

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Portfolio Holder Meeting

13 July 2010

AUTHOR/S: Steve Hampson, Executive Director / Jo Mills, Corporate Manager,
Planning & Sustainable Communities

FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT (APRIL - JUNE 2010)

Purpose

1. This report outlines the progress made by the Planning & Sustainable Communities Service in meeting its targets, as set out in the published 2010/11 Service Plan.
2. The information presented details performance across the first quarter (April to June 2010).
3. This is not a key decision.

Recommendations and Reasons

4. To note the progress made to date against the local and national indicators and action taken on exception areas.
5. This is the first of four quarterly performance reports over 2010/11, will monitor progress and identify any remedial action that is required.

Background

Overview

6. Despite the delays within the registration process, performance has been strong across the service with a high level of commitment from staff.
7. With the review of internal processes, the registration team returning to the area teams and the implementation of a new planning system, improved performance will be seen.

Council Actions

8. Planning was assigned two Council actions for 2010/11:

Action 07

We will promote the district to new businesses by March 2011

9. The Step-Up 'Dragons' Den' for six budding entrepreneurs, all pitching to win some £30,000 worth of business support was held on 30 June 2010. The lucky winner was One Stop Baby Guides.
10. Supported by the Cambridge News and sponsored by Regus, Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce, Business Link, Streets Chartered Accountants, Taylor Vinters Solicitors and Golley Slater Public Relations, this 'Dragons' Den' style competition provided one year's office accommodation as well as legal, accounting and public relations support for a new business or initiative in South Cambridgeshire.
11. A commercial property database is due to be launched within the next two months.
12. A marketing plan framework is being worked on with partners e.g. Cambridgeshire County Council and East of England International.

Action 08

We will support local people to establish community orchards by March 2011

13. A project plan is being undertaken to deliver at least 6 community orchards during 2010/11. Rob Mungovan, Ecology Officer gave a presentation at the Planning Parish Forum on Monday 14 June 2010. There has been phenomenal interest; landowners have offered land for fruit tree planting. Identified sites are currently being reviewed. The Tree Officer has also attended an orchard-planting course in preparation.

Considerations

14. Performance has dropped during the first quarter, due to the planning restructure, the transition to a new planning computer system and delays within the registration process. Registration delays have impacted service areas for Development Control, Building Control and Conservation.
15. Internal processes/work practices are being reviewed to improve the speed and accuracy of registering planning applications together with a review on determining joint applications for listed buildings.
16. Performance is affected by workload; this is being addressed by additional support being brought in until the end of September 2010.
17. The Duty Officer System continues to be very successful and helps to achieve Customer Service Excellence.
18. Pre-application charging is proving successful, generating an income of £13,275.10 during this quarter, compared to £20,170.50 from 5 October 2009 to 31 March 2010.
19. Enforcement cases are slightly down overall at 262 year-to-date (-2.96%-8 cases); when compared to 2009, the number of investigations still remain consistently high when compared to the previous years.
20. The number of enforcement notices for the period totalled 5 that represent 4.2% against a target of 5%. One Injunctive application was granted by the High Court during the period in connection with a potential breach of Planning Control by members of the travelling community. All other updates are covered in Committee on 7 July 2010 under Agenda item 23.

Options

21. There are no options to consider.

Implications

22. Financial	Savings targets across Planning have been met. Savings within the Building Control service have been met with the loss of 2 posts: 1 x Senior Building Control Officer and 1 x Administration Officer
Legal	There are no legal implications.
Staffing	Staffing levels will be reduced once the Planning restructure is complete. Performance has dropped during this quarter due to the planning restructure and the transition with the new planning computer system.
Risk Management	A comprehensive risk register is maintained and accompanies the 2010/11 Service Plan. The Service is a contributor/key partner with other LAs, namely Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County Councils.
Equal Opportunities	Not applicable.
Climate Change	Not applicable.

Consultations

23. All Section Managers were consulted in the compilation of this report.

Effect on Strategic Aims

24. **Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all**
- (a) A customer satisfaction survey is sent to every applicant once a decision has been issued, providing the Council with valuable feedback
 - (b) Feedback is also welcomed via our website, on-line questionnaire and via the Performance Manager.
25. **Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all**
- (a) Pre-application advice has proved successful in encouraging good quality developments.
26. **Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live**
- (a) Working with Applicants to encourage good quality development.
27. **Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all**
- (a) Encouraging development proposals for small businesses and providing free pre-application advice for micro businesses up to 9 employees.
28. **Commitment to providing a voice for rural life**
- (a) An Agents Forum is held every six months to share good practice and provides training on 'what makes a good development'.

Conclusions / Summary

29. Performance has dropped during the first quarter. The service is working carefully to put in place a number of improvements to meet targets and increase performance:
- (a) New planning computer system
 - (b) Improved internal processes
 - (c) Staffing restructure.
30. The service is working well to achieve the Council Aims outlined above.
31. Despite finding efficiency savings, going through a restructure and a new planning system, the Planning Service has delivered a strong performance with a high level of commitment throughout this difficult time.
32. Clarity on changes in the planning system from the Government will assist performance and progress.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Service Plan 2010/11
Corvu performance report

Contact Officer: Cerise Bradford - Performance Manager
Telephone: (01954) 712902