

Report of Chief Planning Officer

Report to Joint Plans Panel

Date: 31 January 2017

Subject: Planning Services performance report quarters 1 to 3, April to December 2016

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	☐ Yes	☒ No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	☐ Yes	☒ No

Summary of main issues

1. Members usually receive a performance report at the twice yearly Joint Plans Panel meetings - one covering quarters 1 and 2, and the second reporting performance for the full year. However, as quarter two ended in September 2016, the information is no longer current. Therefore in order to provide members with as much up to date information as possible, this report covers performance for quarters 1 to 3, 2016-17, to the end of December, wherever it is available.
2. In quarters 1 to 3 there has been a 2.1% increase in the number of applications compared with the same period last year. There has however been a slight drop in performance in terms of determination of applications in time compared with the previous year, but nevertheless performance remains higher than the national average.
3. For the first time, information on Community Infrastructure Levy funds is included in the report and this will be a feature of future performance reports.
4. It has been a further challenging year, balancing workloads and the available resources within a changing planning environment, brought about by the pick-up in the economy, the reduction in public expenditure and pressure on budgets and the Governments planning reform agenda which continues apace.

Recommendations

5. Members are asked to note the report and comment as they feel appropriate and to receive a further performance report in six months' time.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 At the last Joint Plans Panel meeting on 14 July 2016, members received and noted a year end performance report for planning services for 2015-16. It was resolved that the Joint Plans Panel would receive a report covering quarters 1 and 2 of 2016-17 at its next meeting. As quarter 2 ended in September, performance information up to quarter 3 data has been provided to present the most up to date information available.
- 1.2 This report is presented for information and comment.

2 Background information

- 2.1 In the first three quarters of financial year 2016-17, the service continued to deal with a significant workload, whilst progressing with a number of large and strategically important planning applications. This is in the context of a seemingly ever evolving national planning policy picture, as part of the Government's planning reform agenda and a pick-up in the economy.
- 2.2 At the last Joint Plans Panel meeting, members requested that Community Infrastructure Levy information be reported at the meeting; a new section has now been inserted into this report providing members with an indication of the amount of CIL monies received in the strategic fund and distributed through the Community fund.

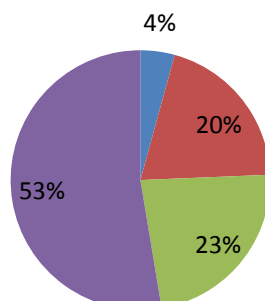
3 Main issues

3.1 Planning performance and workload

- 3.1.1 In the reporting period, there have been 3,565 major, minor and other applications submitted, a 2.1% increase compared with the same period last year. There have been 3,510 decisions made in the reporting period; 97.6% of decisions were made by officers under the delegation scheme, a slight decrease from the same period last year, where 98% decisions were made by officers.
- 3.1.2 There have been 152 major applications submitted in quarters 1 to 3, representing 4% of the total workload of the service. The national average for major applications as a proportion of the total workload is around 3%; therefore Leeds continues to receive a greater number of major schemes than the national average. The workload profile for quarters 1 to 3 is demonstrated below.

Application workload breakdown, quarters 1 to 3 2016-17

■ Majors ■ Minors ■ Others ■ Householder



3.1.3 Household applications account for 53% of the total workload in this reporting period, with 1876 applications submitted. This is an increase of 4% from the same period last year. It appears that the changes introduced under the amended permitted development regime allowing larger household extensions without the need for formal planning application has had little impact on the numbers of householder planning applications being made in Leeds.

3.1.4 Performance on determination times has dropped slightly, but is still well above the statutory timescales, demonstrated in the table below.

	% Majors in time	% Minors in time	% Others in time
Q1 to 3, 2016-17	94.0	89.6	92.7
Q1 to 3, 2015-16	95.8	90.9	93.4
2014-15	93.6	87.2	92.7
2013-14	73.3	70.3	83.3
2012-13	61.3	77.4	88.9

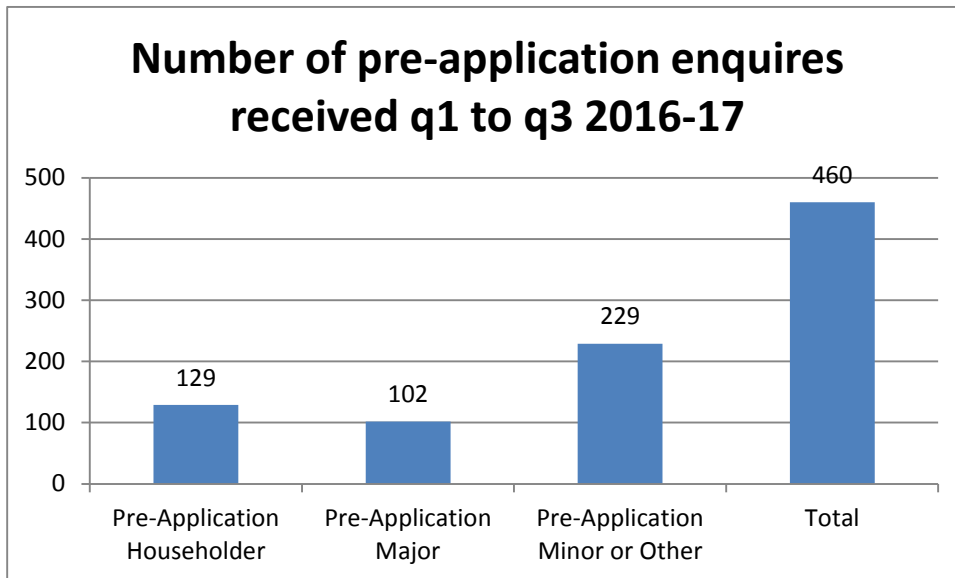
3.1.5 The latest national figures for the period July to September 2016 show that LPAs decided 85% of major applications within 13 weeks or within the agreed time; therefore Leeds' performance is significantly above the national average determination rate.

3.1.6 At the end of quarter 3, there are 5 major applications in the system which are six months old or more and a decision has not been made. Three of these are long standing complex applications. The consequence of having applications over six months old, without an extension of time agreement is the return of the planning fee under the Planning Guarantee.

3.1.7 After 9 months a total of £3,212,247 has been received in planning fees, almost £530,000 up against the projected budget for 2016-17.

3.2 Pre-application

- 3.2.1 In the reporting period the service received 460 pre-application enquiries; of those 102 were for major schemes. The pre-application enquiry service continues to be utilised very well and the service wishes to keep encouraging this dialogue. Early dialogue especially at the pre-application stage has the potential to deal with issues and can lead to swifter determination, once the formal application is made.



- 3.2.2 Additionally, the pre-application enquiry service generated £139,830 income during the reporting period.
- 3.2.3 A review of the pre-application fees will be undertaken in 2017.

3.3 Permitted development

- 3.3.1 In the reporting period the service received 184 notification of prior approval for larger house extensions. 21 came into the service following a neighbour objection and required prior approval. Of these 12 were granted prior approval and 9 were refused. The anticipated volume of additional work in relation to permitted development prior approval has not materialised. However, nor has the predicted fall in the number of planning applications for house extensions with just a small proportion coming back into the service to address.
- 3.3.2 The service has continued to receive a small number of prior approvals for conversion of offices to residential, with 27 made in the reporting period. 23 were granted prior approval. Most of the applications were for the conversion of offices outside of the city centre, just five small scale schemes within the city centre.

3.4 Panel decision making

- 3.4.1 In the first three quarters of 2016-17, 95 applications have been before the Plans Panels and 65 decisions have been made. The full workload breakdown is shown in the table below.

	Meetings	Q1 to Q3 Applications	Q1 to Q3 Pre-app presentations	Q1 to Q3 Position statements	Comments
City	10	16	20	3	1 meeting cancelled
North and East	10	50	2	1	
South and West	8	29	1	1	1 meeting cancelled
Total		95	23	5	

3.4.2 A report went to full Council November 2016 describing the workloads and activity of the three Plans Panels and this is likely to become an annual report to Council.

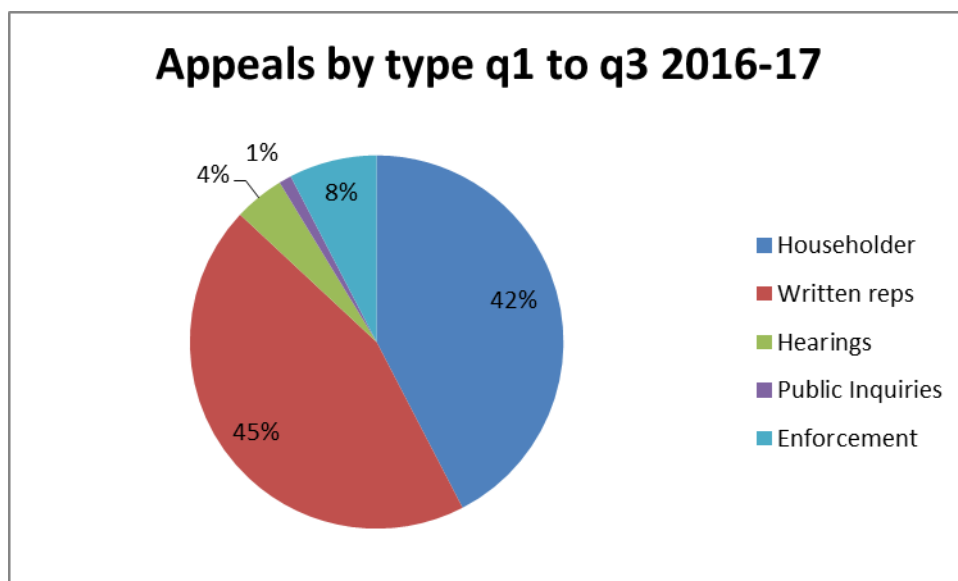
3.5 Major schemes

3.5.1 There have been some significant application submissions, particularly residential schemes in recent months, which include:

- Reserved matters application for retail/leisure plot/phase of the Thorpe Park development including the appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of development for the erection of a series of buildings providing 27,833sqm (299,602sqft) of retail and leisure floor space
- Creation of a new community comprising up to 1,100 dwellings, a new food store (A1) (up to 2,000sq.m) a new local centre, a new school and areas of public open space, together with the means of vehicular access at land to the east of Junction 45 of the M1 Motorway and to the south of Pontefract Lane, Leeds.
- Outline Application for the erection of a Motorway Service Area including means of access and: Facilities Building with viewing platform, up to 100 bedroom Hotel, Skelton Lake Visitor Centre, Fuel Filling Station at land off Junction 45, M1 Motorway
- Residential development (circa 2000 dwellings), retail, health centre, community centre and primary school development, with associated drainage and landscaping on land between Wetherby Road, Skeltons Lane and York Road
- Residential development of 503 houses, on land at Seacroft Hospital, York Road, Leeds, LS14 6UH
- 46 dwellings at land off New Village Way, Churwell, Morley, LS27 7GD
- Erection of 93 houses, new public open space, new roads including link from Throstle Road to Towcester Avenue, Middleton
- The Majestic in City Square, 65,000 sq. ft. office development topped off by an iconic new roof
- Demolition of existing mill buildings and construction of 228 new apartments in 5 Buslingthorpe Lane, Chapeltown

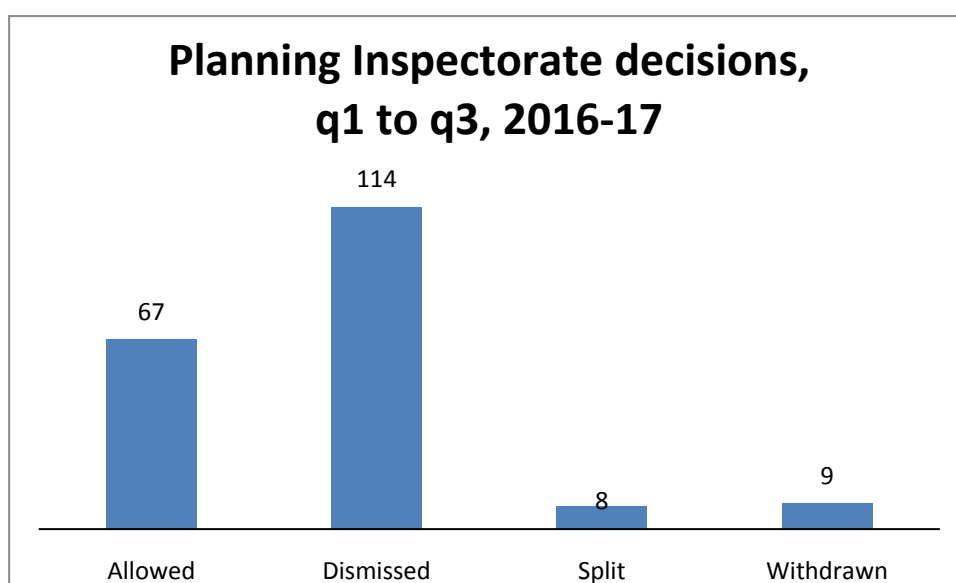
3.6 Appeals

3.6.1 In the first three quarters of 2016-17, the service has received 184 new appeals. The chart below shows how this is broken down by type of appeal.



3.6.2 The majority of the appeals received in quarters 1 to 3 were written representations and those in relation to householder appeals. Just a small percentage of appeals are hearing and public inquiries, with eight hearings and two public inquiries in the reporting period.

3.6.3 In the reporting period the Planning Inspectorate made 189 decisions and 9 appeals were withdrawn. The decisions reached by the Inspectorate are displayed in the chart below



3.6.4 This equates to 65% of appeals being dismissed. This is a drop in the performance rate of dismissed appeals in comparison with the same period last year, 73%, and work will be undertaken to establish where common themes are emerging as well as investigating the high numbers of appealed decisions generally.

3.6.5 19 of the allowed appeals were householder appeals; since the relaxation of the permitted development (PD) on larger house extensions, it appears from analysis

of the Planning Inspectorate's (PINS) decisions that more household extensions are being allowed which are "marginal", given the PD fall-back position. The service will further analyse these appeal decisions and make changes as appropriate.

- 3.6.6 A further eight appeals were for telephone kiosks in the city centre. The kiosks were refused by the service due to a legal point; the Council's view was that kiosks did not benefit from permitted development rights in that the proposed telephone/advertising unit fell outside the Electronic Communications Code and the permitted development rights. The kiosks were for the dual purpose of providing a public telephone service as well as an advertising facility and are therefore subject to separate consent. The Planning Inspectorate took an alternate view and in light of these appeal decisions the service will amend its position in future. However, the appeals on the kiosks have skewed the appeal performance statistics, (without these appeals, performance would be running at 67.5% dismissed) and it is likely that this batch of applications and associated appeals is an isolated occurrence.
- 3.6.7 Analysis of the latest annual figures on decisions from the Planning Inspectorate¹ show that Leeds has the seventh highest rate of S78 appeals and the third highest rate for householder appeals in England. Maintaining control of appeals is particularly important as the Government's new performance regime commencing in 2018 increases the threshold to 10% of an authority's total number of decisions on major and non-major applications made during the assessment period being overturned at appeal.
- 3.6.8 However, the service is currently well within this threshold; based on the last full years data available (2015-16); 4384 planning decisions were made, of which 231 were appealed (5.2%) of which 52 were allowed, or just 1.18% of the total number of decisions made being overturned at appeal. Nevertheless a close watch will be maintained on appeals performance.
- 3.6.9 Decisions were reached on several PAS site appeals during the reporting period:
- Grove Road, Boston Spa for up to 104 new homes, appeal was allowed in a decision by the Secretary of State in May 2016.
 - Sandgate Drive, Kippax. The Council withdrew from this appeal in August 2016 on the basis that it was in the midst of challenging the Grove Road decision. The appeal was allowed.
 - Breary Lane, Bramhope, Bradford Road, East Ardsley and Leeds Road, Collingham. The appeals were conjoined and heard by inspector Ken Barton in February 2016. These three appeals have subsequently been allowed.
 - Bagley Lane, Farsley, The Council was due to defend the release of Bagley Lane Farsley for a third time in January 2017. The Council's request for an extension of time due to the timing of the Ken Barton appeals decision was refused.

¹ Planning Inspectorate Statistics 1 November 2016 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planning-inspectorate-statistics>

3.7 Community Infrastructure Levy

- 3.7.1 Executive Board, in February 2015, made key decisions around spending of the future Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income, directing it into two main funding streams; a strategic fund and a neighbourhood fund, plus up to 5% for administrative costs. Executive Board agreed that the Strategic CIL Fund will be 70-80% of the total CIL received, and that priorities for its spending will be decided on an annual basis as part of the Council's budget setting process, in line with the Regulation 123 List, and taking into account the impact of specific and cumulative infrastructure needs arising from new developments. The balance of the Strategic Fund is currently £685,434.61.
- 3.7.2 In relation to the Neighbourhood CIL Fund, Executive Board agreed that this is to be 15% in an area without a Neighbourhood Plan, and 25% in an area with an adopted Neighbourhood Plan. In town and parish council areas the CIL neighbourhood fund is to be passed directly to those local councils, as required by national CIL regulations. In non-parished areas the decisions about spending are delegated to the relevant Community Committee (as the lowest democratic representative), and the CIL neighbourhood fund ring-fenced by the City Council for that purpose.
- 3.7.3 A breakdown of the CIL balance is available below in comparison for the whole year 2015-16:

	Total CIL paid to date	Total admin fee paid to date	Total neighbourhood fund paid to date	Total strategic fund paid to date
2015/2016	£126,878.21	£6,343.90	£19,031.73	£101,502.58
Q1-3 2016/2017	£769,545.86	£70,181.95	£115,431.88	£583,932.03
Total	£896,424.07	£76,525.85	£134,463.61	£685,434.61

3.7.1 Compliance activity

- 3.7.1 The number of enforcement cases received in the first three quarters of 2016/17 has remained at a consistent high level with 980 cases received. As such the workload through the service remains substantial with a significant number of complex cases being investigated. However, the number of cases on hand has been reduced and maintained overall to under 1000 which has been a long standing service objective. This is a key step in improving the overall handling of cases as it will ultimately assist in reducing officer caseloads as staffing issues are addressed.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Total
No of cases received	370	299	311	980
No of cases resolved	333	402	317	1052
Initial site visits				
Category 1: Site visit same day/within 1 day. Target	1005 (1)	100%(2)	100%(0)	100%

100%				
Category 2: Site visit within 2 working days. Target 95%	80%(10)	100%(8)	100%(2)	93%
Category 3: Site visit within 10 working days Target 90%	83% 298/360 91%*	88% 263/297 97%*	91% 283/309 98%*	87% 95%*
	328/360	290/297	305/309	

* Figures for site visits undertaken within 20 working days in accordance with amended temporary target. See below.

3.7.2 Cases received and resolved and performance in undertaking initial site visits

3.7.3 Performance in undertaking initial site visits has been maintained with a revised target of 20 days for category 3 visits. This revised target has been in place throughout the reporting period due to the resource and staff absence experienced by the service.

3.7.4 In relation to the Category 1 and 2 cases the figures relate to a relatively small number of cases. For example there were 20 category 2 cases during the reporting period and only 2 of those cases missed the 2 day target and this is reflected in the figures.

3.7.5 The overall number of open cases on hand has been reduced and currently stands at 971.

3.7.6 Outcomes of case resolved

3.7.7 The number of complaints investigated that that are found to either involve no breach of planning control or are minor infringements over the period sits at approximately 50 %. This has gradually reduced from a figure of 60% in 2010/11.

3.7.8 This can possibly be accounted for by the increased rigour in examining cases as they come into the service. Where there is clearly no breach of planning control, cases have not been opened and complainants advised that the matter will not be investigated and the reason why. The remaining 50% of cases which have been closed involve significant breaches which have been resolved to the satisfaction of the Council through negotiations, granting planning permission or formal enforcement action. Ward Member meetings have continued during the year. Invitations are sent out with the bi monthly key cases list which continues to be sent to both ward members and parish councils with updates on priority cases within each ward.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	AvTotal
No Breach*	42%	34%	38%	38%
Resolved by negotiation	27%	34%	32%	31%

Breach but de-minimis/ not expedient	14%	12%	11%	12%
Planning permission/ CLU granted/ appeal allowed	14%	15%	15%	15%
Enforcement /other notices complied with	3%	5%	4%	4%

*Includes matters that are “permitted development”; where no development or material change of use is involved; matters that were time exempt from enforcement action on investigation; or where approved plans and conditions have been found to have been complied with.

- 3.7.9 **Enforcement and other Notices** A total of 69 enforcement and other notices have been served during the year so far. A greater number of PCNs and S330 notices have been served. These are formal requests for information and used to gain information to establish the nature of the breach or ownership information. This is a continuation of activity levels of previous years. There have been four temporary stop notices served during the period in relation to both unauthorised building works that were continuing on site and not considered acceptable or likely to gain planning permission and to prevent increased occupation of unauthorised travellers sites. We continue to take more formal action than all the other core cities by some distance reflecting the importance Members place in Leeds on the service. Within the first three quarters the following numbers of notices have been served

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Total
Planning Contravention Notices / Section 330 notices	30	35	37	102
Breach of Condition Notice	2	4	2	8
Enforcement Notice	11	22	17	50
S215 Untidy Land Notice	0	0	1	1
Temporary Stop Notice	3	0	1	4
Stop Notice	0	2	0	2

- 3.7.12 The compliance service continues to draft and issue its own notices with input from legal officers only on the more complex cases. This is continually monitored and whilst it does carry some risk, the resource savings in doing this are significant. It does however place increased pressure on case officers in progressing cases within the service and requires additional on-going training.

3.7.13 **Prosecution Outcomes and outstanding cases**

- 3.7.14 A small number of cases have been brought or are being before the courts for non-compliance with enforcement and other notices. These have been in relation to continuing long standing breaches. A number of cases have been sent letters before action and this threat of court action can be effective in securing compliance with notices and remedying the breach in advance of preparing formal papers for the courts.

3.8 **Staffing and resourcing**

- 3.8.1 This year has seen a significant number of changes to the staff resource not least the early retirement of Martin Sellens (Head of Development management). For much of the year the service has been operating with 2.6 Senior Planner posts vacant and the 2 Planner posts in addition 2 Senior Planner posts have also been vacant in the Minerals Team.

- 3.8.2 Internal appointments have been made to 1.6 Senior Planner posts. Including the release of a colleague from Strategic Planning to the 0.6 FTE post. Appointments have also now been made externally to the two Minerals Senior Planner posts. Once the aforementioned officers have bedded in it is intended to move one officer currently seconded to Minerals to the remaining 1.0 FTE Senior Planner Post.
- 3.8.3 In addition the 2 vacant Planner posts have recently been released for external advert
- 3.8.4 Finally a 'resource realignment which affects the majority of the area teams has been undertaken. The purpose of this is to re align resources, skill levels and individuals aspirations and balance all of the aforementioned against workload pressures generated in geographic areas. Appointment to the Planner posts is critical to the completion of this process. Workload Management Meetings involving all of the Area Team Leaders and the Group manager are being held on a fortnightly basis to identify and react early to work pressures and to respond in a flexible manner. However, this has served to highlight the need at Planner level particularly in North East Area Team. To cover the pressure a Planner is on loan from one of the other area teams but this is only a temporary solution as it will ultimately affect the Performance of that Team.
- 3.8.5 In the Enforcement team there has been a number of difficulties over the year. One FTE PO4 has been absent from the team since Sept 2013 and will continue to be until at least until mid-August 2017. This person has not been replaced nor a secondment brought in to carry out their duties and this is of course placing strain on the remaining staff.
- 3.8.6 Other compliance staff have had periods of absence since April 2016 to the present date, one officer has a long term medical condition which results in extended periods of absence, another officer has been diagnosed with a serious condition and has been off since mid Nov 2016 and is not likely to come back before early summer 2017. All of this has added to the pressure felt by other staff to try and pick up additional workload. The team has had to triage complaints and at times complaints of a of a less serious nature have been put on hold until such time as there was capacity to deal with them.

3.9 **Service quality**

3.9.1 **Complaints**

- 3.9.2 From April to December 2016 there has been 119 stage 1 and stage 2 complaints received by the LPA. This compared with 94 complaints received in the same period last year. This is a 26% increase in the number of complaints received when compared to the previous year.
- 3.9.3 The main theme on upheld complaints revolve around the way the planning applications have been to advertised to neighbours and that comments received from neighbours not been taken in to account by officers. Action has been taken to ensure the appropriate number of site notices are erected by printing such notices prior to the application progressing to the planning case officer.

Additionally, when any representations made by separate emails or letters are uploaded to Pubic Access an auto generated email is sent to the planning officer informing them that new comments are available to take into consideration.

- 3.9.4 The Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) reported 14 cases to the Planning Service during this period of which 10 were received closed with no further action being taken by the LGO.
- 3.9.5 Four cases required investigation and a formal response to the LGO. Two of these cases have identified fault. One case where the comments made by Flood Risk Management on a development of two houses were not fully reflected by the Planning Officer in their report on a delegated decision. This was identified prior to the LGO complaint being received. A draft decision has been received from the LGO recognising the Council have taken appropriate steps to mitigate the situation.
- 3.9.6 A further case was raised where a comment on a planning application was not taken in to account by a planning officer. It was identified the matter had been dealt with appropriately by the Council complaints process with an apology being made, and although there was fault, the LGO considered no injustice was caused.

4 Service improvements

4.1 Workflow meetings

- 4.1.1 Planning teams are organised geographically and receive applications relating to a particular area, however the service has lost a number of staff over recent times and this approach to workload distribution can cause issues. There effective deployment of staff and work allocation of new cases is critical to the smooth running of the service and expeditious decision making. In order to achieve flexibility and a proactive approach across five area teams, a new system has been initiated. Fortnightly workflow meetings are attended by the Team leaders and the Planning Group Leader where pressures within teams can be identified early on. Examples of pressures can be where a large major application is submitted but the area team doesn't have the capacity to deal with it and so it can be allocated to an officer in another team. Another example is distribution of the volume of householder applications received in the North East team across the other area teams. The early identification of pressures and flexibility of allocation of new cases is proving to be an effective measure in trying to manage increasing workloads with the existing staffing establishment.

4.2 Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use or Development and Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Use or Development

- 4.2.1 Not all development needs planning permission and where applicants wish to be certain that the existing use of a building is lawful for planning purposes or that their proposal does not require planning permission, they can apply for a 'Lawful Development Certificate'. This process involves consulting with Legal Services and in the past there have been some difficulties obtaining consultation responses, particularly on those outsourced, resulting in lengthy delays for applicants. A new model has now been adopted whereby officers draft a report

based on a checklist developed by Legal Services, which is then sent to Legal Services for them to check. This change in process means our internal legal service is able to more effectively deal with the responses themselves, which cuts out the outsourcing costs and the necessity of sending out information relating to the application, as this is available to internal users on the planning database-Uniform. This change should speed up response times and hopefully marginally reduce costs.

4.3 Permitted development enquiry service changes

- 4.3.1 The service for a number of years has offered a service whereby for a £50 fee, applicants can submit an enquiry and find out if their proposed development requires planning permission or not. For the fee, customers receive a letter from a planning staff member, who has a deep understanding of the complex rules around permitted development (PD). However, this letter has no legal status and there have been some instances where the advice has been challenged, because of the complexity of the rules on PD. Due to potential changes in the staffing of this enquiry service, planning services will withdraw the permitted development enquiry service in April (after a period of publicity) and instead offer the more formal route of the certificates of lawfulness, as described above.
- 4.3.2 The Planning Portal has recently refreshed its webpages and provides an interactive house of the most common types of developments, such as loft conversions, single storey extensions which provides information of permitted development, enabling members of the public who do not wish to go down the Certificate of Lawfulness route to self-serve much more easily. The Leeds City Council webpage will provide a link to this Planning Portal page, for ease.

4.4 Challenges Ahead

4.4.1 Planning reform

- 4.4.2 The government continues with its planning reform agenda and we are now awaiting the Housing White paper, which will have implications for the planning system and the way new housing is delivered. This is due in January 2017 and the service will need to assess the full impact. The proposals on making changes to the setting of planning application fees may assist in providing a fee to cover the true cost of working on planning applications, which will be helpful from a resource point of view but the proposed introduction of competition in the planning system and planning in principle may have far reaching implications. The granting of permission in principle (through a development order) to land that is allocated for development, whilst may speed matters up, needs to be balanced with the local dimension, which allows communities to continue to have a say on decisions that affect them through the democratic process through their local planning committees.
- 4.4.3 Alternate providers processing planning applications raises a number of issues around local democracy, governance, probity as well as having a potentially significant financial impact on the services provided by the local planning authority.

5 Corporate Considerations

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1.1 This report is presented for information and there has not been the need for wide consultation.

5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 5.2.1 There are no specific equality considerations arising from this report.

5.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 5.3.1 The effective and expedient determination of planning applications contributes to the overall prosperity of the City and plays a key part in the regeneration and growth agenda. The service makes a key contribution to the delivery of housing growth.

5.4 Resources and value for money

- 5.4.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report. However, measures are being taken to ensure that the service is delivered within the financial constraints.

5.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 5.5.1 There are no specific legal implications and this report does not relate to a key or major decision.

5.6 Risk Management

- 5.6.1 There are a number of risks associated with the decision making process which are both financial and reputational. Measures, processes and future service improvements outlined in the report seek to minimise the risk of challenge.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The upwards trend of increase in workload has continued for the last four years and this reporting period is no different, with numbers of applications up by 2.1% in comparison with the same period last year. However, the performance on determining applications in the statutory timescales or within an agreed time has slipped a little, although still significantly better than the national average. Measures will be put in place to ensure that performance is maintained and improved if possible. Leeds continues to receive more than the national average of major applications as a percentage of overall workload, so considering the complexity and size of some of the schemes in Leeds maintaining such a high performance level is a significant achievement. Emphasis will continue to be placed on the efficient and expeditious determination of applications through the promotion of the pre-application service and use of extensions of time agreements when it is clear that applications cannot be determined in the statutory timeframe.

- 6.2 A close watch will be kept to ensure that there are sufficient resources to maintain the quality and speed of service necessary.
- 6.3 Performance on appeals dismissed has dropped and work will be undertaken to identify any common themes and address accordingly. Leeds also receives a high number of appeals and an investigation as to the nature of the appeals will be undertaken during 2017, as this is a significant workload to resource. However, it is important that the service strikes a balance, maintaining design quality and safeguarding amenity, whilst at the same time not being unreasonable.
- 6.4 The service anticipates a further challenging time ahead, however, the direction of travel and objectives are clear in terms of transforming how we work, maintaining and improving performance levels and continuing to improve services to customers within the resources available to deliver the service.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the report and comment as they feel appropriate and to receive a further performance report in six months' time.