

West Wiltshire Development Control Action Plan

West Wiltshire Development Control Action Plan

November 1st to 31st December 2008

Proposed Actions

- To adopt the fast track approach based on 4-5 week assessment time for less complicated applications (see attached)
- To then work towards a maximum of day 49 for all minor and other applications
- To target key process bottlenecks with Householder, Listed building and Minor residential applications to improve performance (key performance sheet –being circulated)
- Officers to check application titles and CLG designations i.e. Major, Minor or Other to make sure they reflect the reality of the proposal and to avoid confusion and delays
- To continue the success of “ Vanguard” group validating but to reduce the no of staff participating at any one time through staff rotation (including planning support officers)
- To develop a buddy system of mentoring with each junior staff having a mentor
- To develop a staff training spreadsheet with feedback sheets and miniature library of conference workshop papers
- Team/Individual backlog target will be --**No more than 15%** of total outstanding applications for Minors and Others by 31st December 2008. The backlog will be monitored on a weekly basis from now on.

DC Action Plan Oct-Dec 2008 cont'd....

- Each DC Officer to have an application spreadsheet to facilitate the management of their applications
- DCM to sign off all out of time other and minor applications submitted after 1st October i.e. from 1st January 2009 for a specified period

- DCM to work with the Team Leaders to make effective use of external resources to assist in reducing departmental backlog.
- To work with our stakeholders i.e. Wilts CC Highways etc; and our customers to achieve our qualitative and quantitative performance target objectives.
- For all planning officers to attend committee on a rotation basis initially as an observer and then to present cases.
- To develop wider appeal skills by attending Informal hearings and Public Inquiries (the latter once RTPI qualified) as expert witness
- To develop an appeals target list to deal with appeal site visits, written representation statements attendance at Informal Hearings and Public Inquiries deadlines
- To standardise S.106 agreement formats and also consider the use of unilateral agreements for small scale major applications tied in with the “ Development Team “ approach

Major Applications

The current major application backlog is so substantial that it will take several months to achieve an above target performance involving weeding of old files final clearing of cases with resolution from committee as well as cases that are not determined i.e. without a completed case officer report .

Apart from focussed internal/external resources, a shift in procedure to less complicated s.106 agreements and utilising unilateral agreements will be necessary.

The key actions are outlined :-

- a. Internal/external resource allocation
- b. Adopting best practice from top quartile LPAs

- c. Adopting a Development Team Approach for Major applications
- d. More streamlined s.106 agreements discussed early on by officers in the application process
- e. Appropriate use of unilateral agreements for small scale major and also minor applications.
- f. Regular review of DC, Appeal and Enforcement performance progress

Conclusion

If the above Action Plan is fully adopted it should lead to a reduction in the planning application backlog particularly for minor and others applications plus improved performance for new applications submitted. It will then result in a return to above NI target performance within the next Quarterly cycle .

For Major applications the problems are more complex and need a multi task approach to solve and will take longer than the next qtrly cycle to begin to solve.

Other Issues

Officers need to ensure basic office cover when they are intending to take flexi leave and /or annual leave by liaising with their colleagues and line manager.

WWDC current arrangements for Annual leave Flex and TOIL will be circulated to all DC and Planning support staff .

RY/11/11/08

November 1st -31st December 2008

Situation as 01/11/08

Total Application caseload...308.....

Total no of cases out of time (backlog incl s.106s) ...125..... (8 - 13 weeks)

Application nos received October 2008 = 155

Major Applications

Total No.....55

Nos in time15.....

Nos out of time.....40.....

Minor Applications

Total no 82

Nos in time.....46.....

Nos out of time.....36.....

Other Applications

Total No.....171

Nos in time.....122.....

Nos out of time.....49.....

National Indicator 157

Major Applications - 60% within 13 weeks (91 days)

Minor Applications - 65% within 8 weeks (56 days)

Other Applications - 80% within 8 weeks (56 days)