

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 11 OCTOBER 2006

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT PROMOTION AND BUILDING STANDARDS

01 APRIL 2006 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2006

Report by Executive Director of Development and Property Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Committee a statistical analysis of the Development Promotion and Building Standards functions over the identified period.

2. DEVELOPMENT PROMOTION

- 2.1 This analysis addresses the above 6-month period and “Householder” and “All” applications determined within the statutory 2-month timeframes as detailed in Annex 1. There has been an improvement in the percentage of applications determined inside two months for both indicators. This has been linked to the filling of previously vacant Planning Officer posts during May and June and a reduction in applications received compared to past “summer” periods. The numbers of applications received is, however, up on that for the previous six months.

- 2.2 Eighty applications were determined at Committee, a reduction from the previous 6 months and more consistent with earlier 6 monthly periods.

- 2.3 The following chart confirms applications received, determined and submitted to Committee over recent reporting periods.

Period	Applications Received	Applications Determined	Reports Prepared
April 2005 – Sept 2005	651	589	79
Oct 2005 – Mar 2006	508	521	103
April 2006 - Sept 2006	555	532	85

- 2.4 As previously indicated to Committee, a “Weekly List” procedure was instituted in September 2005 whose intention was to further increase the numbers of applications determined under powers delegated to the Head of Planning, Development and Building Standards, but only after an initial 7 day opportunity was made available to members should they wish to call the application before a Local Planning Committee. Twenty applications have appeared on weekly lists and of these ten have subsequently been called before Committee.

- 2.5** The scheme of delegation prescribes a number of other means by which an application will appear at Committee. These include where applications are determined at Local Planning Committee following a request from a local elected member and subsequently agreed by the Head of Planning, Development and Building Standards in consultation with the Chair of the Committee concerned. The Division has recorded 17 such applications since September 2005.
- 2.6** Outwith the “weekly list” procedures, Members of the Northern Area Local Planning Committee requested that 7 applications went to Committee since September 2005. Six of these were determined in accordance with officer recommendation.
- 2.7** No applications were placed before the Central Local Planning Committee solely because of a member request outwith the “weekly list” procedures.
- 2.8** Outwith the “weekly list” procedures, Members of the Southern Local Planning Committee requested that 10 applications be determined by them. Of these, all were recommended for refusal by officers and all were approved by Committee.

3. DEVELOPMENT PROMOTION ENFORCEMENT

- 3.1** Enforcement monitoring, and action where required, is once again an important element of the Division’s planning related activity. The number of cases taken up for investigation shows the usual “summer months” increase to 177 and 12 Enforcement Notices were served. The cyclical nature of this activity is broadly illustrated by Annex 2 to this report.

4. BUILDING STANDARDS

- 4.1** During the above 6-month analysis period, 865 Building Warrant applications were received and assessed as detailed in Annex 3. The upturn of 100 applications since the last six monthly period demonstrates the continued growth and buoyancy of the construction sector and construction work for this period equates to £85.9 Million worth of development (again an increase).
- 4.2** During the first 6 month period the general performance in processing Building Warrants and Completion Certificates saw an improving trend. This increase in performance can be attributed to phased implementation of the recruitment strategy during the May and August whereby three vacant Assistant posts were filled enabling the Building Standards Surveyors to be redeployed to focus on Building Warrant assessment. The performance is steadily improving and linked to the management reporting system which identifies work load peaks at an earlier stage. Additionally, a variety of methods consisting pre-warrant consultation with agents, home working and both re-prioritising and redistribution of workloads are being utilised to reduce the application assessment timescales.
- 4.3** However, it is still apparent that many agents submit applications lacking the detailed technical design illustrating compliance with the Building Regulations. This issue still continues to extend the time period to process applications for all applicants, both at the submission stage and where revised information was reassessed. As this issue is common with the other two Ayrshire Authorities consideration is being given to ways to raise the standards of submission presented by Architects.

4.4 It is also apparent that the number of completion certificates being inspected and determined has significantly increased by 14%. The increase in site activity is now being supported by the additional staff recruitment to undertake the site surveys.

5. BUILDING STANDARDS ENFORCEMENT

5.1 The number of Section 27 Enforcement Notices served in relation to unauthorised works having been carried out without benefit of a Building Warrant for this period is 19. This is an increase in enforcement activity and has involvement considerable staff time, particularly in the larger developments where developers have commenced works without building warrant approval. Furthermore there is one case where the developer has constructed and occupied the dwellinghouse without Building Warrant Approval or Completion Certificate and this case has resulted in Legal Services taking out an interdict action on the developer.

5.2 During this period, Building Standards have received 80 property complaints which have resulted in 10 Section 30 Enforcement Notices served in relation to Dangerous Buildings, with 1 Section 29 Enforcement administered for immediate action by this service on the owners behalf. Although this has been a decrease in activity, a number of buildings continue to be monitored which at present are dilapidated and are not considered as dangerous. Annex 4 details the Enforcement Notices during this period.

6. RECOMMENDATION

6.1 It is recommended that members of the Committee;

(i) Note the contents of the report.

James Lavery
Executive Director of Development and Property Services
03 October 2006
DM/DMcD/SA - FV

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

For further information on the contents of this report contact Dave Morris (Development Promotion) Telephone No. 01563 576753 or David McDowall (Building Standards). Telephone No. 01563 576749.

Implementation Officer: Alan Neish

ANNEX 1 DEVELOPMENT PROMOTION

	April 05 – Sept 05	Oct 05 – Mar 06	Apr 06 – Sept 06	
% Householder Applications				
Less than 2 months	65.6%	75.9%	79.0%	
More than 2 months	34.4%	24.1%	21.0%%	
% of All Applications				
Less than 2 months	47.4%	51.4%	56.0%	
More than 2 months	52.6%	48.6%	44.0%	
% of all applications to Development Services/Local Planning Committee determined in less than 2 months	36.7%	21.0%	23.5%	

ANNEX 2**DEVELOPMENT PROMOTION - ENFORCEMENT ACTION**

	April 05 – Sept 05	Oct 05 – Mar 06	Apr 06 – Sept 06
All cases taken up	182	147	177
Notices served	10	12	12

ANNEX 3

BUILDING WARRANT STATISTICS

	April 05 – Sept 05	Oct 05 – Mar 06	Apr 06 – Sept 06
No of Building Warrant Applications received	895	765	865
No of Building Warrant responded to within 15 WD's	142 (21%)	336 (46%)	424 (50.5%)
No of Decisions reached	861 (80% within 6 days)	824 (82% within 6 days)	907 (85% within 6 days)
No of Completion Certificates applied for	641	781	847
Average time taken to respond to a request for a Completion Certificates	7 Days	5 days	7 Days
Number of Completions issued	564	707	679
Number of Completions refused	77	74	168
No of Completion Certificates Determined within 3 days	500 (78%)	539 (69%)	628 (74%)

ANNEX 4**BUILDING STANDARDS - ENFORCEMENT ACTION**

	April 05 – Sept 05	Oct 05 – Mar 06	April 06 – Sept 06
S27 Notices Served	4	14	19
S29 Notices Served and 30 cases considered	22	24	11