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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Community Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> September 2006</b>	<b>CATEGORY:</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>Deputy Chief Executive</b>	<b>DELEGATED</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>John Porter</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Progress Report – Special Project re. Achieving Targets 2006/09 – Planning applications</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD (S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE:</b>

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**1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 To endorse the progress made to date
- 1.2 To agree the way forward on this project

**2.0 Purpose of the Report**

2.1 Members of the Community Scrutiny Committee are requested to endorse the progress made to date on this special project and to agree the way forward.

**Background**

2.2 At it's meeting on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2006, (Minute No. CYS/4) Members of the Committee considered a request from the Environmental and Development Services Committee to examine the issues around the achievement of Best Value Performance Indicator targets in respect of determining major planning applications.

**Informal Meeting**

- 2.3 An informal meeting of the Community Scrutiny Committee was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 2006, in which the following Members were in attendance: Councillors Lane, Bladen, Atkin and Mrs. Mead.
- 2.4 The Members present considered a Briefing Note (copy attached at Appendix A) that had been prepared by the Head of Planning Services.
- 2.5 Members were also informed that a business re-engineering exercise had been undertaken within Planning Services facilitated by consultants. The findings were presented to a group comprising members of Corporate Management Team, Members of the Environmental & Development Services Committee, Development Control Committee and Community Scrutiny Committee. A copy of the slides presented at this meeting are attached at Appendix B

2.6 The main issues identified from presentation are as follows:

- What can affect the speed of determination of major planning applications?
- Difficulties in predicting when applications will be submitted?
- The quality of development needs to be balanced against the speed of determining an application?
- Resource implications including the possible need for the permanent services of a qualified Urban Designer?
- Consideration of the findings from the Process re-engineering exercise undertaken, such as, 'fast tracking' smaller planning applications and day to day enquiries being undertaken by 'Customer First'

### **The Way Forward**

- 2.7 To arrange a Special meeting of this Committee in order to approve the final draft report which needs to be presented to the Environmental Services Committee on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2006.
- 2.8 The Head of Planning Services intends to take a report on the subject to the same Committee in order to set the changes necessary to improve performance in regard to the determination of major planning applications in the context of a sustainable departmental structure.

### **3.0 Financial implications**

- 3.1 None directly from this report
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