

Quarter 2 2023/24 Key Performance Indicators - Planning Policy Committee

Planning Policy Committee Thursday, 16 November 2023

Report of: Interim Development Management Manager

Purpose: For information

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

This report includes information about the key planning performance indicators for quarter 2 (1 July – 30 September 2023). The Council is required to submit this data quarterly to the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC). It also contains information about current planning applications.

This report supports the Council's priority of:

Creating the homes, infrastructure and environment we need

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Recommendation to Committee:

To review and note the Quarter 2 2023-2024 performance indicators and risks for the Committee.

Reason for recommendation:

To support the Committee in monitoring and managing performance.

Introduction and background

1. Performance reports are presented to each policy committee at the end of each quarter. This report is divided into two sections: the first is a summary of the position with regard to the statistics collected by DLUHC, and the second contains a broader performance update on the work of the in-house Planning Service.

Statistics collected by DLUHC

2. The following performance information has been submitted to DLUHC. With reference to the indicator descriptions, an "agreed extension of time" relates to when the applicant has given their consent to the local planning authority exceeding the Government's statutory target date for the determination of their application.
3. The performance statistics only cover applications for planning permission but exclude a whole range of other application types including prior approvals, lawful development certificates, pre-application advice, discharge of conditions and tree applications. They are the official statistics that the government monitors and on which our performance is judged.

Indicator	National Target	Last Quarter	Actual Q2
Percentage of decisions on major applications made within 13 weeks or within agreed extension of time	60%	100%	90%
Percentage of decisions on minor applications made within 8 weeks or within agreed extension of time	70%	85%	85%
Percentage of decisions on other applications made within 8 weeks or within agreed extension of time	70%	94%	90%

4. During quarter 2 there were 240 decisions, made on the following categories of applications:

Type of application	Total	Granted	Refused
Major applications	10	5	5
Minor applications	67	53	14
Other applications (incl. 180 householder)	163	150	13
Total decisions	240	208	32

5. Of the 10 major applications detailed in the table above 9 were decided within the agreed time.

6. Of the 240 decisions detailed above 214 were made within the statutory deadline or with an agreed extension of time.
7. Of the 67 minor applications, 57 were determined within the agreed time or within the agreed extension of time.
8. Of the 214 decisions, which still met the statutory deadlines with an agreed extension of time, around 65% (140) were householder applications.
9. These results are in line with DLUHC's required performance levels for planning applications and demonstrate the continued improved performance of the in-house planning service team.
10. Councils which decide fewer than 60% of major applications within the statutory deadline of 13 weeks or 70% of minor and other applications within the 8 week deadline may be liable to government intervention.

Planning service performance – reducing the backlog (including non-DLUHC statistics)

11. Work has continued during Q2 to further reduce the backlog of planning applications. Officers applied for funds from the Government's "Planning Skills Delivery Fund" which will assist in continuing with this good performance. Officers await confirmation of how much it may have secured.
12. The performance seen in the previous quarter has continued in Q2 where 240 planning applications were determined.
13. The following table shows the comparison between the figures reported to previous meetings and those prevailing at the time of writing (3 November 2023) there were:

Measure	22 June 2023 (Q4 of 22/23)	30 August 2023 (Q1 of 23/24)	3 November 2023 (Q2 of 23/24)
Undetermined planning applications	375	354	334
Undetermined Lawful Development Certificates	81	54	70
Undetermined Prior Notifications	13	14	14
Other outstanding submissions *	180	176	184
Cases waiting to be validated	148	41	42
Invalid applications	67	35	50
Cases more than one year old	32	40	49
Cases past their target date with no EOT	196 (52%)	186 (53%)	165 (49%)

* including pre-application advice cases, notifications, consultations, discharge of conditions and non-material amendments.

14. There has been a slight increase in the numbers of undetermined lawful development certificates. These do not impact upon the national performance standards but Officers are working on reducing these numbers by deploying more resources on the decision-making stage of the process. This should also help to reduce the overall number of planning applications that are more than one year old and the results will show in the Q3 statistics.
15. Of the 334 undetermined planning applications, 49 applications are currently more than one year old and 165 (i.e. 49%) were past their target determination date with no agreed extension of time. In most cases an extension of time will be requested and granted before a decision is made, thus keeping within the Government's performance target.
16. The validation timescales have been maintained at the substantially reduced levels compared with last year's poor performance which was caused principally by problems associated with the Civica software.

17. Officers aim to deal with applications in chronological order and within the statutory time limit but this is not always possible due to the reasons set out below:-
- Further information requested from the applicant.
 - Amendments being made to the application.
 - Specialist advice being sought.
 - Waiting for responses from key consultees.
 - The need to consult again once revised information is received.

18. On Enforcement, the caseload is as follows:

Measure	Quarter 1	Quarter 2
Enforcement cases opened	94	96
Enforcement cases closed	93	71
Total live enforcement cases at beginning of quarter	202	203
Total live enforcement cases at end of quarter	203	228

19. On Appeals, the performance has been as follows:

Measure	Quarter 1	Quarter 2
Planning appeal decisions	23 (11 allowed & 12 dismissed)	14 (5 allowed & 9 dismissed)
Enforcement appeal decisions	2 (2 allowed)	0
New Planning appeals received	26	30
New Enforcement appeals received	3	3
Live Planning appeals at beginning of the quarter	53 (3 Inquiries, 2 Hearings & 48 Written Reps)	48 (3 Inquiries, 1 Hearing, 35 Written Reps & 9 Householders)
Live Enforcement appeals at beginning of the quarter	14 (5 Inquiries & 9 Written Reps)	14 (3 Inquiries, 1 Hearing & 10 Written Reps)

Measure	Quarter 1	Quarter 2
Live Planning appeals at end of the quarter	41 (3 Inquiries, 1 Hearings & 37 Written Reps)	46 (2 Inquiries, 1 Hearings, 31 Written Reps & 12 Householders)
Live Enforcement appeals at end of the quarter	14 (4 Inquiries & 10 Written Reps)	16 (3 Inquiries, 2 Hearings & 11 Written Reps)

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

There are no direct financial implications from this report as it is presented for noting. Performance against specific KPIs may have a financial impact. Financial implications will be drawn out where relevant in the quarterly financial update report.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The performance indicators measure how well the Planning Service is performing and help to plan for future service improvements.

Equality

This is a factual report with no implications for equalities.

Climate change

There are no significant environmental / sustainability implications associated with this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Planning Risk Register

Background papers

None

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