

**PLANNING SERVICES
SERVICE PLAN 2005/2008**

END OF YEAR REPORT (MARCH 2006)

SERVICE DESCRIPTION

The service provides a range of statutory and non-statutory services related to the formulation of planning policy, heritage and conservation, the determination of planning applications, enforcement action and building control to mainly external customers such as residents of the districts and the development industry.

THE YEAR IN CONTEXT

During the year the service experienced several changes at manager level, dealt with planning applications in the absence of an up to date local plan whilst maintaining performance levels and progressing the preparation of new documents related to the 2004 Act. Maintaining standards was rewarded by an increased Planning Delivery Grant allocation from the ODPM.

ACTION	OUTCOMES
<i>Complete studies arising from Planning Delivery Grant</i>	<p><i>The following studies to provide an evidence base for policy formulation were completed during the year</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Swadlincote Town Centre Retail & Leisure Study.</i> ➤ <i>PPG17 Open Space Study</i> <p><i>commenced and are ongoing:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Employment Land Study</i> ➤ <i>Conservation Area Character Studies</i> ➤ <i>Rural Area Affordable Housing Studies</i>
<i>Maintain HERS with increased funding</i>	<p><i>All HERS schemes in the country were to end in March 2006. In February English Heritage informed local authorities that selected HERS schemes would continue and Swadlincote was one of these. (This has yet to be formally confirmed and the budget set – the match funding will be found from Planning Delivery Grant and a contribution from Derbyshire County Council.</i></p>
<i>Pursue improvements to gateways for Swadlincote Town Centre and the approaches to it.</i>	<p><i>Consultation on the Masterplan that will guide the design & form of improvements was completed and a report will be presented to Members in the coming year.</i></p>
<i>Maintain capability to deliver expert advice and decision making via external consultants. Focus expenditure so as to secure level of advice that fully informs decision making on where technical expertise is required.</i>	<p><i>Delivered by ongoing partnership working:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>East Staffs B C - arboricultural advice</i> <i>Derbyshire County Council - archaeological advice</i> <i>Derbyshire Wildlife Trust - ecological advice</i>
<i>Contribute to development of Housing Strategy and balancing of housing markets.</i>	<p><i>Ongoing – joint working with the Housing Strategy Manager regarding housing market areas & affordable housing</i></p>

<p><i>*(also BVPI 200b) Achieve the 2005/06 Milestones set out in the Local Development Scheme</i></p> <p><i>*Support the review of public transport provision in South Derbyshire with the County Council and other partners as part of the production of the second Local Transport Plan.</i></p> <p><i>*Undertake a feasibility study of the Woodville-Swadlincote Regeneration Route.</i></p> <p><i>*Negotiate Section 106 (Planning) Agreements to secure local facilities and services to meet the needs generated by new housing development.</i></p> <p><i>*Apply National Forest Planting Guidelines to all relevant planning applications</i></p> <p><i>*Produce an annual report of housing land availability in the District and share results with key stakeholders</i></p>	<p><i>All met</i></p> <p><i>Responses made to Local Transport Plan consultation.</i></p> <p><i>Being pursued via a Desktop Study commenced by Derbyshire County Council</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing – applies to planning applications that meet the established triggers</i></p> <p><i>Ongoing</i></p> <p><i>Completed - Figures for 2004/5 incorporated into the Annual Monitoring Report</i></p>
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** = also Corporate Plan*

TASKS AT RISK OF NON DELIVERY DURING THE YEAR

ACTION	EXPLANATION
<i>Adopt new South Derbyshire Local Plan.</i>	<i>Document withdrawn in May – remedial measure = Revised Local Development Scheme agreed in June 05 with the Secretary of State.</i>
<i>Prepare associated Supplementary Planning Guidance.</i>	<i>Cannot be pursued due to withdrawal of LP - remedial measure = Informal guidance documents to be produced where possible as an interim measure e.g. telecom masts.</i>
<i>*Prepare Action Area Plan for Woodville to Swadlincote Town Centre.</i>	<i>Timetable affected by withdrawal of LP – remedial measure = Date for first consultation on Area Action Plan set back in LDS to June 2006. (Background information gathering has commenced)</i>
<i>Improve working conditions in the Civic Offices by pursuing apportionment of additional space for overcrowded space.</i>	<i>Staff numbers have increased without comparable increase in workspace – remedial measure = assess accommodation needs in association with move to customer first. Set money aside from Planning Delivery Grant to undertake basic painting etc to be undertaken during 2006/7.</i>
<i>Produce best practice guidance on the provision of affordable housing</i>	<i>Delay – remedial measure = project reassessed and moved to 06/07 so as to follow on from Housing Needs Study, local definition of 'affordability' and emerging national guidance.</i>

** = Corporate Plan*

2005/2006 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

INDICATOR	2004/05 (actual)	2005/06 (target)	2005/06 (actual)
Best Value PIs			
106 – % of new homes built on previously developed land	79%	60%	65% (est)
109a - % of major applications determined within 13 weeks	54%	55%	56%
109b - % of minor applications determined within 8 weeks	72%	65%	70%
109c - % of other applications determined within 8 weeks	85%	80%	87%
200a – Did the LPA submit the Local Development Scheme by 28 th March 05 and thereafter maintain a rolling programme?	Yes	Yes	Yes
200b - Has the LPA met the milestones which the current LDS sets out?	Yes	Yes	Yes
200c – Did the LPA publish an annual monitoring report by 31 st December of each year	N/A	Yes	Yes
204 - % of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning permission. (figures have resulted in additional award in recent PDG)	23%	30%	11%
205 - Score against the quality of service check list. (Securing a greater score is dependent upon achieving permanent and continuing Design Advice, options for which are proving difficult but still being investigated and upgraded software from the supplier to enable applications to be monitored on line).	78%	83%	78%
170a – The number of visits to/useages of LA funded or part funded museums per 1,000 population	N/A	No target set	574
170b – The number of those visits to LA funded museums that were in person per 1,000.	N/A	216	342
170c – The number of pupils visiting museums and galleries in organised school groups (including visits to schools)	N/A	300	291
219a – Total number of Conservation Areas in the LA area.	22	No target set	22
219b - % of Conservation Areas with an up to date character appraisal (Work almost completed. Tender required for remaining 50%)	0%	50%	50%
219c - % of Conservation Areas with published management proposals.	0%	No target set	0%

Local Indicators			
Retain market share of Building Control	65%	65%	78%

LESSONS LEARNT

The introduction of new performance management systems relating to major applications and Section 106 Agreements has helped maintain standards but workloads are still high. Although staffing levels have improved and there are currently no vacancies, all areas of the service are placed under pressure in times of holiday, sickness and particularly maternity absence. Whilst we would not have been able to recruit without the Planning Delivery Grant the service is still poorly staffed by fully qualified experienced planners with regard to the numbers of applications determined compared to other authorities.

The absence of an up to date local plan has complicated the determination of applications necessitating consideration of a diverse range of documents and thus taking more time. Despite this however, the low number of appeals allowed demonstrates that such deliberations are resulting in the right outcome.

PDG has enabled the electronic conversion of documents to commence, however this is particularly expensive and it will be difficult to progress towards meeting the full Pendleton Criteria for on line delivery (BVPI 205) without future ongoing corporate commitment towards developing and updating software.

Whilst performance of the service has been consistent the Government continues to introduce new requirements that are additions to rather than instead of existing ones and thus pressure on the service is very likely to continue after the end of the PDG.