DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

Communities and Local Government (CLG) sets targets for local authorities to determine planning applications. These are set as a % of applications received by category to be determined within a set period of time. The table below sets out how Three Rivers has performed against these targets for the last 7 financial years. The table shows continuing improved performance from 2004-5, with all targets now being met. The improvement has been achieved despite some staff turnover and is due to changes in work practices, better procedures and an excellent response from all staff. The table shows the percentages for each year, and for the last two years the actual numbers of applications dealt with in time and out of time, eg. 15/2.

	2004-5	**2005-6**	**2006-7**	**2007-8**	**2008-9**	**2009-10**	**2010-11**
Major Planning Applications (BV109a) (NI157a) CLG Target 60% in 13 weeks	**45.8%**	**60.7%**	**77.4%**	**86.7%**	**100%**	**100%** **(13/0)**	**90.9%** **(10/1)**
Minor Planning Applications (BV109b) (NI157b) CLG Target 65% in 8 weeks	**64.2%**	**68.8%**	**83.3%**	**84.2%**	**84.9%**	**89.7%** **(183/21)**	**89.0%** **(162/20)**
Other Planning Applications (BV109c) (NI157c) CLG Target 80% in 8 weeks	**79.1%**	**84.3%**	**93.9%**	**96.2%**	**94.7%**	**96.8%** **(882/29)**	**97.6%** **(888/22)**

Source: Council Uniform Data & PS1/2 returns to CLG

For 2008/9 the definition of each category was amended and major applications were divided into 2 – large scale and small scale. Large scale refers to developments of more than 200 residential units or site areas in excess of 4ha, and commercial developments of more than 10,000 sq m or site areas in excess of 2ha. Small scale refers to developments of between 10 and 199 residential units or site areas between 0.5 and 3.9ha, and commercial developments of between 1,000 and 9,999 sq m. The BVPI 109 targets were relabelled as NI 157 but at the same levels as previously. The table shows the actual numbers dealt with in time and those out of time eg. 5/2, as well as the percentage in time.

	2008/9	**2009/10**	**2010/11**	2011/12 1st Quarter	2011/12 2nd Quarter	2011/12 3rd Quarter
Large scale Major Planning Applications (NI 157) CLG Target 60% in 13 weeks	**0**	**0**	**0/1** **(0%)**	2/0 (100%)	0	0/1 (0%)
Small scale Major Planning Applications (NI 157) CLG Target 60% in 8 weeks	**14/0** **(100%)**	**13/0** **(100%)**	**10/0** **(100%)**	4/0 (100%)	2/0 (100%)	4/0 (100%)
Minor Planning Applications (NI 157) CLG Target 65% in 8 weeks	**191/34** **(84.9%)**	**183/21** **(89.7%)**	**162/20** **(89.0%)**	51/5 (91.1%)	64/6 (91.4%)	39/6 (86.7%)
Other Planning Applications (NI 157) CLG Target 80% in 8 weeks	**928/52** **(94.7%)**	**882/29** **(96.8%)**	**888/22** **(97.6%)**	236/9 (96.3%)	217/6 (97.3%)	191/4 (98.0%)

The next table sets out the performance of Three Rivers in the context of adjoining authorities for the year ending 30th September 2011. The table is arranged according to performance for the combined definition of major applications (large scale and small scale). Three Rivers improved its position in the top 4 of the table compared to when it was last published (for the year ending 31st March 2011) and exceeded both national targets and the national average for each type of planning application. This again represents excellent performance.

For the year ending 30th September 2011

Authority	Total Major Decisions	% in 13 weeks	Total Minor Decisions	% in 8 weeks	Total Other Decisions	% in 8 weeks	Previous position
1.THREE RIVERS	**15**	**100**	**208**	**90**	**900**	**97**	**4**
2.S Bucks	31	97	285	93	994	98	3
3.Watford	13	85	216	93	565	99	1=
4=Welwyn Hatfield	51	76	121	76	749	88	5
4=Hertsmere	29	76	206	82	802	91	7
6.Chiltern	18	72	293	81	1,299	92	9=
7.Stevenage	9	67	86	74	251	96	1=
8.Broxbourne	8	63	148	83	631	98	8
NATIONAL AVERAGE		62		72		88	
NATIONAL TARGET		**60**		**65**		**80**	
9.E Herts	40	59	354	82	1,477	93	9=
10=LB Harrow	47	57	424	77	1,854	88	11
10=N Herts	46	57	256	64	925	86	6
12.St Albans	42	33	374	51	2,056	67	12=
13=LB Hillingdon#	-	-	-	-	-	-	13=
13=Dacorum#	-	-	-	-	-	-	13=

Source: CLG / National Statistics – Statistical Release 03/02/2012
LB Hillingdon & Dacorum noted by CLG as not returned data for all quarters to CLG.

CLG have not officially ranked authorities nationally however the national data shows Three Rivers came equal 1st (previously 16th) out of 339 English local authorities for speed of dealing with major planning applications, equal 21st (previously 31st) for dealing with minor applications and equal 11th (previously 3rd) for householder/other applications (which accounted for 80% of our workload in numerical terms). This represents excellent performance given our resources and workloads. Some 93% of decisions were taken under delegated powers in Three Rivers for this period, just above the national average (91%).

APPEALS PERFORMANCE

The table below sets out our performance for the 1st, 2nd & 3rd Quarters of 2011/12 (1st April 2011 – 31st Dec. 2011) for appeals in the context of adjoining authorities. All appeals are grouped together – s.78 planning appeals, fast-track householder appeals, conservation area and listed buildings, enforcement and certificates of lawfulness.

Compared to the whole year 2010/11 our performance has been maintained at a very high level (previously 85.1% dismissed) By contrast Chiltern dropped from 4th to 12th. It is also worth noting that the figures do not include appeals withdrawn by an appellant after they have been registered. We have had several such appeals withdrawn this year after submitting our statements. To put matters in a national context, some 35% of appeals are allowed nationally so Three Rivers performance (with only 22.0% allowed) was noticeably ahead of the national average.

AUTHORITY	TOTAL NO. OF APPEAL DECISIONS	TOTAL ALLOWED or PART ALLOWED	% ALLOWED	TOTAL DISMISSED	% DISMISSED
1.Stevenage	1	0	0	1	100
2.N Herts	17	3	17.6	14	82.4
3.S.Bucks	50	9	18.0	41	82.0
4.THREE RIVERS	41	9	22.0	32	78.0
5.Watford	26	7	26.9	19	73.1
6.Dacorum	48	14	29.2	34	70.8
7.LB Harrow	149	50	33.6	99	66.4
8.Broxbourne	37	13	35.1	24	64.9
9.E Herts	85	30	35.3	55	64.7
10.St Albans	106	38	35.8	68	64.2
11.Welwyn Hatfield	50	18	36.0	32	64.0
12.Chiltern	75	29	38.7	46	61.3
13.Hertsmere	51	20	39.2	31	60.8
14.LB Hillingdon	180	71	39.4	109	60.6

Source: PINS unverified data released 04/08/11, 24/11/11 & 16/02/12

Success rates for appellants appear to be marginally rising across the County and our nearest neighbours which would reflect Government statements on planning generally which they have seen as a block to economic development but may also reflect ageing development plans yet to be replaced in some areas by new LDF's. For Three Rivers the number of cases going to appeal has dropped significantly in recent years which in part is due to reduced applications but also to the extensive pre-application service now available which helps to reduce speculative and badly presented applications which in the past would have been refused. It does also mean that a small number of cases can have a disproportionate effect on % performance however.

DISCHARGE OF PLANNING CONDITIONS PERFORMANCE

A new measure of timeliness was introduced for local planning authorities in 2008 relating to the formal discharge of conditions on planning applications. Most planning applications that are granted have conditions attached which require some form of agreement from the local authority. These can be relatively straightforward and for example may require approval of materials or a tree planting scheme. They can also be extremely complex and require submission of a method statement relating to how a development will take place and involve other agencies such as the County Council or Environment Agency in their discharge. Some requests relate only to a single condition whereas others involve all the conditions attached to a major planning application. Local authorities are expected to deal with all requests to discharge conditions within 8 weeks no matter how complex they are and applicants may request a refund of their fees (either £25 or £85 depending upon the nature of the development) if they are not dealt with in 13 weeks.

During the financial year 2008/9 Three Rivers received 141 such requests for the discharge of conditions on planning applications. A total of 126 were dealt with within 8 weeks (89.4%) and 15 took over 8 weeks (10.6%). Of these 15, just 3 (2.12%) took over 13 weeks and in each case this was due to the involvement of other agencies who did not respond promptly.

For the year 2009/10 we received 180 requests (an increase of 28%) and dealt with 179 within 8 weeks (99.4%). The 1 case over 8 weeks was by negotiation with the applicant.

For 2010/11 we received 220 requests of which 219 were successfully dealt with within 8 weeks (99.5%).

For 2011/12 to date we have received 200 valid requests and have dealt with 175, all of which were within 8 weeks (100%).

NON-MATERIAL AMENDMENTS

These are formal requests to vary aspects of a planning permission without having to make a new full planning application. Matters covered may include changes which do not have a significant effect upon the streetscene, the character of an area or the amenity of neighbours. Examples may include changes to rear facing windows or reducing the size of an extension.

For 2010/11, 62 such requests were made of which 61 were dealt with within 28 days (the statutory timescale) (98.4%).

For 2011/12 to date we have received 61 valid requests of which 56 have been dealt with within 28 days (100%) and 5 remain to be dealt with.

Geof Muggeridge
Head of Development Management & Environmental Health

17-2-12