

# Planning Applications Committee

05 November 2025



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	SECOND 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>Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report</b>	Emma Gee
<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>Council priority</b>	Secure Reading's economic & cultural success
<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 and Building Control team for the first two quarters of 2025/2026 (April to September) with comparison from the same quarters in the previous year.
- 1.2. Also to advise of a proposal to Policy Committee to change both the Planning Pre-Application service and the Building Control Charges Scheme and their associated fees.

## 2. Planning Development Management team

### Decisions Issued

- 2.1 Table 1 provides a breakdown on the decisions issued for 2024/25 and quarters 1 & 2 for 24/25 and so far in 2025/2026. For those decisions issued within the statutory timeframe or within an agreed extended timeframe we started the year well on Minors and Others but the margins for meeting targets for Majors given small number is difficult. It also worth noting that 88% of the decisions issued were granting permission for applicants.

**Table 1: Decisions Issued 2024/2025 and Q1 & Q2 2024/25 & 2025/2026**

Application categories	Target	Overall 24/25	Q1 24/25 Apr-Jun	Q2 24/25 July - Sept	Q1 25/26 Apr-Jun	Q2 25/26 July - Sept
<b>Major</b>	<b>60%</b>	17/20 85%	3/4 75%	8/10 80%	<b>2/3 66%</b>	<b>1/1 100%</b>
<b>Minor</b>	<b>70%</b>	132/153 86%	28/31 90%	32/40 80%	<b>40/43 93%</b>	<b>27/32 84%</b>
<b>Others (incl. householders)</b>	<b>70%</b>	349/395 88%	84/88 95%	80/106 84%	<b>102/117 87%</b>	<b>75/87 86%</b>
<b>Overall Totals</b>		498/568 88%	75/77 97%	129/156 83%	<b>144/163 88%</b>	<b>103/130 79%</b>

## Fee Income

- 2.2 Table 1b provides fee income from dealing with different types of applications, providing pre-application advice and responding to requests for information, such as planning histories and site background checks. The table compares last year's Q1 & Q2 results with this year. We have experienced a lull in the submission of Major applications (just 3 so far) with a significant impact on fee income. Minor and other applications remain consistent with previous quarters.

**Table 1b: Fee income for Q1 & Q2 2024/25 and 2025/2026**

<b>Fee Income</b>	<b>Q1 24/25 £</b>	<b>Q2 24/25 £</b>	<b>Q1 25/26 £</b>	<b>Q2 25/26 £</b>
<b>Major Applications</b>	91,230	252,221	<b>25,474</b>	<b>192,685</b>
<b>Minor Applications</b>	60,574	140,605	<b>121,256</b>	<b>99,061</b>
<b>Other/Householders</b>	34,309	23,216	<b>46,993</b>	<b>46,865</b>
<b>Pre-App</b>	29,555	19,465	<b>53,587</b>	<b>62,067</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	110	27.50	<b>3,923</b>	<b>1,583</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£215,668</b>	<b>£437,617</b>	<b>£251,233</b>	<b>£284,405</b>

## Planning Pre-Application Service Review

- 2.3 The Planning Pre-Application service was reviewed along with the Council's schedule of charges earlier in the year, but officers have been looking at the different levels of pre-app service provided to align more with planning application types and to acknowledge the applicant interest in and merit of using Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) to project manage planning application from pre-app through to decisions and conditions.
- 2.4 Currently we provide 3 levels of service with Level 1 being for the equivalent of householder and small commercial applications, Level 2 being for a mix of Minor and Major type proposals and Level 3 for the significant Major applications. No change to the Level 1 service (or fees charged) for domestic or small business type enquiries are proposed.
- 2.5 However, the current Level 2 service is sometimes confusing as it combines proposals that would be either Minor or Major type planning applications. So, it is proposed to make all minor pre-application enquiries Level 2 and all major pre-application enquiries Level 3. For both of these levels, to enable full cost recovery for all officers and consultees involved in providing advice, it is proposed to increase fees.
- 2.6 Also to align with the approach taken by planning application fees and adjacent authorities when charging pre-app fees for new dwellings it is proposed to apply the fee payable per each new dwelling instead of the current way of batching dwellings (eg; 1 - 3; 4 - 9 dwellings) to be fairer to customers who are, for example, looking to build 4 dwellings paying the same as a customer wanting to build 9 dwellings. See Appendix for details of what is being proposed.
- 2.7 These proposed changes are subject to the decision to be taken by Policy Committee on 17 November 2025.

### 3. Building Control

- 3.1 Recruiting permanent experienced Building Control inspectors remains but we have two experienced agency Building Inspectors helping the Team Leader looking at more complex sites in the town and helping to supervise and train three trainee Building Inspectors, who are all working well.
- 3.2 Table 2 shows performance for the team and the types of applications (fee and non-fee earning) dealt with for 2024/2025 and then Q1 & Q2 for that year and the current year. Fee income remains steady and working procedures are more efficient with use on online applications and payment, including working with Planning Portal to automate application submission.
- 3.3 The significant number of competent persons applications (eg for new windows; new boilers etc) registered this year so far stems from a combination of a backlog plus system change in how these are processed. Thankfully this is a relatively simple administrative task to do, customers are not adversely impacted and we hope to be over the worse.

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

<b>Case work</b>	<b>Total 24/25</b>	<b>Q1 24/25</b>	<b>Q2 24/25</b>	<b>Q1 25/26</b>	<b>Q2 25/26</b>
<b>Fee earning</b>					
<b>Building notices</b>	176	33	41	<b>36</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Regularisations</b>	82	16	16	<b>15</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Full Plans</b>	184	47	58	<b>56</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Demolition notices</b>	10	3	3	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Partnerships</b>	33	12	7	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Fee Income</b>	£241,547	£62,284	£62,059	<b>£65,820</b>	<b>£76,022</b>
<b>Non-Fee earning</b>					
<b>Dangerous structures attended</b>	18	1	4	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Competent Persons</b>	28	6	7	<b>17718</b>	<b>19704</b>
<b>AI Initial Notices</b>	431	104	117	<b>115</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Unauthorised work checks</b>	86	2	58	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>

#### **Building Control Charges**

- 3.4 The Building Control Charges have been reviewed (last reviewed 2 years ago) to ensure the team is achieving cost recovery and to include categories for work to make it easier to see the appropriate fee to pay.
- 3.5 Some property owners carry out work without first seeking approval, either out of ignorance or deliberately seeking to avoid the regulations. Some never sought a completion certificate when works were carried out or have since mislaid it. To resolve this Regularisation applications can be submitted to seek building control approval for works carried out. These tend to be requested when owners are selling but the new buyers ask for the completion certificate. At this point the owners expect the Building Inspectors to quickly provide this and assume will be approved. However, to confirm if acceptable or not requires searches in archives and/or the opening up of works for inspection. Officer time involved can be extensive, particularly when it is found that the works are not acceptable.
- 3.6 In addition, when Building Inspectors identify unauthorised work taking place when out and about in Reading and request that applications are submitted these applications are

also dealt with as Regularisations. The proposed fee changes seek to more accurately account for the time spent on Regularisation applications.

- 3.7 These proposed changes are subject to the decision to be taken by Policy Committee on 17 November 2025. See Appendix for more detail.

#### **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.

#### **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 fee income in the planning and building teams.

**Appendix - Proposed changes to fees schedule to be considered by Policy Committee on 17 November 2025**

**Building Control Fees (extract of typical work)**

<b>Table A - Schedule 1 - Domestic New dwellings</b>	<b>Full Plans / Building Notices Current inc. VAT</b>	<b>Full Plans Proposed inc. VAT</b>	<b>Building Notice Proposed Inc. Vat</b>	<b>Regularisation charge Current exc. VAT</b>	<b>Regularisation charge Proposed exc. VAT</b>
1	£1295	£1385	£1523	£1,554	£1827
2	£1745	£1867	£2053	£2,094	£2463
Additional dwellings		Fees on negotiation	Fees on negotiation		Fees on negotiation
<b>Table B - Schedule 2 - Domestic</b>					
Extension under 10m2	£730	£781	£859	£876.00	£1030
Extension 10m2 - 40m2	£885	£946	£1040	£1,062.00	£1248
Extension 40m2- 60m2	£990	£1059	£1164	£1,188.00	£1396
Extension 60m2- 100m2	£1095	£1170	£1288	£1,314.00	£1545
Erection or extension of detached garage	£575	£615	£676	£690.00	£811
Extension or alteration to a loft not exceeding 50m2	£930	£995	£1094	£1,116.00	£1312
Conversion of a single garage for habitable use estimated works	£575	£615	£676	£690.00	£810
<b>Table B - Schedule 3 - Domestic</b>					
Window replacement up to 5 in a single dwelling	£225	£240	£264	£270.00	£316
Window replacement 10 to 20 in a single dwelling	£285	£304	£334	£342.00	£400
Renovation of a single thermal element	£335	£358	£393	£402	£471
Replacement roof covering	£269	£287	£315	£323	£378

## Fees for Planning Pre-Application Advice and Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)

Service	Category	Charge Unit	Fee Nov 2024	Fee including VAT	New Fee Nov 2025	Fee including VAT	Comment
<b>Level 1</b>  <b>Householders, small business &amp; community groups</b>  <b>Level 1 for advice on development in the "Other Development" category for planning applications.</b>	Householders	Each	180.00	£216.00	£180	£216	No change for Level 1 advice
	Meetings extra	Per hour	£104.60	£122.52	£104.60	£122.52	
	Small business and developers: where the floor area is less than 200sqm.	Each	£180.00	£216.00	£180	£216	
	Meetings extra	Per hour	£104.60	£122.52	£104.60	£122.52	
	community uses - (Free of charge for up to 200sqm)	Each	£160.00	£192.00	£160.00	£192.00	
<b>Level 2</b>  <b>Business/ commercial development of 201 sqm to 999 sqm.</b>  <b>Residential development for less than 10 dwellings.</b>  <b>Level 2 service for advice on development that would fall within in the "Minor Development" category for planning applications.</b>	201 - 499sqm	Each	£400.00	£555.00	£600.00	£720.00	Fee increase
	500 - 999sqm	Each	£862.50	£1,035.00	£1,000.00	£1,200.00	Fee increase
	<del>1-3 dwellings</del> 1 – 9 dwellings One Meeting included in fee, additional Meetings charged by hour.	per dwelling	£462.50	£555.00	£462.50	£555.00	No change to fee but the charge is now per dwelling with one category for 1 - 9 dwellings
	<del>4-9 dwellings</del>	per dwelling	£862.50	£1,035.00			
	<del>10-15 dwellings</del>	Each	£1,075.00	£1,290.00	£1,500.00	£1,800.00	Move all Major planning enquiries to Level 3 service
	<del>16-19 dwellings</del>	Each	£1,437.50	£1,725.00	£2,000.00	£2,400.00	
	One Meeting included in fee, additional Meetings charged by hour.	Each	£147.50	£177.00	£166.00	£200.00	

<b>Level 3</b>  <b>Development between 1,000 and 5,000 sqm or 10 - 19 dwellings</b>  <b>Level 3 pre-app service used for advice on development that would fall in the “Small Major Development” category for planning applications.</b>	Introductory scoping meeting.	Each	£3,750.00	£4,500.00	£4,000.00	£4,800.00	All major pre-app to have initial meeting
	Further meetings charged per hour	Final written advice report	£3,750.00	£4,500.00	£4,000.00	£4,800.00	All major type pre-application enquiries dealt with as Level 3 to rationalise service provided for each level. Increase fee.
<b>Level 3 - PPA</b>  <b>Development over 5,000 sqm or 20+ dwellings (Large Major)</b>  <b>Level 3 - PPA service used for pre-application advice and to manage the eventual planning applications for Large Major development.</b>	The first fee is for introduction meeting and negotiations on terms of PPA. The second fee is minimum for PPA.	Each	£3,750.00	£4,500.00	£4000 £10000	£4800 £12000	Increase in fee for initial meeting. Minimum fee for PPA stated.