

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

<b>TO:</b>	<b>PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2020</b>		
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE - Quarters 1 &amp; 2 2020/2021</b>		
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>PLANNING</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>BOROUGHWIDE</b>
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**1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on how the Planning Service has performed over the past 6 months in terms of meeting government set targets for dealing with planning applications and success at planning appeals.
- 1.2 Detail on the types of applications handled and appeal decisions for Quarters 1 & 2 (the period 1 April 2020 - 30 September 2020) are provided with comparison data from the previous year.
- 1.3 This has been, and continues to be, a challenging year for officers with new processes and procedures for working remotely in addition to getting used to a raft of changes introduced by government (see previous reports in June, July and August). However, Reading's Planning Service has still managed to perform well, working with applicants and consultees in similar circumstances, to meet MHCLG's performance criteria as shown on the following tables.

**2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 That the contents of the report be noted.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Performance by a local planning authority is assessed by government based on the speed and quality of decisions made on major and non-major planning applications. Major applications are those for 10+ dwellings or dwellings on sites over half a hectare or non-residential building(s) exceeding 1000m<sup>2</sup> or on sites exceeding 1 hectare. Non-Major (or Minor) applications are those for 1-9 dwellings (unless floorspace exceeds 1000m<sup>2</sup> / under half a hectare or non-residential buildings up to 999 m<sup>2</sup> or on sites under 1 hectare.

Other applications are therefore a subset of minor applications and include all the other types of applications including householders.

Householder applications are for changes to or in the grounds of an existing dwelling for any purpose of a domestic nature.

3.2 The MHCLG published criteria (2018) judges that a Local Planning Authority is not performing well if:

a. For applications for major development: less than **60 per cent** of an authority's decisions are made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as has been agreed in writing with the applicant;

b. For applications for non-major development: less than **70 per cent** of an authority's decisions are made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as has been agreed in writing with the applicant.

c. For applications for both major and non-major development over **10 per cent** of an authority's total number of decisions on applications have been overturned at appeal.

#### 4. PERFORMANCE AGAINST MHCLG TARGETS

##### Speed

4.1 The Council's performance over the past 6 months in terms of speed of determination of planning applications (see Table 1 below) is:

86% of major development applications within the statutory determination period or an agreed extended period.

85.7% of all non-major development applications within the statutory determination period or an agreed extended period.

4.2 Table 1 provides a breakdown on the types of planning applications handled with a comparison with the same two quarters last year with data given for the whole of year 2019/2020. As can be seen the number of applications received and decided so far in 2020/21 has dropped on all types of applications and this pattern is consistent with the experience of planning authorities across the country. However, performance on issuing decisions remains good and above the MHCLG's targets.

##### Quality

4.3 The quality performance requirement is based on the percentage of appeal decisions allowed, thus overturning the local planning authority's decision, when compared to the total number of decisions made. The current percentage threshold is 10 per cent of an authority's total number of decisions.

4.4 Table 2 provides the results on appeals decided so far this year in comparison with the same 2 quarters last year. It shows that over the past since months only one appeal has been allowed so we are well within the target set. The table also shows how in the first quarter there were a number of appeals decided but then as a consequence of the lockdown the number of appeals determined slowed down. The Planning Inspectorate are now performing better with new processes in place and indeed we had our first on-line planning appeal informal hearing last week to consider 205-207 Kings Road, Reading, LPA ref 190160.

Table 1: Application Performance so far in 2020/2021 for the Planning Service compared with previous year.

Description	MCHLG Target	19/20	Q1 19-20	Q2 19-20	Q1 Apr - Jun 20/21	Q2 Jun - Sep 20/21
Number and Percentage of major applications decided within: (i) statutory 13/16 weeks, or (ii) the extended period agreed with the applicant.	60%	22 100%	4/4 100%	5/5 100%	2/3 66%	4/4 100%
Number and Percentage of all other minor applications decided within (i) statutory 8 weeks or (ii) the extended period agreed by the applicant.	70%	178 86%	44/52 85%	52/62 84%	36/50 72%	41/53 77%
*Number and Percentage of other applications decided within (i) statutory 8 weeks or (ii) the extended period as agreed by applicant.	70%	528 90%	167/177 94%	112/137 82%	106/121 88%	99/105 94%
<i>*Of these decisions the following were for householder applications (not prior approval)</i>		342 84%	114/118 97%	75/90 83%	82/93 88%	81/88 92%
<b>TOTAL DECISIONS</b>		728	215/233 92%	169/204 83%	144/174 83%	144/162 89%

. TABLE 2: Section 78 Appeals against the refusal of planning permission

	Annual 2019/20	Q1 & 2 Apr - Sep 19/20	Q1 Apr - Jun 20/21	Q2 Jun - Sep 20/21
APPEALS LODGED	50	35	6	9
NUMBER OF APPEAL DECISIONS	47	25	7	2
APPEALS ALLOWED	11	8	1	0
APPEALS DISMISSED	35	17	7	1
SPLIT DECISIONS	0	0	0	0
APPEALS WITHDRAWN	1	0	0	0

## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 Planning services contribute to producing a sustainable environment and economy within the Borough as set out in some of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities:

1. Securing the economic success of Reading and provision of job opportunities
2. Ensuring access to decent housing to meet local needs
3. Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
4. Ensuring that there are good education, leisure and cultural opportunities for people in Reading.

## 6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Statutory consultation takes place on planning applications and appeals and this can influence the speed with which applications and appeals are decided. Information on development management performance is publicly available.

## 7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics, it is considered that the development management performance set out in this report has no adverse impacts.

## 8. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

8.2 The Planning Service uses policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly by making efficient use of land and using sustainable materials and building methods. As a team we have also reduced the amount of resources (paper and printing) we use to carry out our work.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The collection and monitoring of performance indicators is a statutory requirement and a requirement of MHCLG. In addition a number of the work related programmes referred to in this report are mandatory requirements including the determination of planning applications and the preparation of the development plan.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.