

# Planning Applications Committee

24 July 2024



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT - PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note the report for information
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	Julie Williams, Development Manager (Planning & Building Control)
<b>Lead councillor</b>	Councillor Micky Leng, Lead Councillor for Planning and Assets
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Inclusive Economy
<b>Recommendations</b>	The Committee is asked: 1. To note the report.

## 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To advise Committee on the work and performance of the Planning Development Management team and Building Control team for the first quarter of 2024/2025 (April to June) with comparison to same quarters in the previous year. These quarterly reports are focussed on planning and building control application processing performance and fee income.
- 1.2. The report also explains why it is intended to increase pre-planning application fees, miscellaneous enquiry charges and building regulation application fees.

## 2. Planning Development Management team

### 2.1 Decisions Issued

- 2.2 Table 1a provides a breakdown on the decisions issued for the first quarter of this year compared to the previous year's quarters. For those decisions issued within the statutory timeframe or within an agreed extended timeframe we continue to perform well for the different types of planning applications handled even with a corresponding increase in overall decisions issued.

**Table 1a: Planning Application Performance  
By quarters in 2023/2024 and in quarter 1 2024/2025**

Description	DLUHC Target	Q1 23/24 Apr-Jun	Q2 23/24 Jul-Sept	Q3 23/24 Oct-Dec	Q4 23/24 Jan - Apr	Q1 24/25 Apr-Jun
<b>Major</b>	60%	7/7 100%	4/4 100%	5/5 100%	4/4 100%	3/4 75%
<b>Minor</b>	70%	29/32 90%	29/35 82%	48/52 92%	39/40 98%	28/31 90%
<b>Others (includes householders)</b>	70%	110/119 92%	90/102 88%	85/92 92%	92/104 88%	84/88 95%
<b>Overall Totals</b>		146/158 92%	123/141 87%	138/149 93%	135/148 91%	115/123 93%

## Fee Income

- 2.3 Table 1b provides data on income from applications, pre-app enquiries and miscellaneous advice. We are still confirming the miscellaneous advice service income so this will be provided at the meeting.
- 2.4 Planning application fees are set by central government and were increased in December 2023 with an across the board increase of 25% for most application types and by 35% for Major applications. The high percentage increase was justified by being the first increase since 2018.
- 2.5 Fees for pre-application enquiries and miscellaneous administrative tasks (planning history searches, copies of decisions and legal agreements, advice for works to trees that are not available to view online) are set locally. These fees have not been reviewed since 2022 so it is now proposed to increase these fees.
- 2.6 Officers intend to increase pre-application fees by 12.5% for smaller schemes and by 25% for larger commercial applications. For the very large applications the fees are calculated by negotiation based on the number of officers involved and time taken and are also expected to rise by 25%.
- 2.7 The current fee for miscellaneous enquiries is £27.50 set in 2022. On analysis of the work involved in providing this information it is clear this charge does not reflect the time taken in many cases, so this fee is to increase to £50. As mentioned above, recent planning histories and decisions can be found for free on our website, but some customers request information that requires investigation on older files or just do not have the time to do the searches themselves. We are also looking to increase fees for S106 enquiries, again to more accurately reflect the time taken to do these tasks.

Table 1b provides information on Planning fee income.

Fee Income	Q1 23/24 Apr-Jun	Q2 23/24 Jul-Sept	Q3 23/24 Oct-Dec	Q4 23/24 Jan-Mar	Q1 24/25 Apr-Jun
Applications	£158,808	£125,894	£71,885	£239,825	£209,202
Pre-App	£11,720	£47,813	£29,518.50	£22,642	£50,899
Miscellaneous	£1,436	£4,962	£358	XXX	£1,177
Totals	£216,711	£178,187	£147,244	xxx	£261,278

## 3. Building Control

- 3.1 Table 2 shows performance for the team and applications dealt with for the first quarter of this year 24/25 compared with the four quarters for last year 23/24 and fee income. The recent increase in completion certificates being issued is a result of the bigger team now able to turn to clear a backlog of cases that have had no completion inspections carried out and certificates issued.
- 3.2 Building Control has also reviewed its fee schedule, as also last increased in 2022, and are proposing an average increase of 17% to reflect the additional cost and time required to provide this service in 2024 when more scrutiny is needed to ensure compliance with new Building Safety Act requirements.

**Table 2: Building Control work performance.**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Q1 23/24</b>	<b>Q2 23/24</b>	<b>Q3 23/24</b>	<b>Q4 23/24</b>	<b>Q1 24/25</b>
<b>Dangerous structures attended.</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Inspections carried out</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>389</b>
<b>Building Control applications submitted</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Applications approved in 5 &amp; 8 weeks Statutory limits</b>	<b>68/70 98%</b>	<b>184/194 95%</b>	<b>47/50 94%</b>	<b>57/59 97%</b>	<b>70/73 97.2</b>
<b>Number of completion certificates issued</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Fee income</b>	<b>£61,207</b>	<b>£61,316</b>	<b>£68,700</b>	<b>£79,502</b>	<b>£62,284</b>
<b>Approved Inspectors Initial Notices</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>116</b>

#### **4. Contribution to strategic aims**

- 4.1 The processing of planning applications and associated work (trees, conservations areas and listed buildings) and building control activities contribute to creating a healthy environment with thriving communities and helps the economy within the Borough, identified as the themes of the Council's Corporate Plan in Section 2 of this report.

#### **5. Community engagement**

- 5.1 Statutory consultation takes place on most planning applications and appeals. The Council's website also allows the public to view information submitted and comments on planning applications and eventually the decision reached. There is also information on policy matters and the and this can influence the speed with which applications and appeals are decided. Information on development management performance is publicly available.

#### **6. Equality impact assessment**

- 6.1 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.

6.2 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.

## **7. Environmental and climate implications**

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

7.2 The Planning & Building Control and Planning Policy Services play a key part in mitigating impacts and adapting building techniques using adopted policies to encourage developers to build and use properties responsibly, making efficient use of land, using sustainable materials and building methods.

## **8. Legal implications**

8.1 The collection and monitoring of performance indicators is a statutory requirement. In addition, some of the work targets referred to in this report are mandatory requirements such as the determination of planning applications and building regulations applications.

## **9. Financial Implications**

9.1 The report includes information on proposed fee increases in planning and building teams. These increases reflect the current costs to the Council and will help us to continue to resource the provision of these non-statutory miscellaneous services for customers.