

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE UPDATE - JANUARY 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	3	0	3	3	0	100%
total	37	3	32	27	7	81%

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

- 3.3 Performance in major developments remains has risen by 2% since reporting in December to 81% (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 in the coming quarters. 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.

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%
Q9	287	119	154	146	22	92%
	1965	619	1078	929	417	79%

Minimum level required

70%

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

Performance in non-major developments is improving in terms of speed for the final figures for the last quarter show improvements to 92% of cases being in time or agreed time periods, with the highest number of cases in any quarter being determined in time or agreed extension (265 cases).

December was a solid month with 92.8% of decisions in time, up around 2% from November:

84 decisions / 41 within 8 weeks / 42 EoT / 37 within EoT

The position is one of sustained performance improvement in terms of productivity; with a shorter month (office closure at the end of December) the service produced around 28 decisions per week, with nearly 50% of decision being within 8 weeks, i.e. with no time extensions required.

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. This will deliver a greater number of decisions in time and outweigh the poor quarters experienced in early to mid-2021. We strive to deliver increasingly more decisions within the 8-week period and reduce extension of time period requests as a result.

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 December stands at 2.56%; remaining a single case overturned during the 2-year performance period in Spring 2021.

3.8 For Non-Major development the figure remained at 0.59% for the appeals determined over the 2-year aggregate.

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 has risen by 49 cases and stands at 571 (522 November). We will monitor this trend closely but may be the result of office closure and new cases being received around the office break. Average caseloads in the Non-Major’s teams remains at 35 cases per officer, with 23.2 cases per officer in the Majors team. Our average cases are remaining stable as a senior officer and planning officer joined the development management team this month.

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 –Russell Stock has started his new role as Team Leader Major Projects and two additional officers are added to the Development management team. We are under a recruitment campaign for a Senior Officer vacancy role in Major Projects.

4.4 Consultations – pressure remains in this area; case officers are encouraged to be proactive. Consultee pro formers are now provided to offer a more concise and consistent form of reporting comments to case officers. We will monitor the speed of consultation returns following this change.

4.5 We continue to monitor key performance areas for improvement:

- Extension of time period, reduce requirement and ensure that wherever possible extended timescales are met.
- 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, e.g. produce consultation pro-former response forms.

5.0 Recommendations:

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