

Built Environment Annual Report 2012-13



Results of enforcement action, Old Fire Station, Jessop Avenue

Context

Following the commissioning review in 2011, the focus of activity within the Built Environment division has primarily been on delivery and consolidating the management and operational structure, to deliver both savings and operational efficiencies.

Challenges

During the last 12 months, there have been the additional challenges outside 'business as usual', including:-

- 1) support to the Joint Core Strategy during the absence of the Planning Policy manager on maternity leave;
- 2) restructuring of the development management team following the retirement of a key member of staff;
- 3) the transition of our on-street parking agency to Apcoa, the company chosen by GCC to run the new county-wide civil enforcement service. This has in turn necessitated the TUPE transfer of most parking staff and the delivery of significant savings within the off street parking service, primarily as a result of diseconomies of scale arising from the loss of the parking agency arrangement;
- 4) support for a range of major planning proposals and public realm improvements, linked to development task force activities;
- 5) business continuity issues arising from ICT system failures, including the virus infection last year and on-going business system problems arising from a long term lack of investment in ICT infrastructure.

Financial performance summary – key income streams

Income performance is critical to the efficient delivery of Built Environment services and helps to underpin the Council's overall financial position in terms of the medium term financial strategy. Driving down our operational costs would be fruitless if it resulted in a corresponding reduction in our income, so it is important to maintain an optimal balance between the two.

Given the efficiency challenge imposed by reducing revenue support from central government, there is a genuine risk that the pressure to reduce staffing costs could result in a damaging drop in income. So far, this has been avoided through investment in our business systems, allowing a reduction in support staffing levels and by generating new forms of discretionary income.

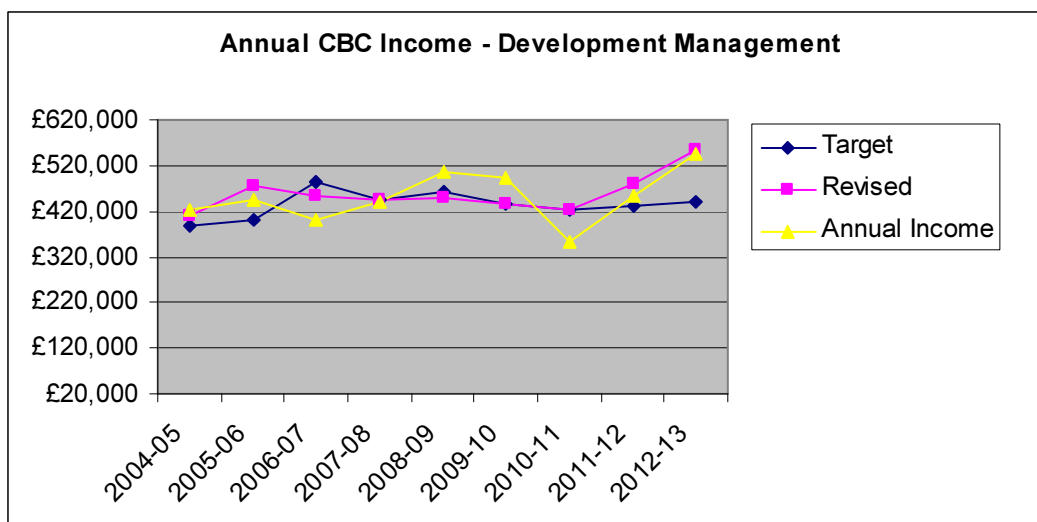
Off Street Car Parking – despite a challenging year involving restructuring which resulted in the loss of the Council’s integrated transport function, the Council’s off street parking function delivered a positive budget outcome, exceeding its net income target of £1.728 million by £24,728 (1.43%). In 2013-14, the off street team (currently within public protection) will increasingly be able to focus on the Council’s core parking business and this should be reflected in another positive outturn position.



Chelt Walk Car Park

Whether the authority will be able to realise the full target savings and offset the diseconomies of scale associated with the county’s decision to outsource the on-street parking service has yet to be established. However, this will largely depend on whether the Cabinet remains willing to accept the full range of service reductions proposed.

Development Management (applications) - The economic environment continues to be challenging, particular in the development sector, but despite this, planning income exceeded target in 2012-13, reflecting an underlying investment confidence in Cheltenham.



Unfortunately, the government backed away from giving district authorities the anticipated freedom to set fees locally, instead deciding to increase nationally set planning fee rates by 15% with effect from November 2012. This is part of the reason for planning fee income achieving record performance last year.

Planning Policy & JCS – Cheltenham manages the JCS budget on behalf of the partnership and we have a separate cost centre for this, as against the council's own planning policy requirements in terms of the Cheltenham Plan.

In effect, the districts have collectively had to absorb the strategic planning function for the JCS area, a role previously undertaken by the county council; there has been no comprehensive financial analysis of the long term impact of this.

Key JCS workstreams commissioned during the year include:-

- Employment and housing assessment work to help establish objectively assessed need – Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP);
- Household formation analysis and review of NLP work – Cambridge centre for housing and planning Research (CCHPR);
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 – Halcrow;
- Sustainability Appraisal – Enfusion;
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan – ARUP;
- Legal advice on spatial options – via counsel.

Within partner councils, the staff have been busy writing policies, topic papers and undertaking sites analysis, including constraints mapping around landscape and heritage issues.

In 2012-13, the Council's expenditure on planning policy (excluding the JCS) was budgeted at £232,600 against an outturn spend of £221,131. This translates into a positive budget variance of 4.9%.

Expenditure on the JCS – Cheltenham manages the shared partnership budget for the JCS, but also has its own costs, including support services elements which bolster Cheltenham's contribution to this strand of planning policy work.

Building Control – Despite further efficiencies within the Building Control team, the operating environment proved difficult again in 2012-13, with fewer major projects

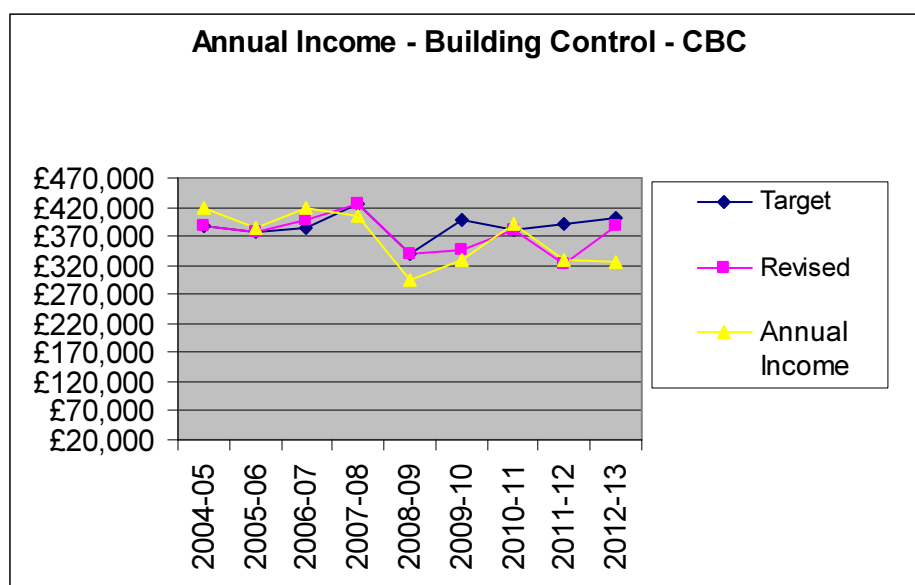
going on site and developers seeking to exploit the competitive market place to drive down fee costs. As a result, fee income was down across the shared service, but Cheltenham fared worse than Tewkesbury. This is in part because the fee target for Cheltenham has been set optimistically high for two consecutive years, whereas Tewkesbury has been more prudent. The service has advised that this 'credibility gap' needs to be addressed over a two year period via the MTFs, as we are not confident that the position will improve in the short term.

However, despite suppressed income, as a result of the management of costs across the shared service, including reduced support service costs, building control delivered a net in-year revenue surplus of £91,429. Even taking account of exceptional adjustments in year, the net surplus was around £15,800.

The service remains committed to getting closer to 'break even' in terms of budget setting, whilst recognising the constraints of non fee-earning activity, the existing Section 101 agreement and the impact of uncontrollable service recharge costs such as office accommodation. There is also an identified need to invest in the service to underpin existing business activity, including the ambition to have a shared ICT business system across the shared service and to support training needs. Concerns about the need to mitigate income shortfall have impacted on the business in this respect.

The Building Control team recognises that the environment within the Authority and within the construction industry is rapidly changing. There are opportunities for the Building Control service, but these will not always provide a cashable advantage to Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council. This misalignment must be understood and both districts need to have a clearly focused idea of what they require from the service over the next three years, so that the function can be successfully managed.

Discussions are currently taking place with Gloucester City Council exploring the potential for an extension of the existing shared service partnership. We remain committed to ensuring that Cheltenham achieves a 'better than cost neutral' outcome from any such arrangement, notwithstanding the potential service resilience benefits.

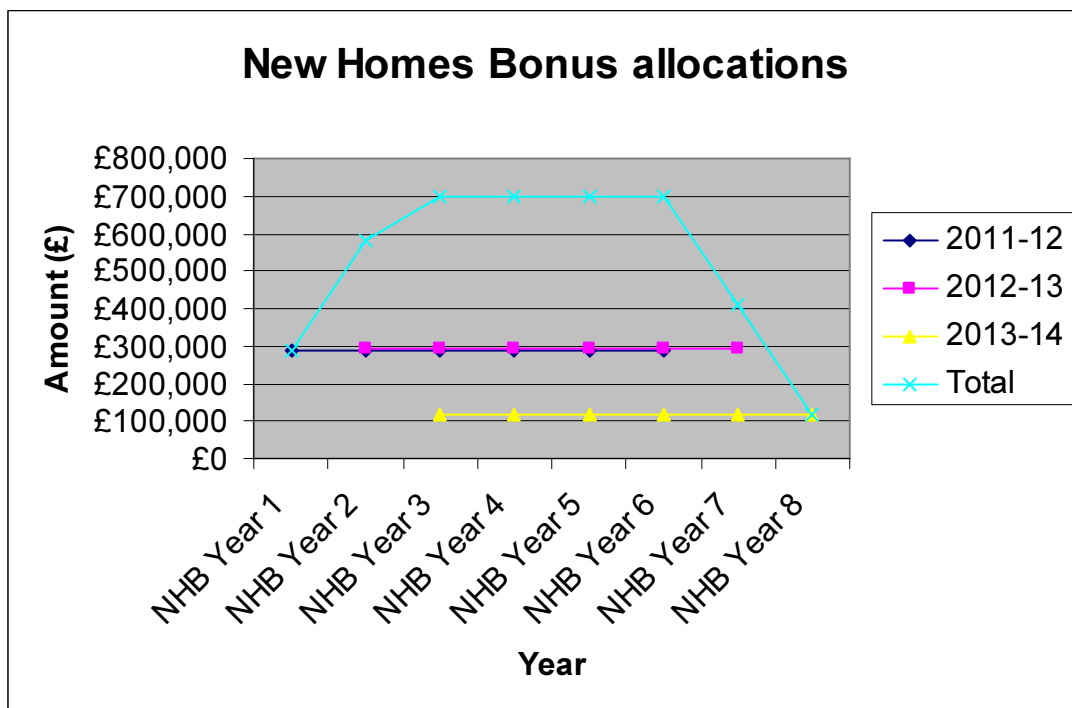


Land Charges

As with building control, despite suppressed income, as a result of the management of costs within the service, including reduced support service costs, land charges delivered a positive budget variance of £64,187.

New Homes Bonus (NHB) – Housing completions in Cheltenham were at an historic low in 2011-12 and despite credible performance in getting long term vacant homes back into use, our additional NHB allocation was a modest £115,556, bringing the total for 2012-13 up to £699,135.

Whilst NHB allocations will not peak for at least another three years, the government recently announced proposals to top-slice a proportion of local authority NHB allocations from 2015-16 in order to provide additional funding to Local Enterprise Partnerships.



In strategic terms, the Council's need to rely on NHB as a funding stream is likely to increase and housing delivery is therefore critical to the financial health of the authority, as it is top-sliced from the national formula grant calculation.

Vacant homes - It is important that the Council maintains its activity in relation to action to keep down the level of long term vacant property in the town. This is especially important when we are bringing forward proposals to release greenfield and green belt sites for development.



22, Gloucester Place (viewed from Fairview Road)

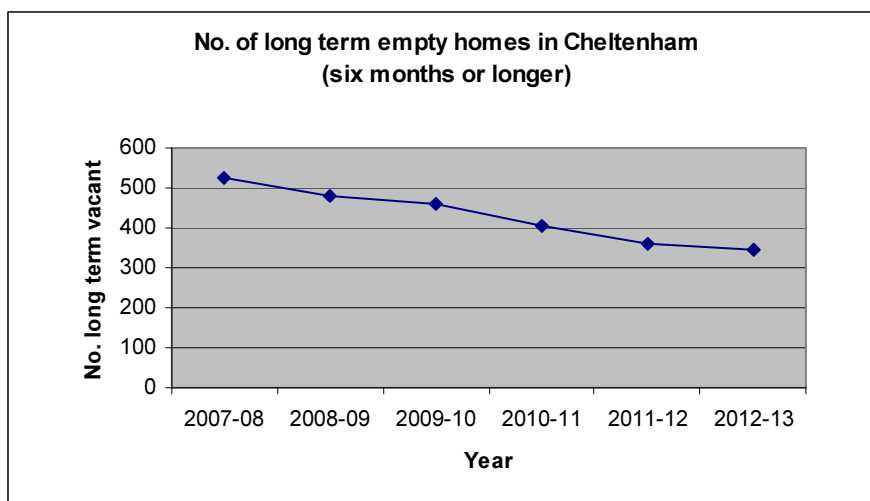
In 2012-13, the enforcement team as involved in helping to secure the re-occupation of 118 empty dwellings.

Dwellings empty for six months or longer are taken into account in the calculation of NHB. Each net long term vacant property brought back into use is therefore worth an average of around £12,000 to the Council. In 2012, the number of long term vacant dwellings in Cheltenham reduced by 18 dwellings, worth to the authority in NHB terms around £216,000 over six years.

This reflects the concerted efforts of both Council Tax and the Built Environment enforcement team in targeting owners under our Vacant Property Strategy. Member support for the approach was underlined by a successful 'invest to save' bid, allowing for more targeted support for this activity.

Compulsory purchase is now being used as a last resort to bring back into use some of the most problematic vacant properties. In addition, reports and procedures are being prepared to facilitate enforced sale. There are in the region of 25 problematic vacant properties that are likely to require compulsory purchase or enforced sale action by the enforcement team.

This shows the importance of investing in staffing on key areas of activity which generate income and where a more cautious approach may actually prove to be less cost effective in revenue terms.



Built Environment structure changes effected during 2012-13

- On-street parking service transferred to GCC's new contractor, with all relevant staff supported through to TUPE transfer; former Integrated Transport manager made redundant; Shopmobility staff transferred to Townscape Team (Economic Development); some retained services have yet to find a permanent home;
- Development services – planning policy and development management (applications) brought together under a new position of 'Head of Planning'; Rob Lindsey, Development manager retired. Various structural changes within the development management area have consolidated the planning function and form a good foundation for performance improvement.
- Private sector housing services and planning enforcement brought together under a combined enforcement service;
- Planning support team streamlined and consolidated, in conjunction with the introduction of changes to *Uniform* allowing applications to be imported directly into our business system from the Planning Portal;
- Townscape team has taken on 1fte to support the cost-effective delivery of design work associated with Cheltenham Development Task Force projects.

Further structure changes proposed in 2013-14

Subject to member agreement of the 'Cheltenham Futures' programme, further changes will be necessary to develop a coherent structure for the new Environmental and Regulatory Services directorate. In view of the shrinking number of senior management posts, this will involve some inevitable redistribution of responsibilities and pragmatic decisions about structural arrangements and priorities for both strategy and delivery.

Other key activities during 2012-13

Policy development - JCS

The national planning position has been undergoing significant changes under the coalition government, with publication of the long-awaited National Planning Policy Framework in March 2012. Since then, a number of core strategy decisions by the

planning inspectorate have informed thinking in the JCS and have focused attention on the evidence base and approach required to achieve a sound plan.

The new 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' poses a particular challenge for the JCS authorities in the absence of an adopted core strategy, particularly in light of the fact that neither Tewkesbury or Cheltenham currently has a five year housing land supply.

Efforts continued to centre on progressing the JCS with our partner authorities, with broad agreement through the Member Steering Group (MSG) to a number of key 'gateway' decisions vital to progress the plan to the preferred option stage. For example, alignment was secured on the objectively assessed need for housing within the JCS area, within a range of between 33,200 and 37,400 dwellings.

The upper end of this range takes full account of housing need arising from the growth led vision for the JCS area, which is also in line with the growth statement of the Local Enterprise partnership (LEP). However, no-one is underestimating the political tensions associated with delivering this ambition and getting the required decisions from the JCS authorities.

However, a number of workstreams are now coming together and will result in the recommendation to each of the partner councils of the 'preferred option' for development in September 2013. Crucially, this will include suggested strategic site allocations to help meet the objectively assessed need for both housing and employment requirements for the JCS area up until 2031.

Key workstreams include:-

- The county-wide strategic housing market assessment (SHMA);
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA);
- Strategic Employment Land Availability Assessment (SELAA);
- Infrastructure delivery plan (IDP);
- Strategic site assessment work, including constraints mapping;
- Landscape assessment;
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (at level 2);
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA); and
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

Cheltenham Plan

Following along in tandem, but slightly behind the JCS timetable is the Cheltenham Plan, which will deal with smaller development sites within the urban area (including non-strategic housing allocations up to 450 dwellings) and policies specific to Cheltenham. This will include issues like space standards and heritage policies.

The scope of the Cheltenham Plan will be subject to an 8 week consultation period during the summer of 2013. Parish Council and other local interest groups have been given prior notification of the consultation period, to allow them to gear up to respond and this is in acknowledgment of the Council's commitment under its Compact with the voluntary sector.

A corporate approach has been adopted in preparing the Cheltenham Plan with committed engagement from both officers and members.

A Scrutiny Task Group was established at the end of 2012 to consider an analysis of household formation. This was a task-finish piece of work for the Scrutiny Group, which was successfully completed and reported to the JCS member steering group. The Scrutiny Task Group has been renamed Planning and Liaison Scrutiny Task Group and is providing support to key workstreams of the JCS and Cheltenham Plan.

Enforcement activity

The combined planning and private sector housing enforcement team which delivered a bridging the gap saving through staff reduction, has already made an impressive impact in terms of meeting statutory duties and desired and targeted outcomes. The combined teams maximise efficiencies in staffing capacity, due to the obvious synergies between the overlapping disciplines.

A schedule of performance indicators was agreed with the commissioning division and of these, the enforcement team exceeded target against 7 out of 8 measures. The only case where this did not occur was in respect dwelling energy efficiency improvements, where changes to the availability of national funding impacted on the local grant scheme.

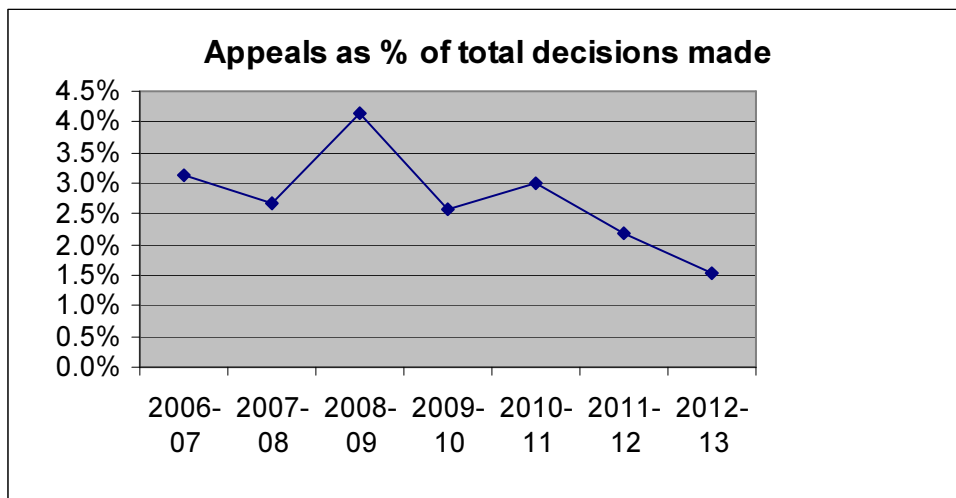
Planning appeals

A summary of appeal activity during the year is attached at Appendix A. The main area of concern is the number of cases where planning committee has refused applications against officer advice and which have then been allowed on appeal.

75% of officer refusal decisions were upheld at appeal, but where the committee refused applications against officer advice, the Council lost in 4 out of 5 cases (80%).

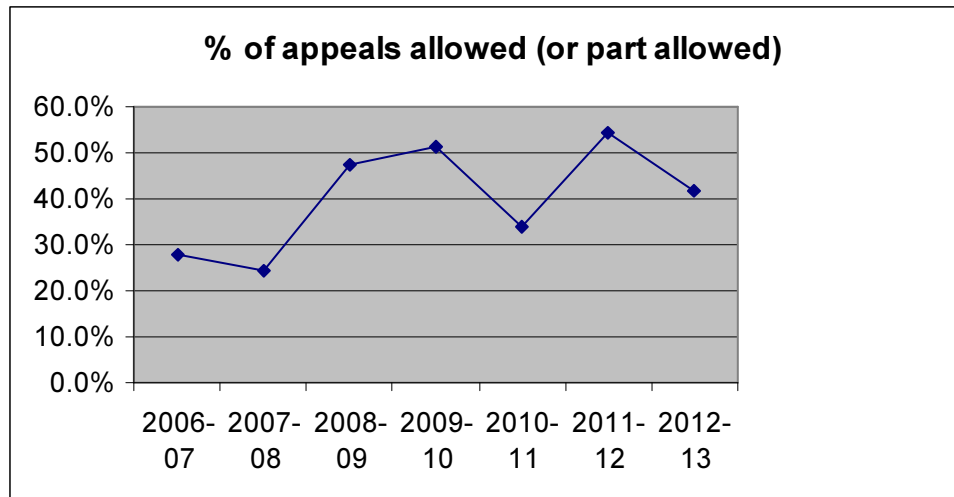
The number of appeals determined in 2012-13 was at a record low of 24 and there was an improvement in the percentage of appeals dismissed, as compared to the previous year. Most notably, the Council succeeded in getting its decision to reject a significant housing development at Hunting Butts upheld by the planning inspector.

Confidence in the Council's planning decision-making continues to improve, with just 1.5% of decisions (1 in 67) now subject to the appeal process.



There were no major appeals outstanding at the end of 2012-13 and the risk of significant costs being awarded against the authority has reduced in light of approval performance.

It is considered prudent to maintain the budget in relation to appeals in light of major strategic applications likely to come forward for consideration during 2013-14.



Civic Pride

Cheltenham Development Task Force (CDTF) is overseeing the delivery of the Borough Council's Civic Pride project, a major town centre regeneration project focussing on public realm improvement, traffic management improvements and redevelopment brownfield sites. The Task Force has 1fte; design and planning support is provided by Built Environment – predominantly from within the Townscape Team, but also involving Development Management and Planning Policy.

2012-13 saw the appointment within the division of 1fte solely to support public realm design work, as work funding begins to come on stream for the delivery of the project from the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (through the County Council) and the imminent sale of North Place/Portland Street car parks. CDTF funded projects are also being supported by other staff within the Townscape team.

Significant projects which the Division has been involved in this year include:

- North Place & Portland Street – planning & design advice on matters related to OJEU tender process and, eventually, planning consent;
- LSTF – support to bid process, achieving £4.9m grant allocation to Gloucestershire County Council, the majority for delivery of Civic Pride initiatives;
- Junction Efficiency Trial - support to GCC in the ideas development, design and delivery of St Margaret's Road traffic light experiment;
- Promenade enhancements – concept design, detailed design and implementation support to GCC in respect of Promenade enhancements Ph2 (completed) and design support on Ph3 (implementation 2013-14);
- Royal Well Development Brief - review and adoption;
- Pedestrian Wayfinding – lead on development and design of new town centre pedestrian wayfinding system;

- Public space design – concept design development for Boots Corner, St Mary’s Churchyard, pedestrianised Promenade;
- Cheltenham Transport Plan – support GCC in developing CTP to a stage ready for consultation (anticipated 2013-14) plus public realm concept design for revised junction arrangements.

Cheltenham Environment & Promoting Cheltenham Funds

The division administered the Cheltenham Environment & Promoting Cheltenham Funds and its staff both support and lead on a number of the associated projects.



Exmouth Arms, Bath Road, enameled mural design

The funds used grant aid from New Homes Bonus income to deliver environmental, community and business projects. Projects run by the Division included:-

- community street design;
- restoration of historic artefacts;
- cycle initiatives;
- tree maintenance, planting and guided walks;
- support for local festivals and events.

Engineering – flood mitigation

The following principal schemes were progressed during 2012-13:-

• Fawley Drive - Channel stabilisation	£2,300	CBC budget
• B&Q channel clearance	£1,765	CBC budget
• Noverton Lane - Flood mitigation works	£2,812	CBC budget
• Cemetery trash screens	£3,522	CBC budget
• Merlin Way channel clearance	£3,426	Glos County Partnership
• Whaddon PLFP* - Phase 2	£85,063	Glos County Partnership (* Property Level Flood Protection)
• 93, Imjin Road flood protection	£4,000	Green Env budget
• Hyde Lane channel clearance	£2,940	CBC budget
• Sandy Lane	£2,125	CBC budget
• Piccadilly Way channel clearance funding	£1,734	Glos County Partnership
• Stanwick Gardens flood protection	£3,775	Glos University/CBC

The above were selected from a much longer list of general flood mitigation works carried out during the financial year. Some of the above could be described as 'maintenance works', but it's a matter of judgement in terms of what exactly is considered a flood resilience scheme. It could be argued that everything done to reduce flood risk (including maintenance) is a flood resilience scheme.

In addition to the above, we spent £50k of 'Flood Defence Grant in Aid' (FDGiA) on feasibility, design and investigation works for the Hearne Brook scheme which will be constructed/implemented in 2013-14 and £13k FDGiA was released to the Contractor that constructed the Warden Hill scheme (contract retention).

Expenditure 2012/13

- Watercourse Maintenance: £24k (46 individual work items)
- Mitigation Improvement Works: £55k (20 individual work items)
- Scheme Feasibility & Design: £50k (Hearne Brook Flood Relief Works)

Funding obtained from external sources 2012/13

- £195k Glos County (some carried over to 2013/14)

Funding Applications Pending

- £59k - Defra (Environment Agency)
- £130k - Local Levy (Regional Flood Defence Committee)
- £100k - Glos County Council

Planned Works 2013/14

- Hearne Brook Flood Relief Works - Construction
- Southfield Brook Flood Mitigation Scheme - Feasibility and option appraisal

Economic Development

Our small Economic Development (ED) team continues to work on projects and initiatives to support Cheltenham businesses.

Key projects - 2012-13:

Business Support Service

In light of the demise of Business Link and access to free business support, ED commissioned Gloucestershire Enterprise (with £10k of funding) to deliver free weekly business clinics and monthly enterprise clubs for Cheltenham residents looking to start a business.

Business clinics supported 16 start-up businesses in the two months between January and March 2013

Two enterprise clubs took place in February and March with a total of 19 attendees.

Promoting Cheltenham Funding

Promoting Cheltenham funding has (via a total of £156,500) now contributed towards 22 events, projects and initiatives aimed at stimulating economic and business growth in Cheltenham. A number of these with the initial help from our pump-prime

funding are now self sustaining. Projects included Cheltenham Design Festival, Cheltenham Poetry Festival, the Ukulele Festival of Great Britain and a Top of the Shops award event, to celebrate retail in the town and an enhanced and improved tourism website for Cheltenham

High Street Innovation Funding

Funding has enabled the following projects and improvements:

- £65k – to support rate relief for Small to Medium sized Enterprises (SME's) occupying premises that were previously vacant;
- £9K – to replace and improve the linking of footfall-counting cameras in the town;
- £20k – to deliver retail skills training to SME's in the town;
- £6k - to help fund a strategy to develop an improved signage system for pedestrian visitors to the town centre.

Cheltenham Business Pride

Cheltenham Business Pride increased its membership by 71 businesses between March 2012 and March 2013. Feedback regarding the quarterly newsletter has been extremely positive, with many businesses reporting that it is essential to keep up to date with council initiatives, legislation and local business events.

Partnership working

ED continues to work in partnership with the following organisations to support businesses in the town:

- Jobcentre Plus – Job Fair and Opportunity Cheltenham;
- University of Gloucestershire – Incubation Service/ Enterprise Hub;
- Chamber of Commerce – Business Partnership and its Manager.

New legislative requirements

The Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 has introduced a new requirement to process planning applications to decision within 26 weeks. Failing this, local planning authorities are required to reimburse application fees. The new provisions come into force on 1st October, 2013.

(Requirements to process planning applications to decision, subject to any agreed extensions, within 8 weeks (for non-major development applications) or 13 weeks (for major development applications), will still apply as regards the risk of non-determination appeals being submitted).

We will be reviewing the implications of this change for our development management service during the early part of 2013-14.

Policies and procedures will also be developed in light of the Mobile Homes Act 2013, which introduces a new enforcement regime with associated powers to charge,

so that the Council can meet its statutory duties in respect of the inspection and licensing of mobile home parks.

Customer complaints

The division has a proactive approach to the recording of customer complaints, which are used as a tool to help drive service improvement. In common with the national picture as reported by the Local Government Ombudsman, planning usually records the highest level of complaint activity, although this remained at a stable level in 2012-13.

Complaint reports are monitored corporately by the Customer relations manager, although we have developed systems to allow recording to be centralised to reduce duplication of effort and inconsistencies in approach.

In 2012-13, there were 86 Stage one complaints and 27 compliments recorded. Of the 86 initial complaints received, 59 (67%) related to Integrated Transport, with the early implementation of the new Regent Arcade parking system being a significant issue.

Just four complaints were pursued to Stage 3 of the Council's complaints process and although several complaints did reach the Local Government Ombudsman stage, there were no findings of maladministration relating to built environment services.

There are currently no significant concerns arising from the customer service complaints received in relation to Built Environment during 2012-13.

A summary of complaints received during 2012-13 is attached at Appendix B.

Built Environment Annual Plan for 2013-14

Projected financial summary

Divisional income targets have generally been reviewed upwards in line with inflation, apart from Building Control, where there has been a correction to reflect depressed activity in the construction sector. Building control continues to perform well overall in financial terms and has been proactively managing supplies and services costs and reducing direct staffing cost by providing officer support to Gloucester City Council. It is expected that this will continue in 2013-14, as we explore the potential for an extension to the shared service to include Gloucester.

Officers are clear that this does need to be done a commercially sound basis and we will not entertain extending the service unless it is financially better than cost neutral for the existing partners.

Development management income is likely to be higher in 2013-14 for three main reasons:-

- 1) A slowly improving economic climate;

- 2) Higher fee rates – the government raised national planning fee rates in November 2012 by 15% (the first increase since 2008);
- 3) The likelihood of two major strategic planning applications coming forward at North West Cheltenham and South Cheltenham.

Fees from Land Charges income may also be higher if the housing market recovery continues, although there is also a medium term risk arising from the possibility that the service may be transferred to the Land Registry (current government pilot project in progress).

Structure changes proposed in 2013-14

Subject to member agreement of the 'Cheltenham Futures' programme, further changes will be necessary to develop a coherent structure for the new Environmental and Regulatory Services directorate. In view of the shrinking number of senior management posts, this will involve some inevitable redistribution of responsibilities and pragmatic decisions about structural arrangements and priorities for both strategy and delivery.

Key challenges in 2013-14

- 1) **Cheltenham Futures** – this key corporate project will be an inevitable resourcing issue in 2013-14 and will need to be carefully managed to avoid undue impacts on service delivery. At the same time, it will be critical to underpinning the sustainable future of services and their related outcomes.

The proposals identify the range of services that may continue to be dealt with in-house, rather than being commissioned through other delivery options, but this does not rule out the potential for further reviews, should alternative delivery models emerge that can deliver target outcomes in a more efficient way.

In the meantime, it is incumbent on internal providers to continue to innovate and strive to deliver high quality services in what will inevitably be an increasingly constrained financial environment.

- 2) **Joint Core Strategy** – the long-winding process is moving towards its conclusion, with the planned publication for consultation of the 'preferred option' for housing and employment allocations due in September. If the partnership fails to adhere to the timetable, there is an increasing risk of unplanned sites coming forward as applications through the planning system, with insufficient consideration of infrastructure requirements and development impacts.
- 3) **Cheltenham Plan** – having adopted a timetable, it is important that this document progresses sequentially and just behind the JCS, providing context for local development and smaller scale local plan allocations (in the case of housing, that is site allocations below 450 dwellings).
- 4) **Heritage and conservation** – we will review current resource allocation and priorities, with the intention of unblocking identified issues relating to the service which have been leading to delays in the planning consultation and decision-making processes.

- 5) **Enforcement** – we will review our enforcement policy and approach to action in relation to advertising, banners and unauthorised changes to listed buildings and formally report to members with our recommendations in providing a level playing field for local businesses.

The use of enforced sale and compulsory purchase will escalate to enable problematic vacant properties to be brought back into use.

The team is exploring the potential for combined use of additional private sector licensing and planning powers to help raise the standard of student accommodation and control the impact such accommodation can have on surrounding neighbourhoods. This approach, made possible by the combining of planning and housing enforcement teams, could also help to offset the net cost of services at the same time as improving on target outcomes.

- 6) **Civic Pride** – this is a key project for the Council and funding is now coming on-stream, through land sales and government grants.

We will continue to provide design and expertise to support both the CDTF and the County Council in the development, design and delivery of their Civic Pride initiatives - likely to include (subject to funding approval)



- Cheltenham Transport Plan (support implementation of traffic management proposals);
- pedestrianised Promenade revitalisation (to tender stage);
- St Mary's Minster Green Oasis (to tender stage);
- Promenade enhancements Phase 3 (support implementation by GCC) and Phase 4 (support detailed design);
- CTP junction alterations public realm works (concept and some detailed design);
- Pedestrian wayfinding system (phase 1 implementation);
- Boots Corner (detailed design).

Risks and business continuity

During 2012-13 service managers reviewed risks across the division and these have now been entered into the corporate risk management module to allow for easier and regular review and updating. The fourteen divisional risks are available for consideration alongside the two risks relating to the JCS (CR33 and CR81) and currently identified at the higher corporate risk level.

Built environment services experienced considerable disruption to its ICT services during 2012-13 and this had an impact both on customers and our reported performance.

Whilst the problems with ICT infrastructure and underinvestment have been corporately recognised and the partnership with Forest of Dean District Council is welcomed, the problems have served to underline the increasing performance dependence which internal services have on the capacity and reliability of ICT.

Community engagement

During the year, the division has continued to actively encourage pre-application consultation and engagement with local communities in relation to the planning process and some significant planning proposals have been determined by planning committee.

These include:-

- 1) North Place / Portland Street – £70 million mixed use development;
- 2) Brewery Phase II – mixed use retail and housing development;
- 3) Starvehall Farm – residential development;
- 4) Royal Well Development Brief 2013 Revisions.

The division attended a number of C5 Parish Council meetings to brief on neighbourhood planning opportunities and continued to support the twice yearly forum for local planning agents, architects and surveyors.

The division has worked with local communities to design and deliver improvements to streets and green space in areas including:-

- 1) St Paul's Edible Garden;
- 2) Bath Road Connect My Street;
- 3) Whaddon Road Blocks;
- 4) Friends of Pittville Gates;
- 5) Friends of Pilley Nature Reserve;
- 6) Cheltenham Tree Group;
- 7) Friends of Jenner Gardens; and
- 8) St Mary's Minster Green Oasis.



Humber Road streetscape improvement, Oakley

Many of these (and other) projects are still on-going, although the staffing capacity to directly support community groups has reduced.

The re-establishment of the Public Art Panel, led by the Built Environment Division, is beginning to deliver works with a strong Community input. Works commenced this year include Hester's Way Library Reading Chair (with Hester's Way Neighbourhood Partnership) and Bath Road history panels (with Cheltenham Connect, Bath Road Traders and St Philips and St James Residents' Association). Both are currently at design stage and are due to be delivered in 2013–14.

Planning Appeal Performance

Total appeals to date in 2012-13

Total appeals determined	16	(100%)
• Dismissed	8	(50.0%)
• Allowed	7	(43.8%)
• Part allowed	1	(6.2%)

Of which,

Application determined under officer delegation	8	(50.0%)
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Of which,

• Dismissed	6	(75.0%)
• Allowed	1	(12.5%)
• Part allowed	1	(12.5%)

Application determined by the planning committee	8	(50.0%)
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Of which,

• Dismissed	2	(25.0%)
• Allowed	6	(75.0%)

Of applications determined by committee

Refused against officer recommendation	5	(62.5%)
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Of which,

• Dismissed	1	(20.0%)
• Allowed	4	(80.0%)

Appendix B

Built environment complaints 2012/13

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Compliments
Quarter 1				
Development management	3	2	0	1
Building control	0	0	0	0
Townscape	0	0	0	0
Support services	0	0	0	1
Car parking and integrated transport	9	0	1	1
Enforcement	1	0	0	0
Decent and lifetime homes	0	0	0	0
Quarter 2				
Development management	1	0	1	1
Building control	0	0	0	0
Townscape	0	0	0	2
Support services	0	0	0	2
Car parking and integrated transport	36	0	0	0
Enforcement	2	0	1	0
Decent and lifetime homes	0	0	0	0
Quarter 3				
Development management	4	2	0	3
Building control	1	0	0	0
Townscape	1	0	0	2
Support services	1	0	0	0
Car parking and integrated transport	11	1	0	1
Enforcement	0	0	0	0
Decent and lifetime homes	0	0	0	0
Quarter 4				
Development management	3	1	1	1
Building control	1	0	0	0
Townscape	7	0	0	11
Support services	1	0	0	1
Car parking and integrated transport	3	0	0	0
Enforcement	1	0	0	0
Decent and lifetime homes	0	0	0	0
End of year				
Development management	11	5	2	6
Building control	2	0	0	0
Townscape	8	0	0	15
Support services	2	0	0	4
Car parking and integrated transport	59	1	1	2
Enforcement	4	0	1	0
Decent and lifetime homes	0	0	0	0
Total	86	6	4	27

