

AGENDA ITEM 6

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

21 APRIL 2011

REPORT OF PRINCIPAL PLANNING OFFICER

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PERFORMANCE 2010/11

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the Performance Indicator outcomes related to the determination of planning applications for Q4 (January to March 2011), the workload trends currently present and the general performance of the team.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Committee notes the current performance data.

3. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PERFORMANCE

3.1 BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 The Performance Management Framework includes the following elements:

- The performance criteria we wish to meet, which are laid down as aims and objectives. These are an integral part of the Corporate Plan, which includes both corporate level objectives, and Local Priority Action Plans. Each Service also draws up its own Service Plan, which includes aims, objectives and targets. Our Community Strategy illustrates our shared vision with partner organisations, and details what we want to achieve together.
- Measures of performance against the above criteria. These include National Performance Indicators and Local Performance Indicators, which together measure our performance against both the promises we make to the local community, and the roles which Government expects us to perform.

3.2 BVPI MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES AND CURRENT POSITION

- 3.2.1 The table below shows the Council's recent and current performance against national and local measures and targets. BVPI measures focus on efficiency and speed rather than the development of the service, the quality of the decisions made and the outcomes secured.

Indicator	2006/ 07	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	TARGET 2010/11	Q1 April – June 10	Q2 July – Sept 10	Q3 Oct – Dec 10	Q4 Jan – Mar 11	2010/11 outturn
157 (a): % 'major' applications determined in 13 wks	71.4 %	79.31 %	66.66 %	64.28 %	60%	0% (0/1)	42.86%	40%	100%	53.33%
157 (b): % 'minor' applications determined in 8 wks	83.84 %	80.32 %	67.39 %	83.5 %	65%	80%	63.93%	71.04%	78.26%	73%
157 (c) : % 'other' applications determined in 8 wks	92.43 %	92.87 %	81.28 %	90.23 %	80%	87.06%	91.01%	89.85%	87.5%	88.86%

LOCAL: % all applications determined in 8 weeks	87.53 %	86.18 %	74.93 %	86.65 %	80%	83.44%	77.07%	80.85%	81.54%	81%
LOCAL: % householder applications determined in 8 weeks	94.01 %	95.65 %	83.00 %	91.98 %	90%	89.23%	94.34%	93.22%	89.9%	91.49%

3.2.2 Planning application performance for quarter four has shown performance figures being met for all indicators. This is an overall improvement on figures to date.

3.2.3 Included in the quarter 4 report are the overall outturn figures for 2010/11. Performance figures have been met for the year in all indicators except major developments. We are above target for minor and others as well as the overall turn around of application in 8 weeks.

3.2.4 Performance for major application in this quarter is 100% however on the overall outturn our target has not been met. A significant amount of major application processed in the year have been historic ones which have been waiting Section 106 agreements, the year also saw the determination of a windfarm application which by the nature of the proposal takes significantly longer than 13 weeks to determine. The focus on such application needs to be getting the decision right rather than meeting set timescales.

3.2.5 Towards the end of quarter 4 it is evident that the amount of workload has increased, albeit a slight increase, compared to the previous year.

3.3 QUALITATIVE MEASURES

3.3.1 The outcome of appeals is regarded as a principal measure of decision making quality, being the means by which decisions are individually scrutinised and reviewed.

Indicator	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	TARGET) 2010/11	Q1 April – June 2010	Q2 July – Sept 2010	Q3 Oct – Dec 2010	Q4 Jan – Mar 2011	2010/11 outturn
188: % of decisions delegated to officers	85.85%	87.15%	91.70%	92.89%	90%	93.42%	83.54%	88.51%	93%	89.52%
204 : %age of appeals against refused applications dismissed	50.00%	55%	46.57%	62.5%	66.66%	100%	62.5%	100%	66.66%	71.43%
219a: no of Conservation Areas in Borough	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44	44
219b: % of Conservation Areas with character appraisal	18 (41%)	21 (48%)	22 (50%)	30 (68%)	36 (82%)	30 (68%)	30 (68%)	30 (68%)	30 (68%)	30 (68%)
219c: % of Conservation Areas with published management	18 (41%)	21 (48%)	21 (48%)	30 (68%)	36 (82%)	30 (68%)	30 (68%)	30 (68%)	30 (68%)	30 (68%)

proposals										
205 : quality of Planning Service checklist	83%	83%	94.44%	94.44%	94%	94.44%	94.44%	94.44%	94.44%	94.44%

3.3.2 Planning appeal performance (BVPI 204)

The table below indicates the Council's appeal record for quarter 4, with key information associated with a selection of the appeals detailed in Appendix 1 below.

Appeals by decision background:

Decision type	No. of appeals dismissed	No. of appeals allowed
Delegated	1	
Committee, in accordance with recommendation	1	
Committee, departure from recommendation		1

3.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE SERVICE

3.4.1 The 2010/11 Service Plan has now been formally agreed. The Service Plan for 2010/11 identifies the long term vision for service delivery within Regulatory Services. The long term vision is;

- Accessibility
- Engagement and Inclusiveness
- Outcome driven
- Customer Focus and Response
- Transparency
- Pro-activeness
- Efficient
- Learning and self-awareness

The Service plan also identifies recent achievement within Regulatory Services.

3.4.2 The initiatives for 2010/101 are set out within the Service Plan and are broken down into Development Control, Conservation and Enforcement. Listed below are examples of some of the initiatives identified for DC, Enforcement and Conservation;

- EETG – Service Redesign: Enforcement of Regulatory Services;
- EETG – Paperlight Ways of Working
- Maintaining performance
- Continue to improve internal links/training
- Continual update/improvement of website
- CAPs training
- Letters/consultees comments on applications posted on website
- Listed buildings on-line
- Produce further Conservation Area Appraisals
- Review Buildings at Risk Register
- Enforcement on-line

3.4.3 Progress has begun on a number of these initiatives and some initiatives have been completed, such as listed buildings on line, continual update of the website and internal training all of which are designed to improve the delivery of the service and create efficiencies in working. Unfortunately progress on capital projects such as Enforcement on Line and CAPS training have not gone ahead due to insufficient funds available.

3.5 OUTCOMES

3.5.1 There are no well developed techniques to measure the quality of the outcomes of Development Control activity. However, it is helpful to consider it in terms of both 'service delivery' and 'results on the ground' and the following indicators are considered to offer insight as to the delivery of the service. The context for the examples below is 1023 applications determined in the period addressed by this report.

3.5.2 Impact of Development Control process on outcomes

It is estimated that approximately 30% of planning applications are the subject of improvements to design, layout and/or content as a result of negotiations carried out through the planning process. Each of these 'add value' to the development, in terms of the quality of the outcome (the final form of the development) and its impact on the surrounding environment and meeting planning objectives. This approach is furthered by the use of s106 agreements and these have been deployed to secure affordable housing and infrastructure contributions. Within 2010/11 the Council has continued to secure affordable housing contributions to the level required (40%) in all applicable cases and secured infrastructure contributions to meet the requests of service providers, also at a rate of 100% in terms of library and civic amenity provision.

3.5.3 The Core Strategy (Preferred Options) facilitated progress in terms of addressing housing mix and sustainability issues. The Core Strategy, and the evidence base behind it, has enabled decision making to require house sizes to meet local need, including examples of the refusal of applications where they have presented the wrong type or mix of houses. The Council has been successful in defending their position on housing need at a recent appeal, detailed in this report.

3.5.4 Decision making

The central purpose of decision making is to determine planning applications in accordance with decision making responsibilities defined by s38(6) of the Act : in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This encompasses the identification of all material considerations and their balancing with the Development Plan. Measures of the robustness of this process are considered to be appeal results (particularly any awards of costs which illustrate unreasonable decision making), complaints to the ombudsman regarding misapplication of policy or failure to take into account material considerations and departures from the development plan. The following examples have taken place in 2010/11:

- A 100% affordable housing scheme approved.
- The approval of a windfarm for 9 wind turbines.
- 3 complaints to the Ombudsman: 1 confirming that issues relating to development were correctly considered, 1 relating to enforcement procedures that was withdrawn as misdirected and 1 that considerations have been incorrectly applied or omitted is under investigation.
- Only 28% of appeals have been upheld (72% success rate) including a decision of national profile relating to the windfarm at Bottesford.
- 3 applications for costs have been made against the council this financial year, all three applications were refused by the Inspector and the Council not considered to have behaved unreasonably.

3.5.5 Contribution to Council Priorities and objectives

In common with all other services, the Development Control team seek to contribute to corporate priorities and objectives and, in terms of development, the service delivers the implementation of these ambitions, together with the content of the Local Plan. The objectives and priorities are embedded within the day to day service delivery and the teams positive approach to development (e.g. seeking solutions to problems rather than a direct refusal) has enabled development to make its contribution. Members will be aware of numerous examples of permissions being granted that contribute to these objectives:

Priority 7

Help provide a stock of housing accommodation that meets the needs of the community, including the need for affordable housing

We are addressing the imbalance of housing type and size.

We will require all residential developments to make a contribution towards affordable housing.

We will secure more rural affordable housing through the development of 'exception' sites.

- Securing 40% affordable housing contributions and a 100% affordable scheme in Melton.
- Ensuring a mix of house types and sizes within new developments: rejection of applications which do not address identified housing needs or do not provide adequate affordable housing. Successfully pursuing such arguments through the appeal process.

Priority 10

Supporting economic recovery

Ensure a high level of skills, education & employment is maintained across the Borough

Provide appropriate employment space & infrastructure

Maximise the Borough as a place for investment, with a focus on improving the visitor economy by maximising tourism potential

- Approving large scale employment schemes in Melton Mowbray/Asfordby Hill

Priority 11

Enhance the vitality and viability of Melton Mowbray Town centre

Promote and market the town to attract more visitors and increase footfall.

Encourage further investment and development in the town.

- Secured external funding for improvements to historic buildings in Melton Mowbray Town Centre - £15000 contribution has stimulated investment value of £106000
- Secured redevelopment of Town Station site with development which will increase town centre footfall

4 ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PERFORMANCE

4.1 The service plan requires a number of local performance indicators for enforcement. This is the second year that the figures have been collated and it is intended that in future figures will be monitored against past performance. Below are the indicators (and targets) used to assess the performance of the service;

- Planning Enforcement : % cases resolved per month against annual total of all cases (TARGET: 8.3%/month 100%/year)
- Planning Enforcement : cases reaching 'course of action' decision within 8 weeks (TARGET: 70% of cases)
- Planning Enforcement: % appeals against enforcement notices dismissed (TARGET: 100% of appeals)

4.2 Table of performance

Indicator	2009/10 Overall	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2010/11 Overall
No. of Cases Received	231	37	67	44	48	196
No. of Cases Closed	238	65	55	62	44	206
% Resolved per month against annual total (target 8.3% per month = 100% per year)	8.6% 103% total for the year	(21.7) 14.6%	(18.3) 8.8%	(20.6) 10.5%	(14.6) 7.4%	8.75% 105% total for the year
Cases reaching a course of action decision within 8 weeks (target 70% of cases)	71.5%	75.6%	77.6%	75%	83.7%	78%
Appeals against enforcement notices dismissed (target 100% of appeals)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

4.3 Throughout 2010/2011, the Planning Enforcement Service served a total of 26 notices of which 2 have resulted in appeals against the Council's Decision. These appeals are currently ongoing. The notices served have been in respect of unauthorised commercial uses, works in conservation areas, domestic buildings, use of land for the siting of caravans, unauthorised accesses and agricultural building. This number of Notices exceeds the quantity of any recent year and also compares positively with most other Local Planning Authorities.

4.4 The Enforcement Officer also took a lead role in the making of the Council's first Article 4 Direction. An Article 4 Direction is used to remove permitted development rights normally enjoyed in respect of the development of land and/or buildings without the need for a formal planning application. This Direction is being used to remove the rights to carry out various developments on a large area of Agricultural land off Welby Lane, Ab Kettleby, in the interests of protecting the character and visual amenities of the open countryside.

4.5 During the year, the Enforcement Service has been engaged in a service re-design which has now reached the stage of implementation. The re-design has been agreed, with a single team addressing both planning and licensing enforcement activity being formed through the restructure.

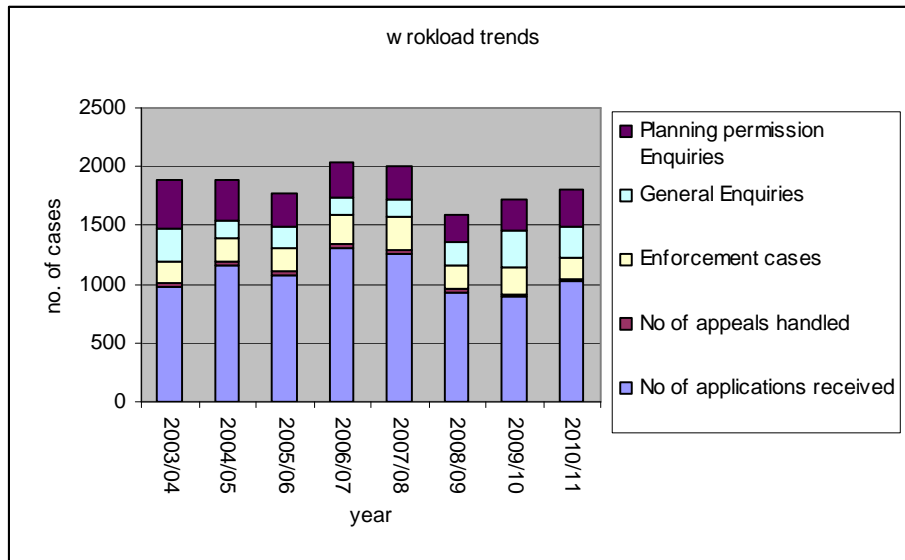
4.6 Also, the Service has engaged of a number of the Parish Councils to formally assist in the investigation of breaches of control. Six of the Borough's Parish Councils have stated their wish to work with the enforcement team and will be carrying out the initial investigation of matters complained of within their area. The policies and procedures to manage this work are being developed with full implementation commencing in the early part of 2011/12. As far as officers are aware, Melton are the first authority in the country to engage Parish Councils in this way and are being watched with interest by a number of other authorities around the country to gauge our success. This approach accords with the spirit of the 'Localism agenda' and has been formulated well in advance of the Localism Bill.

5 WORKLOAD CONTEXT

5.1 Members will be aware that the above statistics have been delivered in a changing workload context. The following graph illustrates the pattern of workload in recent years.

As will be noted, the 2010/11 has gone against general trend and we have seen a significant downturn in applications received. This can be equated to the current economic climate.

- 5.2 The downturn in applications received has enabled us to maintain target figures despite the loss of a case officer. However, the number of applications are starting to pick up and there is concern that it may be difficult to sustain performance figures with our current staff levels.



6. VALUE FOR MONEY

- 6.1 The Planning Department took part in a national benchmarking exercise, carried out by the Planning Advisory Service, which broke down the component parts of the application process in order to allow comparisons with other Authorities, to allow examples of good practice to be identified for future examination. 90 Authorities were included in the exercise, offering a large sample group with whom to make comparisons. This included all but one of the Leicestershire Authorities which allows for detailed local discussions.
- 6.2 The results of the benchmarking exercise have been previously reported in a detailed paper to Committee, attached in appendix 2. Overall the exercise proved valuable and provided substantial evidence that Melton's DC service can be described as 'high performing and extremely low cost'. This is something which Development Control should be extremely proud of and take forward into the future.
- 6.3 The exercise will also allow for the department to identify other authorities that display costs and performance superior to our own, as examples of good practice so that we may be able to learn from their ways of working. The detail of the study enables this to be isolated to discrete aspects of the service which will enable ideas from a range of sources to be considered.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION: HOW ARE WE PERFORMING?

- 7.1 This report has shown that in quarter four standards of performance is excellent with all targets being met. Our performance in appeals is particularly high. The team should be commended for their work and efforts.
- 7.2 The annual figures also expressed within the report show that throughout the year the services PI's have on the whole been met. In general terms, the Council's performance in terms of service delivery and maintaining high standards of processing, inclusion and the robustness of decision making is sound, with the quality of errors representing a very small proportion of overall activity.
- 7.3 The Enforcement Team's overall figures for the year have exceeded the targets that have been set and the enforcement team should be commended for their work and efforts.
- 7.4 The Councils appeal record has seen a marked improvement this year and the Council has been successful in defending all applications for costs in this financial year.
- 7.5 The team should also be highly commended for their achievements in relation to the recent benchmarking exercise undertaken and the outcomes from this exercise in relation to high performance and the low cost of the department.
- 7.6 2011/12 poses to bring new challenges to the team with the restructure and creation of a single enforcement team. However, it is hoped that the high level of performance demonstrated for this year can be taken forward into quarter 1.

Appendix 1 : Appeal decisions

Proposal: 10/00140/FUL Replacement Stables at Land South Of St Michaels' Church, Church Walk, Thorpe Satchville

Level of decision: Delegated

Reasons for refusal:

- approval of the application would be detrimental to the open rural character of the area and could set a precedent for similar sporadic stable developments in open countryside
- the proposal if approved would lead to unsatisfactory use of the church yard which would have an impact upon the setting of the listed building and would be contrary to PPS5

Inspector's conclusions: Dismissed – The Inspector concluded that on the basis of the conflicting evidence presented that they were not able to establish with sufficient certainty whether or not vehicle access through the adjoining churchyard would be available to the appellants. However, in either event it was concluded that unacceptable harm would result, to the setting of the listed building or to the interests of highway safety. Each potential aspect of harm outweighs the neutral effect of the building on the character and appearance of its countryside surroundings.

Proposal: 10/00322/FUL New two storey dwelling and change of use of part of lot from a farm yard to a domestic garden for new dwelling at Land Adjacent To Moat Farm, Middle Lane, Nether Broughton

Level of decision: Committee

Reasons for refusal:

- access lacks adequate visibility splays and therefore vehicles turning out of the access could create additional dangers for highway users to the detriment of highway safety
- the proposal fails to contribute to a sustainable and balanced housing market and is therefore considered to be contrary to PPS3

Inspector's conclusions: Dismissed - The Inspector concluded with regards to highway safety that that there would still be some degree of risk to the safety of road users but, in the circumstances and given the mitigating factors, it would not be so great as to warrant a refusal of planning permission on its own account. On the issue of housing need the proposal would undermine and therefore have a harmful effect on the Council's aim of achieving a balanced housing supply in the District.

Proposal: 10/00352/FUL Erection of 5 dwellings with associated access, parking and accommodation works at The White Hart, 37 Main Street, Harby

Level of decision: Committee

Reason for refusal:

- the proposal fails to contribute to a sustainable and balanced housing market and is therefore considered to be contrary to PPS3
- represent an unwarranted extension into the surrounding countryside which contributes to the village setting and would be detrimental to the rural character and appearance of the village

Inspector's conclusions: Allowed - The Inspector concluded that the scheme proposed would clearly not, in its entirety, provide the small properties that are agreed as being in short supply in the area. The proposal would therefore conflict with the RS and with some of the advice in PPS3. The development does, however, include two smaller properties that are only marginally larger than a small/medium property. The scheme would also extend choice in providing a mix of size and type of high quality housing on the site, which would contribute towards a mixed community. Moreover, they are satisfied that other matters, namely the need to make efficient use of the land, and the particular constraints of the site, have material implications for the viability of a scheme of only small dwellings. On balance therefore other considerations outweigh the fact that the scheme does not necessarily reflect the housing needs of the area. With regards to the impact on the character and appearance of the area the Inspector concluded that although the land lies outside the village envelope subject to conditions to control future boundary treatment, including the treatment of the boundary between the two gardens, and to control the erection of curtilage buildings or enclosures such as sheds, greenhouses etc, its use as private garden space would not have an adverse impact on the established character and appearance of the village, or its rural setting.

This appeal was also the subject of a cost application. The Inspector concluded that unreasonable behaviour resulting in unnecessary or wasted expense, as described in Circular 3/2009, has not been demonstrated and therefore conclude that an award of costs is not. The cost application was refused and no award of cost made.

APPENDIX 2

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

24TH FEBRUARY 2011

REPORT OF HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES

REPORT INTO NATIONAL BENCHMARKING EXERCISE FOR DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1** To advise the Committee of the findings of the national benchmarking exercise carried out by the Planning Advisory Service.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1** That members note the content of this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1** Melton BC was invited to join a detailed Benchmarking exercise. This comprised a detailed review into several aspects of the planning process and has delivered information on the following aspects:
- hourly costs;
 - activity (e.g. processing applications)
 - a first look at chargeable planning costs
 - a breakdown for every £1,000 spent
 - customer satisfaction
 - performance indicators
- 3.2** The exercise broke down the component parts of the application process in order to allow comparisons with other Authorities, to allow examples of good practice to be identified for future examination. 90 Authorities were included in the exercise, offering a large sample group with whom to make comparisons. This included all but one of the Leicestershire Authorities which allows for detailed local discussions.

4. APPRAISAL

4.1 The results provided are reported as follows:

(i) Cost per activity summaries

Detailed data was collected by breaking down planning processes into numerous (over 40) smaller areas of activity. This then allowed comparisons to be made in terms of both where activity is dedicated and the cost of activity. Key findings are as follows:

- Melton's overall costs are some 17% below average (and higher than average costs in only 2 out of 42 categories – dealing with complaints/feedback and Committee reporting/decisions)
- We dedicate a greater proportion of time to the evaluation and negotiation of applications than is average.
- We dedicate a greater proportion of time to appeals than average* but costs remain average.
- We dedicate a greater proportion of time (but not cost) to staff supervision than average.

*it is suspected this may result from the sampling period, which coincided with the dates the Bottesford Wind Farm Inquiry was running

(ii) Costs per productive hour

A summary of the findings are reproduced below:

	Direct costs	Lost time	Direct charges	Generic charges	Total cost	% total cost	Avg
Generic	32,323	1,915		£0	34,239	11%	14%
Strategic Planning	43,892	2,589	£7,010	£0	53,291	17%	22%
Planning Applications	105,531	6,254	£96,708	£0	198,493	62%	49%
Compliance & Delivery	20,322	1,204	£15,000	£0	36,527	11%	11%
Non-planning	0	0		£0	0	0%	4%
Lost time	11,963	-11,963					
	213,831		£108,718	£0	322,549		

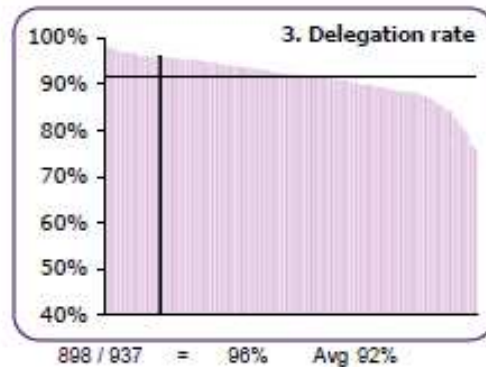
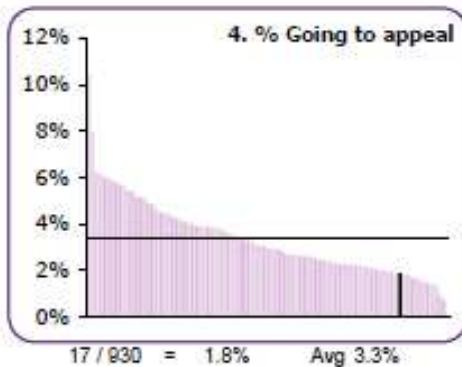
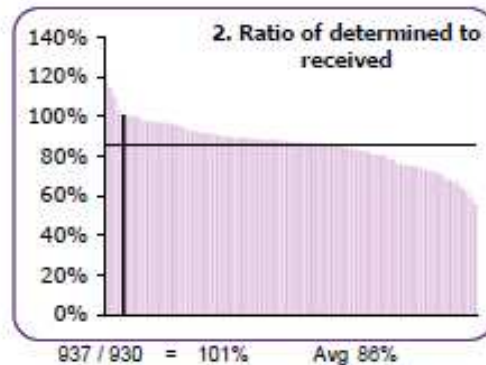
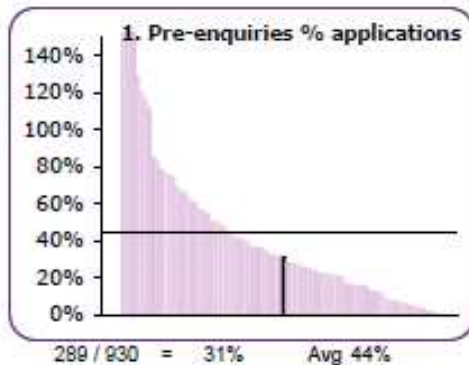
This table shows the distribution of officer time spread across planning activity (n.b please note inclusion of LDF work by the Policy Team, which formed part of the exercise). Key factors of note are:

- Proportion of resource dedicated to applications
- Impact of recharges ('direct charges') which come close to doubling the cost of Development Control activity. This relates to costs charged for premises, support provided by other departments (e.g Financial Services, Customer Services etc) and additional commissioned advice (e.g specialist technical advice)

(iii) Activity

Details were provided which compares our activity (i.e dedication of resources available to various aspects of the application process) to those recorded by others. Key findings identified are:

- Slightly below average quantity of pre-application enquiries leading to applications.
- A 'turnover' of applications greater than numbers received, i.e. no backlog is being developed.
- A lower than average appeal rate – an indication of sound decision making?
- Slightly above average delegation rate.

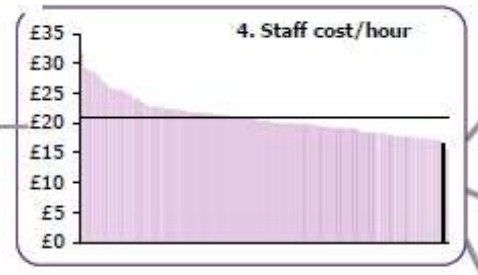
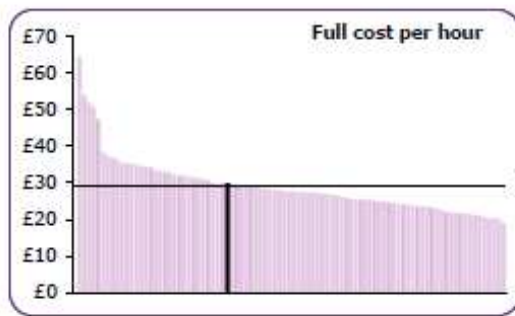


(iv) Chargeable costs to fees

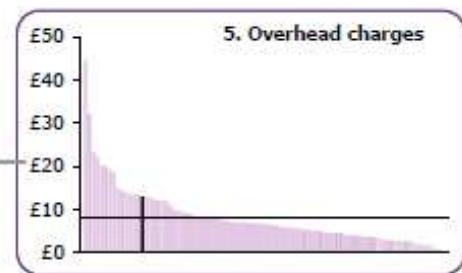
Data analysis suggests that the fees received exceed the costs dedicated to dealing with applications. It is likely that future fee regimes will enable Authorities to set their own fees against costs and this implies that (a) there will be little scope for increases and (b) fees currently support non-application activity such as enforcement and pre-application advice which may be difficult to support under future regimes.

(v) Costs per hour

The following graphs show overall costs and combine staff costs with overheads. As will be noted, staff costs are the second lowest in the entire sample group of 90, but overheads raise overall costs to an average level. For information, 'staff costs' include the costs of departmental management and supervision and all expenditure on goods and materials (from transport costs to stationary) but costs relating to 'back office' activity such as customer services, IT systems etc are included as 'overheads'.



		Avg	
Recorded cost	£8,118		
Recorded hours	583		
Direct £/hour	£14	£17	
Lost time	8%	16%	
Management	10%	11%	
Staff cost/hour	£17	£21	
Overhead charges	78%	30%	
Overhead/hour	£13.0	£8.1	
Full cost per hour	£30	£29	



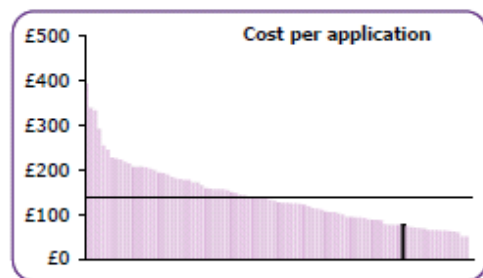
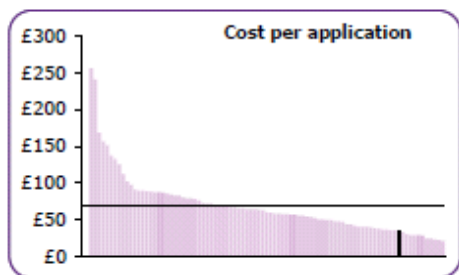
(vi) Costs per application

The study broke down the application process into its 'component parts' and analysed the cost of each element. These results were then amalgamated to produce a final, overall, cost per application.

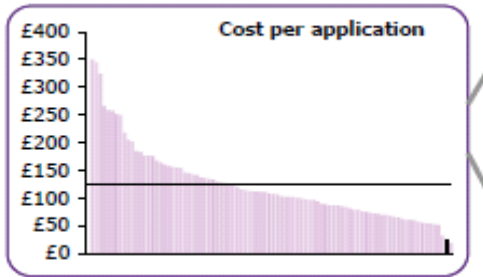
As will be noted, Melton delivers all aspects of the application process at well below average costs, culminating in one of the lowest overall costs per application of the entire study (this despite the overheads findings referred to above).

Validation and receipt

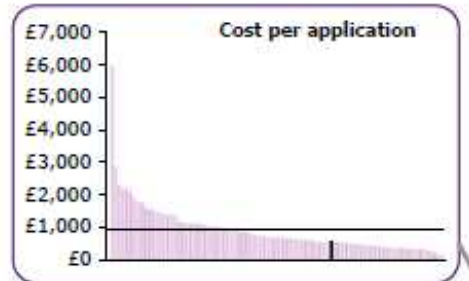
Evaluation and negotiation



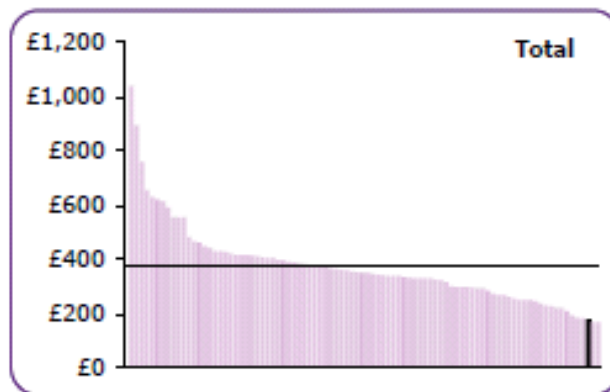
Decisions – delegated



Decisions – Committee

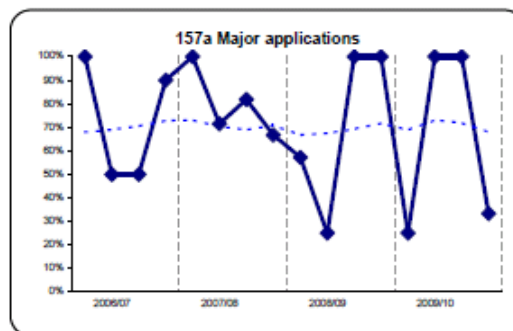


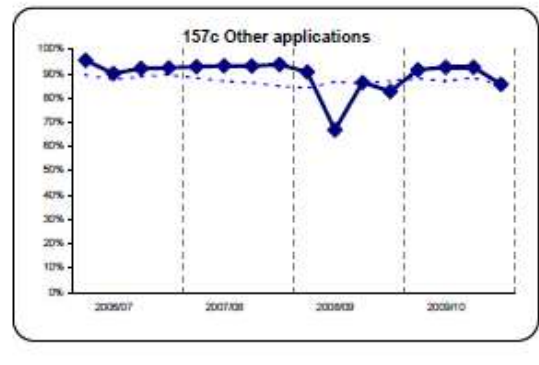
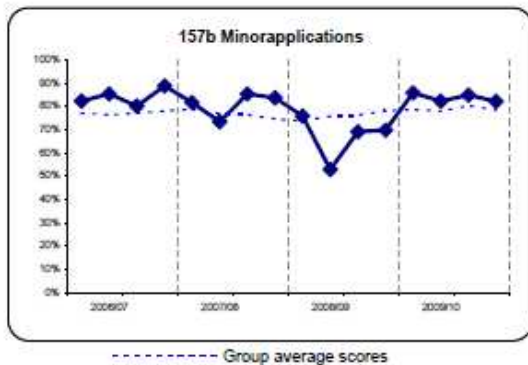
Overall application costs



(vii) Performance

The study took a narrow overview of performance, reliant only upon national indicators (as the only universal measure available). We tend to take a more 'rounded' view of performance but comparative measures are not available for other measures. However, the data supplied shows Melton to be around, or just above, the average level.





4.2 Conclusions and next steps

The study provides substantial evidence that Melton's DC service can be described as 'high performing and extremely low cost', illustrated most clearly at (vi) above.

4.3 However, the data also reveals some detail that is of interest beyond the key findings. Melton's staffing model is founded upon large contributions from staff of limited qualification and experience. This is the main factor behind the low costs but is also the driver for the higher than average levels of Management time dedicated to the area. We are aware of alternative, diametrically opposite approaches, whereby more qualified staff are employed with greater autonomy over their case load. However, this study shows that our approach is lower cost and delivers a good standard of service.

4.4 The next steps will comprise the identification of Authorities that display costs and performance superior to our own, as examples of good practice that we may be able to learn from. The detail of the study enables this to be isolated to discrete aspects of the service which will enable ideas from a range of sources to be considered.

5.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no significant corporate implications arising from this proposal.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The findings will assist in future exercises for local fee setting for planning applications.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

8.1 There are no direct community safety implications.

9.0 EQUALITIES

9.1 There are no direct equality implications.

10.0 RISKS

10.1 There are no risks arising from this report.

11.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

11.1 There are no climate change implications.

12.0 CONSULTATION

12.1 No consultation has been carried out.

13.0 WARDS AFFECTED

13.1 None

Background Documents: None

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