of the measures of an underperforming LPA will be one that determines less than 50% of Major applications within 13 weeks and that includes the need to have a signed S106 Agreement. This often involves more than one signatory which makes it extremely difficult to achieve and puts more pressure on the LPA to commence work on the S106 Agreement at an early stage. As a consequence it is often the case that the LPA has requested an extension of time on Major proposals so as to remove the scheme from the target.

## 4.2 RIBBLE VALLEY DETERMINATION RATES

### FIRST QUARTER 2015/16 - 1 April 2015 to 30 June 2015

Majors **33.3%** determined within 13 weeks

Minors **26%** determined within 8 weeks

Others **62.74%** determined within 8 weeks.

### SECOND QUARTER 2015/16 - 1 July 2015 to 30 September 2015)

Majors **50%** determined within 13 weeks

Minors **32.72%** determined within 8 weeks

Others **69.62%** determined within 8 weeks

## 4.3 TREND

Members will see that although the targets for the Minor applications and Other applications have not been achieved in quarters 1 and 2 there is a slight improvement in quarter 2 there is an improvement.

Members will also be aware that in the last year there has been significant staff turnaround in the planning section and this has impacted on the service. The Head of Planning Services is confident that a combination of measures which include a restructure in the Planning Section, appointment of staff to fill vacancies and the use of consultant services Urban Vision who have been allocated 28 planning applications as well as agreed overtime for an officer to deal with 30 applications planning applications will assist in clearly the backlog of planning applications and eventually lead to an improved level of service. However, it is important to emphasise that the clearance of the backlog of applications, which include applications already outside of the determination time will impact on the results for quarter 3 – 1 October 2015 – 31 December 2015 and Quarter 4 Jan 16- 31 March 16.

## 5 FEES RECEIVED

### 5.1 The fees received for planning applications are as follows:

Quarter 1 (01/04/15 – 30/06/15) - £164710.75 included in this figure are fees generated by Major schemes – which amounted to £110557.00. Two examples of a major application during this quarter was the solar Panel Farm at Gisburn and the Reserved Matters application for Lawsonsteads, Whalley which totalled over £60,000

Quarter 2 (01/07/15 – 30/09/15) - £157897.50 75 included in this figure are fees generated by Major schemes – which amounted to £80,963.00. During this quarter a Reserved Matters application for Dilworth Longridge was submitted which generated a fee of approximately £35,000.

## 6 INVALID APPLICATIONS

### 6.1 When an application is received into the Planning Office it is checked to make sure it is a complete application.

6.2 There is a national list and local list of requirements to ensure this which includes : the correct fee, a location plan, plans drawn to a recognised metric scale with external floor dimensions and elevational dimensions, bat and tree surveys. Dependent on the type of application other things may be required in order to have a valid application. Common reasons for invalidity include fee outstanding, bat survey required, heritage statement required (Conservation Areas, Barns and Listed Buildings, dimensions on plans (elevational) and plans that are not to scale. Most invalid applications are turned around fairly quickly.

7 APPEALS DETERMINED

7.1 There are three main types of planning appeals. These are written representations, Hearings and Inquiries.

7.2 WRITTEN REPRESENTATION

The majority of appeals are deterred as written representation. The appellant will put forward a written statement whilst the Local Planning Authority cannot send comments and so reliance is put on the officer's report (either delegated or committee) to justify the Local Planning Authority decision.

HEARING

A planning hearing is an appeal in which there is normally no legal representation. Statements are submitted by both parties and there is a discussion on the key issues.

INQUIRY

An Inquiry is more formal and there is normally legal representation formal close examination of witnesses.

7.3 APPEAL DECISIONS

QUARTER 1 (Apr May Jun 2015)

<b>Planning Appeals Determined</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Allowed</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>	<b>%</b>
Written Representations	6	1	5	83.33%
Hearings	0	0	0	N/A
Inquiry	0	0	0	N/A
Householder	1	0	1	100%

QUARTER 2 (July Aug Sep 2015)

<b>Planning Appeals Determined</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Allowed</b>	<b>Dismissed</b>	<b>%</b>
Written Representations	5	0	5	100%
Hearings	1	0	1	100%
Inquiry	0	0	0	N/A
Householder	2	0	2	100%

7.4 COST AWARDS

It is important to emphasise that an application for costs can be made by either party if it is considered they have acted in an unreasonable manner. Guidance is available in the

Planning Practice Guide. These can be for a Procedural award or a Substantive award. Although there has been no award during these quarters the Council has recently paid an award of costs from a previous appeal. There are currently 2 outstanding claims that need to be resolved or submitted.

## 7.5 QUALITY OF DECISIONS

DCLG has also imposed a criteria in relation to planning appeals which will be used in assessing the performance of the LPA. The **measure** to be used is the percentage of decisions on applications for major development that have been overturned at appeal

The **threshold** for designation is 20% or more of an authority's decisions on applications for major development made during the assessment period being overturned at appeal.

## 8 ALTERATIONS TO THE PLANNING SERVICE

Members will be aware as part of the overall improvement to the Planning Service which included the restructure other changes to service have been undertaken and there is an ongoing plan to review how the service can be improved. A key factor in this is the use of IT which includes more effective use of the planning portal.

In relation to Committee reports minor changes such as introduction of site plans, web links to the application file and standard headings have been added to the reports to assist Members and it is envisaged that further changes will be made to give more clarity to the report.

## 9 PRE APPLICATION ADVICE

### 9.1 Fees

A chargeable pre application advice service was introduced a number of years ago. The current fees are:

Householder development £51 (written response only) or £92 to include a meeting

Minor development £195

Intermediate development £390

Major development £790 plus £380 for additional meetings

Listed buildings or work in Conservation Areas £97 (advice for development in a Conservation Area or work to a Listed Building that consists only of repairs and maintenance to the existing fabric (not replacement) will be free of charge.

Tree Work £56

Advertisements £56

Prior Notification and telecommunications £102

9.2 Fees generated between 1 April 2015 and 30 June 2015 (Quarter 1) were £11908 and between 1 July 2015 and 30 September 2015 (Quarter 2) were £8697.

9.3 Following the appointment of a pre application officer to cover maternity leave, the Head of Planning Services is expecting the level of service to be improved on the basis that there is now an officer in post. Prior to the appointment there was a vacancy of 3 months which resulted in a back log of pre application advice applications. Many of the applications were eventually distributed to officers as part of their workload which involved additional tasks and ultimately a delay in responding to pre application advice applications.

9.4 Members should now be aware that the Environment Agency now charge for pre application advice and LCC Highways are no longer offering the service until they have established a charging mechanism.

## 10 FEEDBACK FROM PARISH COUNCILS

Members will be aware as part of the efficiency measures and to reduce printing paper copies the Council no longer forward hard copies of plans to Parish Councils. This has been operating for 6 months and although 3 Parish Councils consider this to be a reduced service there would appear to be no significant issues. It has allowed for a more efficient administration of planning applications with a net reduction in the amount of time taken to validate and book out the planning applications.

## 11 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

11.1 Note the report.

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HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES

JOHN HEAP  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

For further information please ask for John Macholc, extension 4502.

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