



WNDC Board Report

Report by the Director of Planning and Development

Paper Reference: 06-2009-08

Agenda Item: 8

15th September 2009

Subject: Planning Service Delivery Report

Advice: That the Board notes:

1. the Planning Performance.
2. the review of major applications affecting performance figures
3. planning decisions in **Appendix 1**

Summary:

- The Grange Park planning application and s106 agreement has now been approved.
- Performance has improved over the first part of Q2.
- We are reviewing our processing to improve performance further.

1. Overall performance against national indicators

- 1.1 Two-thirds of the way through Q2, planning performance has improved on all types of applications. However, we still expect the older applications, specifically the smaller major applications to negatively impact on the stats at some future date.



2008 - 2009					2009 - 2010		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1*	Q2 part	National PI
Major (13 to 16 Weeks)	25%	38%	39%	39%	29% (7)	36% (2)	60%
Minor (8 weeks)	69%	71%	80%	82%	84% (19)	87% (11)	65%
Others (8 weeks)	75%	80%	80%	82%	88% (8)	92% (4)	80%

1.2 Paragraph 2 below sets out in more detail some of the reasons why some major applications have taken time to be resolved and why they have missed the national targets.

2. Grange Park

2.1 The Grange Park application has successfully been approved. This is a large scale major mixed use development with an extensive s106 legal agreement. The scheme delivers 450 homes, 10,500 sq m office, 150 bed hotel. This equates to approximately 597 on-site jobs. The Design Code approved by Northampton Area Planning Committee in October 2008.

2.2 The total value of the S106 financially will be **£9,430,000** to WNDC. The agreement is a hybrid between on-site contributions and standard charge, reflecting the negotiations over two years. Cost per unit, excluding the employment standard charge and halving the staffing/travel plan costs (as these costs are excluded from the POS) is **£20,300** per residential unit.



2.3 This breaks down to:

- Affordable Housing – 35%
- Employment standard charge – £25 per square metre (£262,500)
- Residential Standard Charge - £17,840 per unit (total £8,028,000)
- Sustainability Strategy – Minimum of Code 3/BREEAM “very good”
- Design Code and Public Art
- Staff Monitoring Contribution - £7,500
- Staff Reserved Matter Contribution - £37,000
- Travel Plan Coordinator Contribution - £20,000
- Indoor Sports Provision Contribution - £450,000
- Outdoor Sports Provision Contribution - £300,000
- Children and Young Persons Contribution - £75,000
- Community Buildings Contribution - £250,000

Total S106 £ value = £9,430,000

2.4 One of the major concerns that have been raised by the community is the impact on education provision. The s106 introduces a mechanism known as the Education Balancing Payment. This means that should the mix change to a type that would increase the pupil generation from the site the Residential Standard Charge rises accordingly. In fact, should larger unit sizes be bought forward, the residential standard charge would change significantly i.e. a two bed apartment pays £1,057 per unit, a three bed £6,362 and a four bed £13,089. The current mix is –

One bedroom apartments	20%
Two bedroom apartments	41%
Two bedroom houses	20%
Three bedroom houses	15%
Four bedroom houses	4%



2.5 Underpinning this is the flexibility within the standard charge. If money is not spent or is needed to be spent in another subject area, then WNDC has the ability to do this in order to deliver the necessary infrastructure for the Northampton area.

3. Review of major applications affecting performance

3.1 Members asked what were the key factors affecting performance on major applications and how other UDC's compare with the WNDC. There are two types of major applications:

3.1.1 The large scale majors which are complex and on the whole comprise significant urban extensions. They range from 450 units to 5,500 units. As they will impact significantly on the future of the existing places, they create many issues to be considered and which it is important to get right. These have many issues relating to the ability to move them forward to determination and therefore are not quick decisions.

3.1.2 There are small scale major applications that range from 10 units to 200. Our recent review of processes indicated that these often get held up in the consultation stage with statutory bodies such as Highway Agency, Environment Agency, Northampton County Council Highways, Northampton Borough Council planning and Environmental Health.

3.2 For both types of application further delays often occurring during the s106 negotiation stage.

3.3 The following table shows the performance over the last two years of those consultations against the required time targets.

Stake holders	Total consultations sent	Received within 28 days	Received past 28 days	No Response Received
NBC	57	15 (26%)	18 (32%)	24 (42%)



E A	41	20 (48%)	15 (32%)	6 (15%)
NCC	49	19 (39%)	28 (57%)	2 (4%)
H A	46	6 (13%)	40 (87%)	0
	Total			
	Percentage	31%	52%	17%

3.4 The Highway Agency have had a significant impact on the timeline. Of the 46 apps commented on, 20 of them had formal Tr110 notice served preventing us making a formal decision. Often this has been caused by the lack of information or issues relating to transport modelling and their outputs. This type of work requires extensive technical inputs.

3.5 The reasons why consultees go over time, is a harder matter to assess. In examining the responses the majority have sound planning issues that need resolving; conditions need applying or need further information to be submitted. In assessing some of those responses, it is clear that many could have been made earlier and on time. This implies there are resourcing issues relating to those respective consultees. As many of the comments are standard matters and should not have taken as long to respond.

3.6 This issue of receiving earlier comments is being addressed by early contact with those consultees as part of our project management approach, having a more robust pre-application process involving a development team approach and working closely with our partner authorities.

3.7 The other aspect that the boards were concerned with is how WNDC compares in the majors applications performance against other UDC's. The headline figures are set out below but it is difficult to assess, as there are only three UDC determining applications and all three are different in nature, size, the issue they are dealing with and the budgets they have available.



Planning Authority	No. Major	% In 13 Weeks
West Northamptonshire UDC	46	39
Thurrock UDC	32	44
London Thames Gateway	30	43

3.8 Further benchmarking work is underway and the findings from this work will be brought forward to the board, along with a programme of improvements.

Appendix:

Appendix A Planning Decisions