

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE
9TH MARCH 2010

**Monitoring of quality in the Development Control process:
 Assessment of Added Value in connection with
 Determining planning applications**

OPEN	
DIRECTOR:	Director of Planning and Regulatory Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Julia Mellor – Extension 2517 Julia.Mellor@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendices 1 – 3 Graphs

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform Members of where ‘Added Value’ has been achieved in the determination of planning applications.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 **That this Report be noted.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 As part of the Business Plan for 2006/7 it was recognised that there was a need to monitor ‘quality’ in the Development Control process. This has remained as a target within the subsequent and current Business Plans.

3.2 Whilst it is difficult to measure ‘quality’ it has been possible to record where an officer has been able to improve a planning application prior to its determination, or in other words where an officer has ‘added value’. Such added value can include an amendment to the proposed design or layout or by providing mitigation against an adverse effect associated with a development proposal.

3.3 Added value has been recorded since May 2003 and monitored since May 2006. Reports have been presented to Members in May 2006, August 2007 and March 2009. This report sets out where added value has been achieved over the period from 1st January to 31st December 2009.

4. PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 Whilst the Adopted Local Plan policies have not changed since January 2004, the Council adopted the Design Quality Supplementary Planning Guidance in July 2004, which was produced in order to improve the overall design quality in the built environment. This guidance is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application.
- 4.2 When the issue of added value was reported to Committee in May 2006, Members were advised that the figures given did not show where revised applications had been submitted following discussions with Officers to address previous objections on design, amenity or other planning related grounds. It was therefore proposed that, for future recording of added value, Officers would also record added value on applications which have been amended and re-submitted to address previous objections, as a result of advice given by an Officer. Since the meeting in May 2006 added value has been recorded on this basis.
- 4.3 The graphs in the appendices show the following:
- 4.4 *Appendix 1* shows the **number** of applications, by category, where added value has been achieved per quarter for the period from 1st July 2007 to 31st December 2009.
- 4.5 *Appendix 2* shows the **percentage** of applications, by category, where added value has been achieved per quarter for the period from 1st July 2007 to 31st December 2009.
- 4.6 *Appendix 3* shows the percentage of applications, where added value has been achieved, which were determined beyond the expiry of the statutory target period. The statutory period for minor and other applications is 8 weeks and the target period for major applications is 13 weeks.
- Minor/Other Applications**
- 4.7 The Graph in Appendix 1 shows that the numbers of applications where added value has been achieved for both minor and other applications has remained fairly stable, for the period from 1st January to 31st December 2009.
- 4.8 As per previous years the number of 'other' applications where added value has been achieved is greater than for the other categories. This is to be expected as the number of applications received in the 'other' category is higher. 'Others' include householder extensions and this category constituted 71% of the decisions made in 2009.
- 4.9 Time delays associated with adding value during the determination process are inevitable. Sometimes this will mean that the date when the application is determined is beyond the statutory period. Appendix 3 shows that the percentage of applications where added value has been achieved and the application has subsequently gone over the statutory period has been fairly

level. There has however been an increase with respect to the 'minor' category over the latter half of 2009.

Major Applications

- 4.10 In contrast to 2008 and the first half of 2009 Appendix 1 shows that there has been an increase in the number of major applications where added value has been achieved. This figure has been aided by the number of major applications which have been received. The graph in Appendix 2 shows that in percentage terms there are generally a higher proportion of major applications which benefit from added value, compared to minor and other applications. Appendix 3 shows that, with the exception of July to September 2009, the percentage of major applications where added value is achieved which go over the allotted handling period is relatively low. This is a reflection of the amount of time which Officers spend on providing pre-application advice on major development schemes, the longer statutory time period of 13 weeks and the adopted procedures on dealing with major applications and Section 106 obligations.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal or policy implications.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There are no risk management issues.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 This report shows that 'added value' is continually being achieved in the Development Control process and that the overall quality of development is being actively enhanced through negotiations with Officers.
- 8.2 It is essential that whilst meeting the statutory targets for determining applications this should not be at the expense of design quality. Officers will therefore continue to negotiate improved design in order to achieve added value, but where possible within the statutory period for the determination of the application.

9. CONSULTEES

- 9.1 None

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Monitoring of quality in the Development Control process: Assessment of Added Value in connection with determining planning applications – Planning (Development Control) Committee: May 2006
- Monitoring of quality in the Development Control process: Assessment of Added Value in connection with determining planning applications – Planning (Development Control) Committee: August 2007
- Monitoring of quality in the Development Control process: Assessment of Added Value in connection with determining planning applications – Planning (Development Control) Committee: March 2009