

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE UPDATE - DECEMBER 2021

1. Introduction:

1.1 This report sets out performance in relation to the determination of planning applications in both Development Management and Majors teams on the basis of speed and quality of decision against national benchmarks. This report is provided as an analogous report to the reporting of The Planning Portfolio Holder to Full Council. The report is provided on a monthly basis.

2. Background:

2.1 The table below sets out the current national performance targets as set by Central Government as measured over a cumulative 24-month period.

Measure and type of application	Threshold and assessment period
Speed Major Development	60% of applications determined within 13 weeks or an agreed extended deadline over a 24-month cumulative period. NB for EIA development this extends to 16 weeks or an agreed extended deadline.
Quality Major Development	Not more than 10% of appeals overturned over a 24 month cumulative period.
Speed of Non-major ¹ Development	70% of applications determined within 8 weeks or an agreed extended deadline over a 24 month cumulative period.
Quality of Non-major Development	Not more than 10% of appeals overturned over a 24 month cumulative period.

3. Current Performance:

3.1 The current period for assessment runs from 2019 to 2021. Applications performance data in relation to speed of decisions for Majors and Non-majors is shown below for quarters from October 2019 to June 2021, with current position at end of August shown in the July to September 2021 quarter.

3.2 Major developments as measured under Table 151 of MCHLG guidance:

		All Major Decisions	Major Decisions within 13 weeks	PPA, EoT or EIA Decisions	PPA, EoT or EIA Decisions in time	Out of time	Result
Q2	Jan - Mar 2020	5	0	4	3	2	60%
Q3	Apr - Jun 2020	6	0	6	6	0	100%
Q4	Jul - Sep 2020	3	1	2	2	0	100%
Q5	Oct - Dec 2020	7	2	5	5	0	100%
Q6	Jan - Mar 2021	8	0	7	4	4	50%
Q7	Apr - Jun 2021	4	0	4	3	1	75%
Q8	Jul - Sep 2021	1	0	1	1	0	100%
Q1	Oct - Dec 2021	4	0	4	3	1	75%
	total	38	3	33	27	8	79%
						Minimum level required	60%

* *EoT – Extension of Time Period for determination.*

3.3 Performance in major developments remains has fallen by 2% since reporting in November to 79% (over the 2-year average). Our aim as officers and managers is focused on performance improvements to ensure the figures move to the 95% mark.

3.4 The challenge remains adding robustness by increasing the number of timely major decisions as a whole over the coming quarter. This will require timely progress of s106 negotiations and that those active cases where the Council is minded to grant permission in the remainder of this quarter. Regrettably, single decisions running out of time in this category have to ability to skew monthly / quarterly reports.

3.5 Non Major Performance as measured under Table 153 of MCHLG guidance:

	Non-major Decisions	Non-major Decisions within 8 weeks	PPA, EoT or EIA Decisions	PPA, EoT or EIA Decisions in time	Out of time	Result
Q2	259	143	107	96	20	92%
Q3	200	71	122	110	19	91%
Q4	182	44	131	126	12	93%
Q5	235	61	155	118	56	76%
Q6	308	41	178	130	137	56%
Q7	298	83	123	104	111	63%
Q8	196	57	108	99	40	80%
Q1	203	78	112	109	16	92%
	1881	578	1036	892	411	78%

Minimum level required

70%

* *EoT – Extension of Time Period for determination.*

Performance in non-major developments is improving in terms of speed for the current quarter figures showed improvements to 92%.

November was a solid month with 90.9% of decisions in time:

110 decisions / 50 within 8 weeks / 51 EoT / 50 within EoT

The position is one of sustained performance improvement in terms of productivity; 110 decisions as against 106 decisions in October; and better reliance for our customers on timeliness i.e. more cases being determined in 8 weeks, 50 as against 36 in October, and with all but one extension of time period being met.

Despite this positive improvement our revised 2-year average will take time to recover, officers strive for good levels of productivity. Our benchmarks will be

to average around 300 decisions (that are registered for performance analysis) per quarter, and for those decisions to be at 90 to 95% of cases “in time” for each month. We will continue to feel the “weight” of poor performance in January to March 2021 (Q5 & 6) for a little time yet.

3.6 Appeals performance data (the quality criteria) is defined as no more than 10% of all appeals against the Council's decisions being overturned over via the appeal process over the same two-year period.

3.7 For major development appeals the current figure to November remains at 2.17%; this is single case overturned during the 2-year performance period in Spring 2021.

3.8 For Non-Major development the figure is 0.59%; the appeals determined are independently reported on a monthly basis to Development Committee, members will be aware of the strong performance from the Council in this area with a single case being overturned at appeal in August.

4.0 Influencing factors and actions

4.1 Officer caseloads – the number of older cases held in the service's live caseload is reviewed monthly. Current live case load of all matters stands at 522 items (584 October). Lives cases reported per month are falling and numbers of decisions are rising. Average caseloads in the Non-Major's teams stand at 34.8 cases per officer, with 25 cases per officer in the Majors team. High rates of validation are being achieved with average timing remaining around 3 days per case for the PPU team.

4.2 Software updates – No new software updates are expected in the near future.

4.3 Staffing – I am pleased to report an internal promotion, with Russell Stock being appointed to the role of major Projects Team Leader, we are under recruitment campaign to backfill the Senior vacancy role in this team. I can also announce a successful campaign to recruit a planning officer in the non-major's teams. This will bring the group to full capacity.

4.4 Consultations – pressure remains in this area; officers are encouraged to be proactive. Engaging with consultees and keeping customers up to date with any outstanding matters.

4.5 Key performance areas for improvement have been discussed and agreed with the Director of Place and Climate Change, and The Planning Portfolio holder:

- Extension of time period, only requested on a bespoke case by case basis. Only by very rare exception are extended timescales being achieved.

- Monitor need to boost capacity to meet any short term needs.
- Enhanced performance management reports for Case Officers, Team leaders and Managers,
- Improved communication agents / applicants
- Improved business process.

5.0 Recommendations:

5.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.