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Development Management Performance Update

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the performance of the Planning Management team particularly in respect of the determination of planning applications within statutory timescales.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Planning Committee note the content of this report.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The speed of the determination of planning applications is a key factor in the provision of an effective customer focussed development management service. This is recognised at both local and national levels such that the government is currently bringing forward a scheme whereby poorly performing local planning authorities will be placed into "special measures".
- 3.2 Authorities are at risk of being placed in special measures where they determine less than 30% of major planning applications within the statutory timescale of 13 weeks. It is intended that the power to determine major planning applications along with the application fee will be removed from special measures authorities. Whilst the authority will continue to undertake and bear the cost of the administrative work associated with major applications, their consideration and determination will be undertaken by the Planning Inspectorate rather than the authority itself thereby imposing a potentially significant financial burden on the authority.
- 3.3 The attached table provides a summary of the performance of this Council in respect of the determination of the 3 categories of planning applications from April 2011 to date.
- 3.4 During the financial year to the end of March 2012, it can be seen that performance was at a level where, had the scheme been in place, this Council would have had been at serious risk of special measures.
- 3.5 However, it can also be seen that since that time there has been a steady and clear improvement in performance to the point that over the last 2 quarters Warwick District Council is one of the best performing councils across the country. Further, as part of the peer review benchmarking exercise, this Council has also been recognised as one of the two most improved councils within our benchmarking group.

- 3.6 As a consequence, Warwick District Council is gaining a reputation as a highly performing authority and is no longer in a position where there is a risk of special measures being imposed.
- 3.7 In seeking to ensure that this position is maintained and that further improvements are made wherever possible, Planning Committee are requested to note the improvements in performance achieved to date and to endorse the on-going work of the Development Management Team in that respect.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The speed of decision making is a significant factor in the provision of an effective development management service for customers. The making of decisions in a less than timely manner would have a significant impact on the quality of service provision and could also put the Council at risk of the imposition of special measures as described above.

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 There are significant potential budgetary implications of the provision of a poor development management service resulting in the imposition of special measures. In that scenario, this council would continue to undertake and bear the cost of the administrative work associated with major applications without the associated planning application fee which depending on the nature of the scheme can typically amount to many, sometimes tens of thousands of pounds.

6. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 National and local planning policies and plans provide the wider framework within which planning applications are determined.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 N/A.

Table 1: % of Applications determined within Statutory Period

Quarter ending	Major	Minor	Other
30 June 2011	33%	36%	41%
30 Sept 2011	33%	40%	50%
31 Dec 2011	33%	16%	27%
31 March 2012	29%	21%	24%
30 June 2012	56%	38%	60%
30 Sept 2012	65%	82%	87%
31 Dec 2012	65%	85%	95%
31 March 2013	100%	93%	95%
30 June 2013	90%	100%	98%