

# Planning performance report

## Planning Policy Committee Thursday, 22 June 2023

Report of: Interim Head of Planning

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Purpose: For information

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Publication status: Open

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Wards affected: All

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### Executive summary:

This report includes information about the key planning performance indicators for quarter 4 1 January-31 March 2022-2023. 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.

From the next committee cycle, all policy committees will return to formal reporting of key performance indicators, along with risk registers.

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### This report supports the Council's priority of:

Creating the homes, infrastructure and environment we need

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### Recommendation to Committee:

That the Quarter 4 2022-2023 performance indicators for the Planning Policy Committee be noted.

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### Reason for recommendation:

To support the committee in monitoring and managing performance.

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## 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 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.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>National Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Percentage of decisions on major applications made within 13 weeks or within agreed extension of time	60%	83%
Percentage of decisions on minor applications made within 8 weeks or within agreed extension of time	70%	90%
Percentage of decisions on other applications made within 8 weeks or within agreed extension of time	70%	93%

4. During quarter 4 there were 254 decisions, made on the following categories of applications:

<b>Type of application</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Granted</b>	<b>Refused</b>
Major applications	6	4	2
Minor applications	58	46	12
Other applications (incl. 180 householder)	190	169	21
<b>Total decisions</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>35</b>

5. Five of the major applications detailed in the table above were decided within the agreed time.
6. Of the 254 decisions detailed above 202 were made within the statutory deadlines or with an agreed Extension of time.
7. For the 58 minor applications, the percentage decided within the agreed extension of time was 96%.
8. Of the 202 decisions, which still met the statutory deadlines with an agreed extension of time, around 70% (146) 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 planning service.
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. Over the last six months the Council's planning service has reduced the backlog of outstanding applications. Work is ongoing to reduce this further.
12. A backlog occurs when the number of planning applications being determined is less than the number of new applications received. If this occurs over a succession of quarters then the backlog position gradually worsens. The total number of regular applications for planning permission received in Tandridge in the year 2022-2023 was 907.
13. The worst quarter for decision-making was Q3 when 217 planning applications were received but only 107 decisions were made.
14. The situation is improving and in Q4 254 planning applications were determined. At the time of writing (12 June 2023) there were:
  - 375 undetermined planning applications.
  - 81 undetermined Lawful Development Certificates
  - 13 Prior Notifications
15. There are also a further 180 outstanding submissions of other kinds including pre-application advice cases, notifications, consultations, discharge of conditions and non-material amendments. These types of submission are currently not monitored by the Government.

16. There are a further 148 cases waiting to be validated and a further 67 which have been classed as invalid, as they have not met the necessary criteria. In these cases, officers work with the applicant to make them aware of the necessary information required to make the applications valid.
17. The validation timescales have substantially reduced since last year but have increased again recently. Further work is being done to ensure new cases are validated as quickly as possible and to substantially reduce this validation backlog during the course of June. Once validated, the cases will be added to the total number of undetermined cases.
18. In terms of outstanding cases, of the 375 undetermined planning applications, 32 applications are more than one year old and 196 (i.e. 52%) 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.
19. 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.
20. During 12-16 June the Planning Service will have focused on further reducing the remaining backlog of planning applications to enable a sustained improvement in performance. A verbal update on the situation will be provided by the Interim Head of Planning at the meeting.

## **Key implications**

### **Comments of the Chief Finance Officer**

There are no direct financial implications of this report. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the recommendations.

## **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**

None

## **Background papers**

None

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