

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

**STATISTICS OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS
JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2008**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the council's performance in handling planning applications during 2008, together with a comparison between the annual performances of 2007 and 2008.

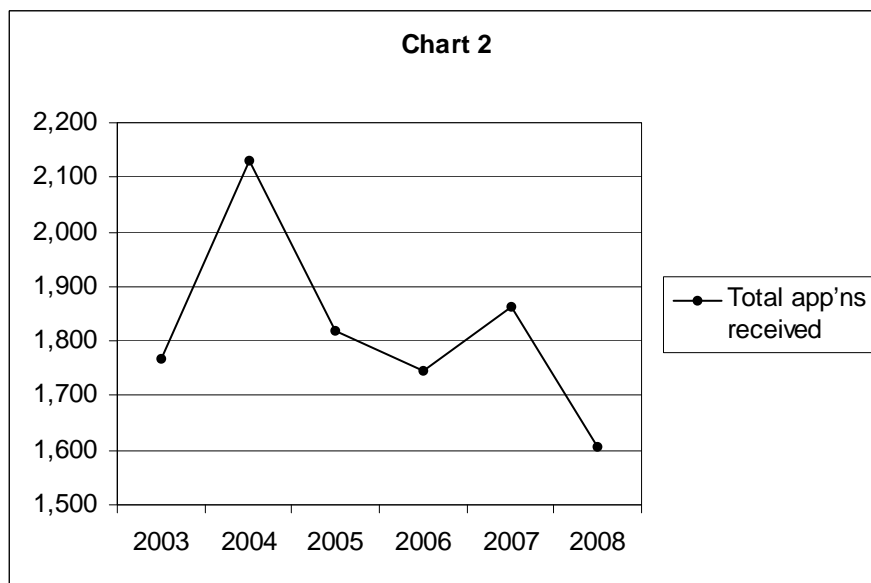
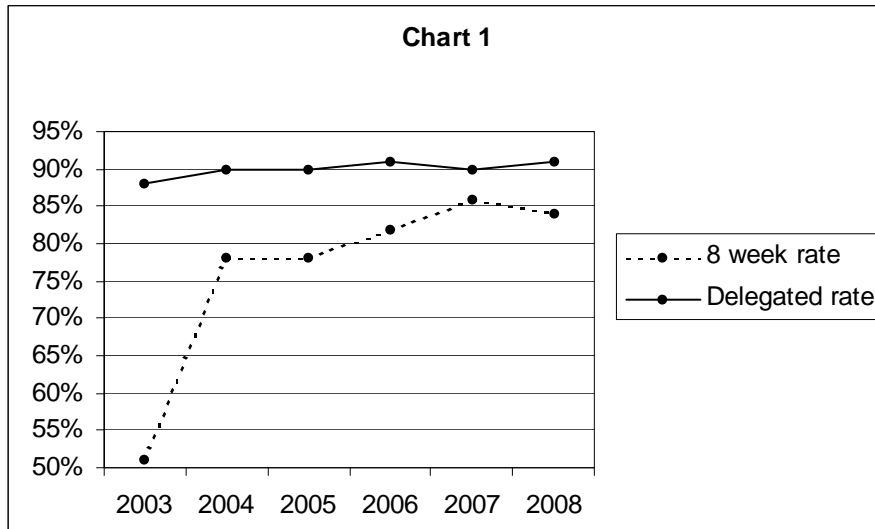
2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Good practice advice issued by Government indicates that reports should be submitted to members on a regular basis outlining the council's performance in handling planning applications.
- 2.2 The annual figures for 2008 have now been compiled on behalf of the council.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

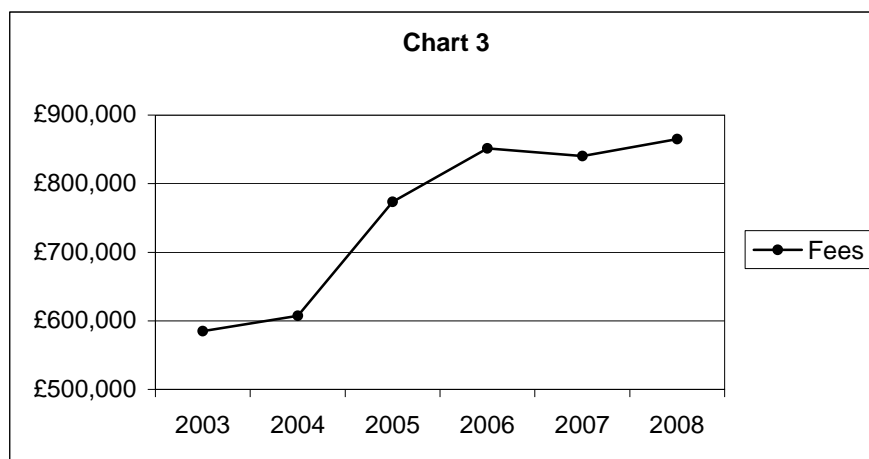
- 3.1 The main criteria used when examining performance is the length of time taken to decide planning applications.
- 3.2 I am pleased to report that the improvement in overall performance over the last three years has been maintained during the last calendar year.
- 3.3 During 2007 the council determined a total of 1,751 planning applications, of which 86.5% were within 8 weeks. During 2008 this number was slightly lower, at 1,560. The approval determination 8-week rate has decreased slightly to 84% from 86.5% in 2007 (see Charts 1 and 2 overleaf).
- 3.4 The three categories of application under which Central Government measure local authority planning performance are under the headings 'major', 'other' and 'minor' applications. For the 'major' applications category the percentage of applications determined within 13 weeks in the year 2007 was 66%, whereas during the year 2008 this was significantly higher, at 78.3%. Significant improvements have been made within the 'other' and 'minor' applications categories over the last few years. The percentage of 'other' applications determined within

8 weeks for 2007 stood at 87% and this increased to 89.7% during the last year. In the 'minor' applications category, the number of applications determined within 8 weeks has negligibly dropped from 80% in 2007 to 79.7% in 2008.



3.5 The improvement in overall development control performance over the last four years is due to the introduction of a number of procedural and practice changes within the team. These changes take into account a number of the issues raised following advice from outside consultants on the procedures and practices undertaken in the processing of planning applications, together with the provision of more staff and IT resources.

- 3.6 The number of appeals determined in 2008, for all types of planning decisions of the council, was 56. Of these appeals some 51 were dealt with by way of the written representations procedure and 5 by way of informal hearing. There were no public inquiries during the year. Of these, 25% were allowed, an improvement to the 32% allowed in 2007, when 61 appeals were lodged. The national target for appeals allowed is 30% so the council is well within this range.
- 3.7 Fees income received from the submission of applications has generally shown a steady rise over the last eight years from £482,267 in 2000 to £865,007 in 2008 (see Chart 3). A revised national scale of fees was implemented in April 2008, which is likely to explain the increase of fees income over the past year.
- 3.8 The number of applications received (and the fees income) in the latter months of 2008 has fallen due to the national economic downturn and it is uncertain as to how long or deep the economic recession will be and its impact on local economic activities.



- 3.9 Table 1 below sets out the detailed figures for fees income, number of applications received and percentage determination rates for the last six calendar years.

Table 1	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Fees	£584,786	£607,330	£773,705	£851,470	£840,146	£865,007
Total app'ns received	1,766	2,132	1,818	1,744	1,862	1,606
8 week rate	51%	78%	78%	82%	86%	84%
Delegated rate	88%	90%	90%	91%	90%	91%
% app'ns approved	88%	84%	83%	86%	84%	82%

- 3.10 As identified by Central Government, these performance figures need to be sustainable over a long period and staffing resources and procedures should be continually monitored, and improvements and changes made where necessary.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

4.1 Financial

- 4.1.1 Income from planning application submission fees is subject to and wholly dependent on both local and national economic activity and confidence being maintained. The current economic recession will continue to affect fees income and the number of applications submitted for determination until an upturn in the national economy occurs.

4.2 Staffing

- 4.2.1 From within the approved establishment.

4.3 Property

- 4.3.1 No implications.

4.4 IT

The council's existing planning database is used to both process and monitor the determination of planning applications and needs to be maintained and developed to maximise efficiency and performance.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 – CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

5.1 Statutory

- 5.1.1 None.

5.2 Environmental

- 5.2.1 As this report is concerned with information related to administrative and procedural matters there are no direct environmental implications. Speed of decision-making has to be balanced against the aim of ensuring the best decision is reached and that adverse environmental impacts are minimised whenever possible.

5.3 Diversity

- 5.3.1 None.

5.4 **Section 17 – Crime and Disorder**

5.4.1 None.

5.5 **Risk**

5.5.1 None.

5.6 **Other**

5.6.1 None.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the contents of this report be noted.

HEAD OF PLANNING

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

DCLG Quarterly Statistical Reports.