



## **Report to Cabinet Planning Committee**

**Subject:** Planning Services Report

**Date:** 20th April 2006

**Author:** Head of Planning and Environment

### **Purpose of report:**

To be made aware of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) report into progress towards specific performance standards set for 2005/05, the steps taken to achieve further performance improvements and the ability to reach national targets set for all local planning authorities.

### **Background**

Gedling Borough Council had been designated as a 'standards authority' for 2005/06 for not meeting interim performance thresholds for processing minor planning applications. The Council was therefore subject to review and investigation by consultants on the ODPMs behalf.

### **Results**

The report has identified clear signs of improvement.

Against a background of fairly static application numbers, performance has improved considerably with the result that all national targets for major, minor and other applications are being exceeded. Performance for the year up to the end of Quarter 3 of 2005/06 is reported as 90% of major applications determined within 13 weeks (target is 60%), 88% of minor applications determined within 8 weeks (target is 65%) and 94% of other applications determined within 8 weeks (target is 80%).

Appeal workloads have increased but the percentage of appeals being dismissed has remained above the national average.

In terms of processes and performance monitoring, the report identifies that these are up to date and reflect good practice.

The scale of improvement since the service was last inspected in 2004 has been significant. Additional resources have been allocated to planning, administrative processes have been improved, IT has developed considerably, and performance management has improved. Further improvement proposals with regards to website

and IT development, production of Supplementary Planning Documents, training for members and staff, improving committee presentations and the transparency of the delegation system are noted. These proposals are considered to be realistic.

The report recommends that the planning service should be categorised as a 'green' authority, not requiring any further close scrutiny by the ODPM. Gedling Borough Council has not been designated as a standards authority for 2006/07, and the ODPM is confident that all targets will continue to be met. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State has also written to congratulate the authority on its excellent progress.

### **Recommendations**

**It is recommended that Cabinet note the contents of the report.**

**Appendix 1: Letter from ODPM**

**Appendix 2: Gedling Borough Council Planning Services report**