

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

28th November 2006PLANNING PERFORMANCE WORKING GROUPPurpose of the Report

To provide Members with information on the work of the Planning Performance Working Group (PPWG).

Strategic Planning Framework

The information and recommendations contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework.

Background

In May 2005, the Audit and Review Committee considered a report from the Head of Park Management on the Authority's performance in processing applications in respect of national targets. The Committee approved the report's recommendations.

The PPWG was established by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 13 September 2005, with a remit to review procedures and make recommendations for improving performance.

The group endorsed an Improvement Plan and monitored its progress during regular meetings. A copy of the Plan, together with notes on progress, is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The new measures & practises adopted have helped considerably with the efficient processing of applications. These have included; requiring more information prior to validation of applications, revised Planning Committee size and procedures, and improved performance monitoring.

During 2005 and 2006, the Planning Department has made considerable strides in the digitisation of data and the development of the website. These measures have made access to information easier both for officers and the public.

A major factor in poor performance, prior to this period, was the high turnover of Planning staff. Since February 2006, all vacant posts have been filled and a stable Development Control team has been re-established.

As a result of the above, the Authority has consistently exceeded national targets for the speed of determining planning applications for the last three quarters. (**See Appendix 2**).

Improved performance has been based on long term measures and, subject to continued stability, the current performance level can be sustained. Provided that national performance targets continue to be met, the Authority should move out of its 'Standards' status in mid 2007.

With the progress made in implementing the Improvement Plan measures, and the consistent attainment of the required performance levels, the work of the PPWG has been successfully completed. Responsibility for performance issues has now passed to the Development Control Member Champions.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the report.

Peter Watson
Head of Planning

Background Documents

'Planning Performance Review' report to A&R 27 May 05

Planning Improvement Plan**Updated 7 November 2006**

Action	Progress
1. To ensure required information is submitted prior to registration of applications, prepare list of minimum requirements and establish procedures with Planning technicians.	Documentation completed. Requirements publicised by letters to Parish Councils & Agents, and on website. Implemented: 16 October 2006.
2. Monitor performance in application registration.	The performance of staff in terms of time taken to register adequate applications was undertaken between January & December 2005. No further action needed at present. Further period of monitoring in January and February 2007 when new validation procedures should have bedded in.
3. Investigate scope for use of e mail consultations, as far as is practicable.	In use for internal consultations but further development proceeding. External consultations: Equipment has been purchased to allow plan scanning. Training in the use of 'library link' will take place in November, and the use of email for external consultations should begin in early 2007. We will email consultees with link to the relevant item on our website, so they can view application forms & plans and respond electronically.
4. Establish monitoring system & targets for consultee responses.	Not to be progressed until systems referred to in 3 are in place.
5. Emphasise response deadlines to consultees.	Standard consultation letters clearly specify response dates. Considerable emphasis in non-standard correspondence and verbal communication between Pos and consultees.
6. Investigate scope for plotting pre-application discussion on PACS	Subject of further review in January 2007 when scheduled IT systems development have been substantially completed.
7. Resolve difficulties with drafting conditions on PACS	Achieved – resolved at meeting with PACS provider on 12/13 April 2006
8. Simplify Decision Notice printing	Achieved
9. Applications direct to PO's	Achieved
10. Redistribute workload to minimise individual backlogs	Achieved
11. Initiate area team meetings with DHoP to monitor application progress	Achieved; But meetings with individual officers continue in preference. Teams reformed to accommodate new staff; open plan working at Yoredale has reduced need for formal team meetings.

Action	Progress
12. Review Standard conditions	In progress
13. Extend planning surgeries to all areas & require appts at other times	Achieved. Area surgeries now operating in Reeth, Sedbergh, Malham, Grassington, Bainbridge & Settle.
14. Appoint Enquiries Officer	Achieved
15. Review telephone call management for PO's when Enquiries Officer in post	Achieved
16. Clarify report deadlines	Achieved
17. Reduce length of delegated reports especially when approval is recommended	Achieved
18. Reduce length of Committee reports especially when non-controversial	Achieved
19. Committee reports to include summary clearly identifying relevance of the authority's policies	Achieved
20. Consider checks & balances for member call-in of applications, site visits, deferrals, reference back	Discussed at 10 March meeting of PPWG and rejected. To be reviewed in light of experience with smaller Committee.
21. Consider fast track for applications that, after deadline, require committee determination	Discussed at 10 March meeting of PPWG and rejected.
22. Review Planning Committee size	Achieved
23. Introduce targets for completion of 106 agreements	Achieved
24. Introduce 6 monthly reports to Planning Committee monitoring 106 progress	Discussed at 10 March meeting of PPWG. Applicants given deadline to confirm whether they intend to progress outstanding 106s. This has resulted in completion/withdrawal of applications. Unresolved cases being referred to Planning Committee, starting in November 07.
25. Review outstanding 106s & refer dormant cases to Planning Committee for refusal, if not withdrawn	As for 24
26. Consider scope for Grampian conditions requiring 106 prior to commencement	Procedures agreed between Planning & Legal Depts for using Grampian conditions in cases where there is clear evidence of an applicant's willingness to enter into a legal agreement. Two consents so far issued (Sept 06).
27. Appoint two Enforcement Officers	Achieved
28. Consider giving enforcement role to Planning Officers	Achieved. Not considered necessary in view of successful recruitment of EO's
29. Review enforcement performance targets	Achieved; 60% determination within 16 weeks to be adopted from May – August quarter
30. Introduce regular reports to Planning Committee on enforcement progress	Achieved

**YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS AND APPEALS: 1 JULY 2006 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2006

Total Applications

139 applications were outstanding at the end of September compared with 181 the quarter before. A more detailed breakdown of the figures is as follows:

	<u>TOTAL</u>
Outstanding at start of quarter	181
Received during quarter	163
Decisions issued during quarter	189
Withdrawn/PD during quarter	16
Outstanding at end of quarter	139

Applications Determined

Of the 189 applications where decision notices were issued, the total time taken to determine them was:

	<u>NATIONAL TARGET</u>	<u>% LAST QTR.</u>	<u>TOTAL THIS QTR.</u>	<u>% THIS QTR.</u>
Major applications less than 13 weeks	60%	100%	5	100%
Minor applications less than 8 weeks	65%	74%	53	77%
Other applications less than 8 weeks	80%	87%	99	86%
Percentage approved	No target	86.5%	169	89%

Applications Outstanding

Of the 139 applications **outstanding** at the end of the quarter, the following have so far taken longer than 13 weeks (details in Section 2 overleaf):

NB: Details of **completed** applications which took longer than 13 weeks to determine are given in Section 1 overleaf.

Appeals

	<u>TOTAL</u>
Outstanding at start of the quarter	10
Received during the quarter	9
Allowed during the quarter	2
Dismissed during the quarter	1
Withdrawn	2
Outstanding at the end of the quarter	14

**YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS AND APPEALS: 1 APRIL 2006 TO 30 JUNE 2006

Total Applications

181 applications were outstanding at the end of June compared with 252 the quarter before. A more detailed breakdown of the figures is as follows:

	<u>TOTAL</u>
Outstanding at start of quarter	252
Received during quarter	175
Decisions issued during quarter	200
Withdrawn/PD during quarter	46
Outstanding at end of quarter	181

Applications Determined

Of the 200 applications where decision notices were issued, the total time taken to determine them was:

	<u>TOTAL</u>	
Major applications less than 13 weeks	1	100%
Major applications more than 13 weeks	0	-
		%
Minor applications less than 8 weeks	51	74%
Minor applications more than 8 weeks	18	26%
Other applications less than 8 weeks	113	87%
Other applications more than 8 weeks	17	13%
Percentage approved	173	86.5%

Applications Outstanding

Of the 181 applications **outstanding** at the end of the quarter, the following have so far taken longer than 13 weeks (details in Section 2 overleaf):

NB: Details of **completed** applications which took longer than 13 weeks to determine are given in Section 1 overleaf.

Appeals

	<u>TOTAL</u>
Outstanding at start of the quarter	11
Received during the quarter	7
Allowed during the quarter	0
Dismissed during the quarter	7
Withdrawn	1
Outstanding at the end of the quarter	10

**YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

ANALYSIS OF APPLICATIONS AND APPEALS: 1 JANUARY 2006 TO 31 MARCH 2006

Total Applications

252 applications were outstanding at the end of March compared with 237 the quarter before. A more detailed breakdown of the figures is as follows:

	<u>TOTAL</u>
Outstanding at start of quarter	237
Received during quarter	215
Decisions issued during quarter	186
Withdrawn/PD during quarter	16
Outstanding at end of quarter	252

Applications Determined

Of the 186 applications where decision notices were issued, the total time taken to determine them was:

Major applications less than 13 weeks	1	100%
Major applications more than 13 weeks	-	-
		%
Minor applications less than 8 weeks	32	70%
Minor applications more than 8 weeks	14	30%
Other applications less than 8 weeks	118	86%
Other applications more than 8 weeks	19	14%

Applications Outstanding

Of the 252 applications **outstanding** at the end of the quarter, the following have so far taken longer than 13 weeks (details in Section 2 overleaf):

NB: Details of **completed** applications which took longer than 13 weeks to determine are given in Section 1 overleaf.

Appeals

	<u>TOTAL</u>
Outstanding at start of the quarter	12
Received during the quarter	4
Allowed during the quarter	0.5 (part allowed/part dismissed)
Dismissed during the quarter	4.5 (one appeal part allowed/part dismissed)
Withdrawn	0
Outstanding at the end of the quarter	11