

# Department for **Communities and Local Government**

**Baroness Andrews OBE**  
*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State*

**Department for Communities and Local Government**  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 020 7944 3083  
Fax: 020 7944 4538  
E-Mail: [baroness.andrews@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:baroness.andrews@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

30 June 2006

Cllr David Bard  
The Leader  
South Cambridgeshire District Council  
South Cambridgeshire Hall  
9/11 Hills Rd  
Cambridge

CB2 1PB

Dear Councillor Bard

I am writing to send you a copy of the report of your authority's planning service that ODPM (now DCLG) commissioned from consultants, and to let you know how we propose to proceed in light of its findings. We are most grateful for the help and co-operation that your officers have given the consultants in their work.

As you will be aware, officers from your authority have recently been involved in discussions with a consortium of consultants, headed by Addison & Associates, contracted by ODPM to assess your authority's planning performance. These investigations were instigated after your authority was designated as a Planning Standards Authority for 2005/06 for not meeting interim performance thresholds for processing major planning applications. The consultants' initial assessment was done primarily as a desktop study. The second stage has involved the opportunity for your officers to comment on the accuracy and recommendations of the consultant's report. Any comments, observations, recent performance data were then used to inform the final assessment of your planning service's ability to meet national targets.

In considering these reports, regard has been given to your authority's progress towards the specific performance standards that were set for 2005/06, the steps taken to facilitate further performance improvements, and, in the longer term, your authority's ability to reach the national targets set out in the Office's public service agreement 6 (PSA6). As you will know, these targets require all local planning authorities to process at least 60% of major applications in 13 weeks, 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks and 80% of other applications in 8 weeks by March 2007, and maintain these levels of performance for the duration of the current spending review period which is up to March 2008.

After careful consideration of this report, I believe your authority is making excellent progress. Please accept my congratulations on your success to date. I would encourage you to consider taking steps to sustain your good levels of performance as suggested in the attached report.

Whilst we will continue to monitor your progress along with that of all other authorities from the quarterly returns made to DCLG, I see no reason to continue to scrutinise closely the

activities of your authority.

If your officers have any detailed questions to raise on this letter or the report they should contact Julian Wheeler in DCLG on 020 7944 5790 in the first instance.

A copy of this letter goes to John Ballantyne your Chief Executive and D B Hussell your Planning Director.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kay Andrews". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and 'A'.

**BARONESS ANDREWS**