



Councillor Richard Musgrave - Deputy Leader of the Council

Report to Council, - 16 July 2019

This detail of the report covers the period from the Council meeting on 26th March 2019, some of which relates to the period before I joined the Executive. Since being appointed to the Executive I have attended Executive meetings and represented the Council at local and regional meetings including deputising for the Leader as required.

Reporting on the key items:-

Development Management

Sustained progress has been made in the following areas:

In the period between 01.04.2019 to 31.05.2019, 100% of major applications were determined within the statutory period or agreed extension of time. This equates to 7 determined, 0 within the statutory 13 weeks, 7 within the extension of time period agreed and 0 which was out of time. This is compared with 86% in the same period last year which equates to 7 determined, 3 within the statutory 13 weeks and 3 within the extension of time period agreed and 1 out of time. These figures are significantly higher than the national designation targets set by the Government for major applications which is 60%.

In the period between 01.04.2019 to 31.05.2019, 62% of non-major applications (minors and others) were determined within the statutory period or agreed extension of time. This equates to 95 determined, 29 within the statutory 8 weeks and 30 within the extension of time period agreed and 36 out of time. This is compared with 87% in the same period last year. This equates to 110 determined, 69 within the statutory 8 weeks, 27 within the extension of time period agreed and 14 out of time. It does however represent an improvement in performance when compared to the last report to Council.

Current performance on non-major applications is down from last year and the figure is below the 70% national designation targets set by the Government target for non-majors. This is a reflection of short-term capacity issues within the service that we are actively addressing.

It should be noted that both the application types listed above include allowances for the Extension of Time within the figures. An extension of time allows the timetable for dealing with development applications to be extended beyond the statutory period so long as the council and the applicant agree. Provided the council is then able to meet the new mutually agreed date, an application will be counted as satisfying the timeliness requirement for development applications. This allows for a positive outcome to be negotiated.

With regard to resources we currently have a vacancy within the Development Management Service for a Planning Officer and a Senior Planning Officer and we are in the process of recruiting. An Open Day was held on 3RD July to attract candidates to these two posts. It is anticipated that once the posts are filled performance will improve.

Performance at Appeal is a measure of how successful local decisions are at holding up to scrutiny external to the Council. Performance remains high in terms of winning planning appeals. 6 appeals

were determined in the period between 01.04.2019 to 31.05.2019 of which 1 was allowed and 5 were dismissed.

We are continuing to work proactively to improve our Planning Enforcement Service. Over the past few months there has been a focus on reducing the backlog of planning enforcement cases. There are currently approximately 235 open cases. This has reduced from approximately 400 open cases this time last year.

Planning Policy

Having taken over the Portfolio lead for Place Shaping, I'd like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Councillor John Mackman's hard work in this role over the last 8 years, often spent dealing with complex legal situations. Under John's governance the District has a track record of delivering housing and employment land in recent years that it can be proud of and we must thank John for everything he has done.

A report recommending that the Council now start work on developing a new Local Plan will be presented to the Executive on the 11th July. Recent changes to National Planning Policy, combined with the Council's track record of delivery and our strong position relating to future residential housing land supply, now place us in a good position to enables us to consider the benefits of producing a new plan which will build on the previous work done.

Preparation of an Olympia Park Supplementary Planning Document is ongoing. The document will include an indicative Masterplan and Development Brief for the whole site in order to meet the requirements of Core Strategy Policy SP7. Once we are confident it can be delivered, a report will be presented to the Executive seeking approval to carry out public consultation on the Masterplan and Development Brief. In the short term, a planning application will be made to build an access road which will be a key enabler for the scheme.

Work is ongoing on a piece of work with North Yorkshire County which will consider the infrastructure requirements and potential improvements in the Sherburn in Elmet area of the District. This work is being undertaken through the Better Together initiative.

Roeselare visit

I recently joined a party from the District Council Network to visit the Belgian town of Roeselare to see at first hand the innovative work that Mayor Kris Declercq and his team are doing to revitalise and enhance their town centre and high street.

We could not have been made more welcome and what they have delivered is impressive. It is pleasing to see that the initial work we are doing on our own town centres is following very similar principles and I look forward to sharing key lessons with the team working on that.

Richard Musgrave
Deputy Leader of the Council