

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE UPDATE – FEBRUARY 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. (EIA development 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 April 2020 to April 2022. Applications performance data in relation to speed of decisions for Majors and Non-majors is shown, with current position as at the date of publication.

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
Q1 Apr - Jun 2020	6	0	6	6	0	100%
Q2 Jul - Sep 2020	3	1	2	2	0	100%
Q3 Oct - Dec 2020	7	2	5	5	0	100%
Q4 Jan - Mar 2021	8	0	7	4	4	50%
Q5 Apr - Jun 2021	4	0	4	3	1	75%
Q6 Jul - Sep 2021	1	0	1	1	0	100%
Q7 Oct - Dec 2021	3	0	3	3	0	100%
Q8 Jan - Mar 2022	0	0	0	0	0	
total	32	3	28	24	5	84%

Minimum level required 60%

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

3.3 No major decisions were issued in January. Performance in major developments remains shows a theoretical rise by 3% since reporting in December to 81% (over the 2-year average). The rise in performance arrives as the previous quarter Jan - Mar 2020 producing 5 decisions. 2 of which were out of time. We must improve upon the reporting for quarter Jan - Mar 2020 limiting any decisions made beyond agreed time limits and boosting decisions produced. Our aim as officers and managers remains focused on performance improvements to ensure the figures move to the 95% mark.

3.4 I will be working with our Service Manager and new Team Leader to ensure decisions with pending s106 agreements are issued in a timely manner. We will establish a clear project plan for s106 development and improved timelines, return overrunning cases to Development Committee with reporting of progress / review decisions. Officers and members can agree the path to move decisions forward, delays can be limited and members updated. 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 **Projected** 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	200	71	122	110	19	91%
Q3	182	44	131	126	12	93%
Q4	235	61	155	118	56	76%
Q5	308	41	178	130	137	56%
Q6	298	83	123	104	111	63%
Q7	196	57	108	99	40	80%
Q8	287	119	154	146	22	92%
Q9	305	147	150	147	21	96%
	2011	623	1121	980	408	80%
	Minimum level required					70%

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

Projecting performance forward from January gives a potentially stronger quarter with 305 decisions at 96% in time, moving to 80% of decisions over the two-year time period being in time. Our aim is for the figure to be maintained for each quarter to be at no less 90% with over 300 decisions being made in total.

January:

Performance in non-major developments is maintaining the improvements in terms of speed. January was a further improvement of 94.28% from a December figure of 92.8% of decisions in time.

The quantity of decisions also increased in January 105 from 84 decisions in December.

Reliance of extension of time period improved to stand at 47% of all decisions under extensions and improved conversions standing at 98% being completed in the agreed time.

The position in Non-Major development is one of sustained performance improvement in terms of productivity; with nearly 50% of decision being within 8 weeks, fewer extensions required. We hit our bench mark of over 100

decisions per month. This trajectory can delivery robust performance to offset the poor quarters experienced in early to mid-2021.

We will strive to deliver more decisions, and for more of those decisions to be within the 8-week period, creating a reduce reliance on extension of time period requests.

3.6 Appeals performance data (the quality criteria) is defined as no more that 10% of all appeals against the Council's decisions being overturned over via the appeal process over the same two-year period. Performance in both Major and Non Major Decision making remains strong in terms of Quality.

3.7 For major development appeals the current figure to January stands at 2.63%; remaining a single case overturned during the 2-year performance period in Spring 2021.

3.7 For Non-Major development the figure fell to 0.54% 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 in this report with Development Committee. The current live case load of all matters in the service has fallen by 19 cases and stands at 552 (571 December).

Average caseloads in the Non-Major's group has fallen to 29 cases per officer (35 from last month). Our average cases per officer are reducing in the Non Major group, a Trainee and Senior officer joined the group in January.

We have a rise to 29 cases per officer in the Majors team (23 last month). A vacancy exists in the major group which is being reviewed to assist capacity in the group. This together with a clutch of major decisions (5) awaiting imminent clearance of decisions should delivery an improving picture for reporting in March.

High rates of first time validation are being achieved with average timing remaining consistent at around 3 days per case for the PPU team to move the applications through to case officers.

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

4.3 Staffing – Jo Medler has returned as a Senior officer in Development Management. Isobel McManus joined the Development Management Team as a trainee Planning Officer in January. Bruno de Frago Costa has been promoted to the Senior Officer role in Major Projects. The team will now review the vacant role of Planning Officer in the group.

4.4 Consultations – pressure remains in this area; internal consultees are under pressure from competing work areas. Case officers are being proactive and supportive. Assessment of cases at first clear date remains central to driving forward speed and quality of decision making.

4.5 We continue to monitor key performance areas for improvement:

- Reduce reliance on extension of time periods (reducing as a proportion of decisions issued - 43% decisions extended in January). Ensure that wherever possible extended timescales are met (completion rates last quarter 100% major & 95% Non-Major).
- Monitor need to boost capacity to meet any short term needs (No short term needs apparent).
- Enhanced performance management reports for Case Officers, Team leaders and Managers, (completions graph available for managers).
- Improved communication agents / applicants (generally positive, escalation process in place where required)
- Improved business process, (produced consultation pro-former response forms).

5.0 Recommendations:

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