

## REPORT TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

### ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/2021

#### **Purpose of the report**

To provide members with an end of year report on the performance recorded for Development Management between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Figures for 2018/19 and 2019/20 are also provided for comparison as are targets set within the relevant Planning Service Plan.

#### **Recommendations**

**(a) That the report be received.**

**(b) That the Head of Planning and Development Manager seeks to maintain and improve performance of the Development Management team (including the technical support team) to meet the targets.**

**(c) That the 'Mid-Year Development Management Performance Report 2021/22 be submitted to Committee around November/December 2021 reporting on performance achieved for the first half the complete year 2021/22.**

#### **Reasons for recommendations**

To ensure that appropriate monitoring and performance management procedures are in place and that the Council continues with its focus on improving performance, facilitating development and providing good customer service to all who use the Planning Service.

#### **1. Background:**

An extensive set of indicators is collected to monitor the performance of the Development Management service. These indicators have changed over time and officers have sought to ensure that the right things are being measured to enable us to improve performance in every significant area. The range of indicators included reflects the objective of providing a fast and efficient development management service including dealing with pre-application enquiries, breaches of planning control, considering applications, and approving subsequent details and delivering development.

#### **2. Matters for consideration:**

There is an Appendix attached to this report:-

**APPENDIX 1: PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT, 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21:** Contains quarterly and annual figures for the Performance Indicators applicable during 2020/21 (comparative figures for 2018/19 and 2019/20 are also shown).

This report is a commentary on the local performance indicators that the Council has as set out in detail in Appendix 1. It follows on from a report that was considered by the Planning Committee at its meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 which reported on the mid-year performance figures and gave predictions on whether the targets for 2020/21 would be likely to be achieved.

Cabinet receives a Quarterly Financial and Performance Management report on a series of performance indicators including those which relate to whether Major and Non-Major planning applications are being determined "in time", and any indicators failing to meet the set targets are reported by exception.

### 3. The performance achieved:

#### National Performance Indicators

The Government has a system of designation of poorly performing planning authorities – two of the four current criteria for designation under ‘Special Measures’ are thresholds relating to the speed of determination of Major and Non-major applications, performance below which designation is likely. Designation as a poorly performing Local Planning Authority would have significant and adverse consequences for the Council.

The assessment period for this measure is the two years up to and including the most recent quarter for which data on planning application decisions are available at the time of designation.

The threshold for designation as an underperforming authority at the end of that reporting period for ‘Major’ applications is where the Council has failed to determine a minimum of 60% of its applications within a 13 week period or such longer period of time as might have been agreed with the applicant.

For ‘Non-major’ applications (All ‘Minor’ applications plus ‘Changes of use’ and ‘Householder’ applications) the threshold is where the Council has failed to determine a minimum of 70% of its applications within an 8 week period or such longer period of time as might have been agreed with the applicant.

The other designation criteria measure the quality of decision making as demonstrated by appeal performance (again for Majors and Non-Majors). The measure to be used is the percentage of the total number of decisions made by the authority on applications that are then subsequently overturned at appeal, once nine months have elapsed following the end of the assessment period.

The nine months specified in the measure enables appeals to pass through the system and be decided for the majority of decisions on planning applications made during the assessment period.

The threshold for designation with regard to both ‘Major’ and ‘Non-major’ in terms of quality of decisions is where 10% or more of the authority’s decisions are allowed at appeal. Therefore, in this instance the upper limit is 10%.

The Council's performance with regard to the 4 national indicators are as follows:

	Designation threshold	Performance To date
<b>Speed of major development applications</b>	Less than 60%	92.6%*
<b>Speed of non-major development applications</b>	Less than 70%	97.3%*
<b>Quality of major development applications</b>	Over 10%	3.4%**
<b>Quality of non-major development applications</b>	Over 10%	0.9%***

The figures provided are based upon the rolling total for the two year assessment period drawn from the Ministry of Communities, Housing and Local Government’s (MCHLG) nationally published ‘Live Planning Tables’ for the following two year assessment periods:

\* April 2019 – March 2021 (Table 151a for major development and 153 for non-major)

\*\* October 2017 – Sept 2019 (Table 153)

\*\*\* July 2017 – June 2019 (Table 154)

As can be seen above, the Council is clearly well above the threshold for designation in terms of 'speed of decisions' for both 'Major' and 'Non-major' applications and well below the upper threshold in respect of 'Quality of Decision'.

The MHCLG 'Live Planning Tables' show how improved performance over a sustained period has affected the Council's placing. At the end of the year 2019-2020 the Council remained within the bottom quartile of Local Planning Authorities within England with regard to 'Speed of Decision' for both 'Major' and 'Non-major' applications. The most up to date performance information published in the Live Planning Tables, however, now places the Council in the second quartile for 'Speed of Decisions' for 'Major' applications and in the top quartile for 'Non-major' applications.

**Local Performance Indicators (LPI)**

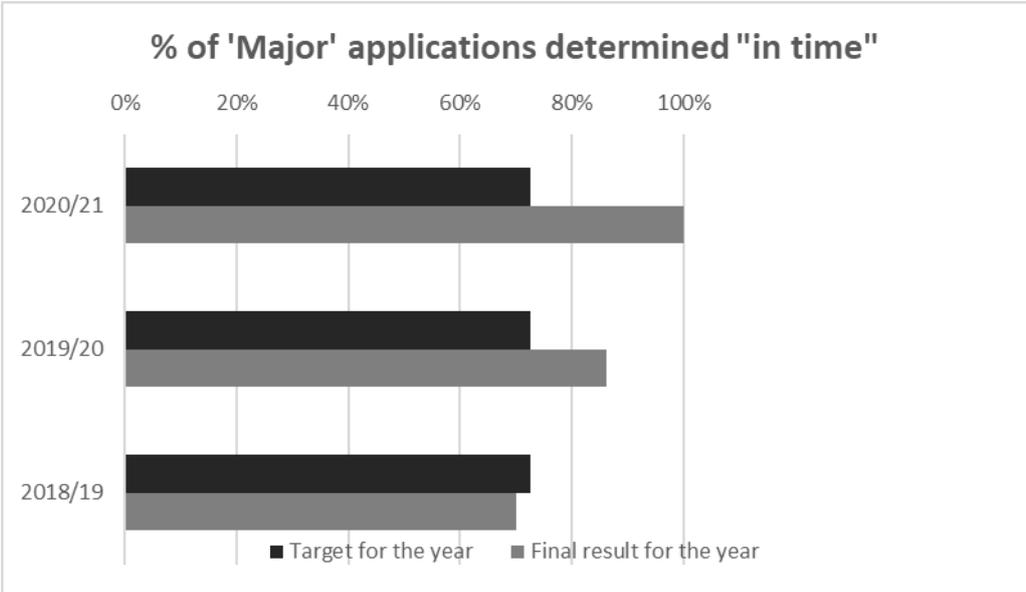
There are 7 indicators, all measuring speed of performance, which are referred to in the commentaries below. Members will note that out of these 7 performance indicators, the target set by the Council for itself has been met in 2020/21 in 6 cases.

**INDICATOR - Percentage of applications determined within timescales:-**

- (1) 72.5% of 'Major' applications<sup>1</sup> determined 'in time'<sup>2</sup>
- (2) 77.5% of 'Minor' applications<sup>3</sup> determined 'in time'<sup>2</sup>
- (3) 85% of 'Other' applications<sup>4</sup> determined 'in time'<sup>2</sup>
- (4) 85% of 'Non-major' applications<sup>5</sup> determined 'in time'<sup>2</sup>

(see footnotes set out at the end of this report)

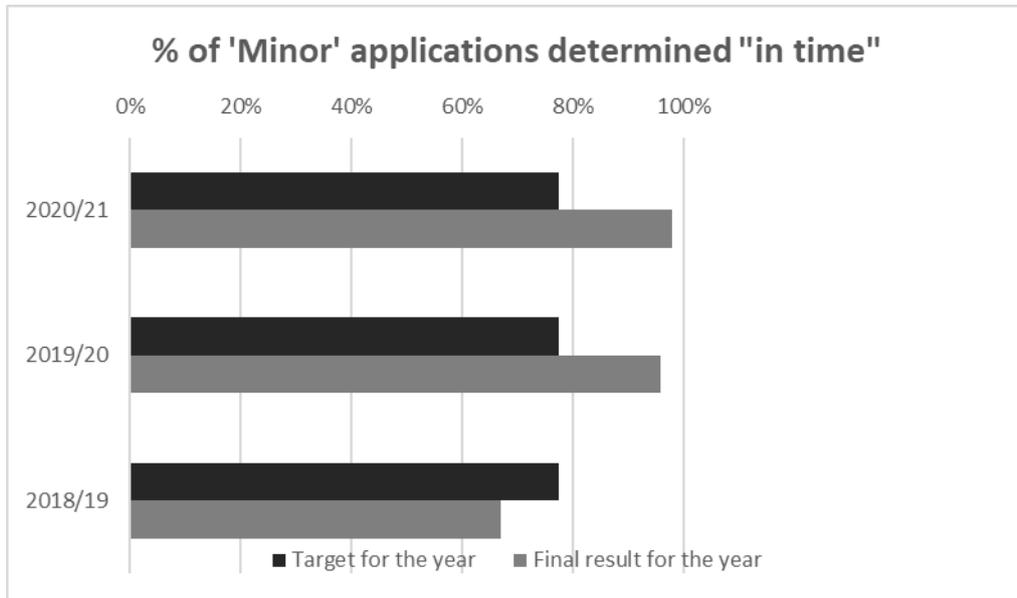
(1) In dealing with 'Major' applications the LPI is 72.5%. The end of year performance 2020/21 was 100%.



This is an improvement on the already commendable 2019/20 performance of 86.2%. 100% of decisions have been issued 'in time' for an 18 month period.

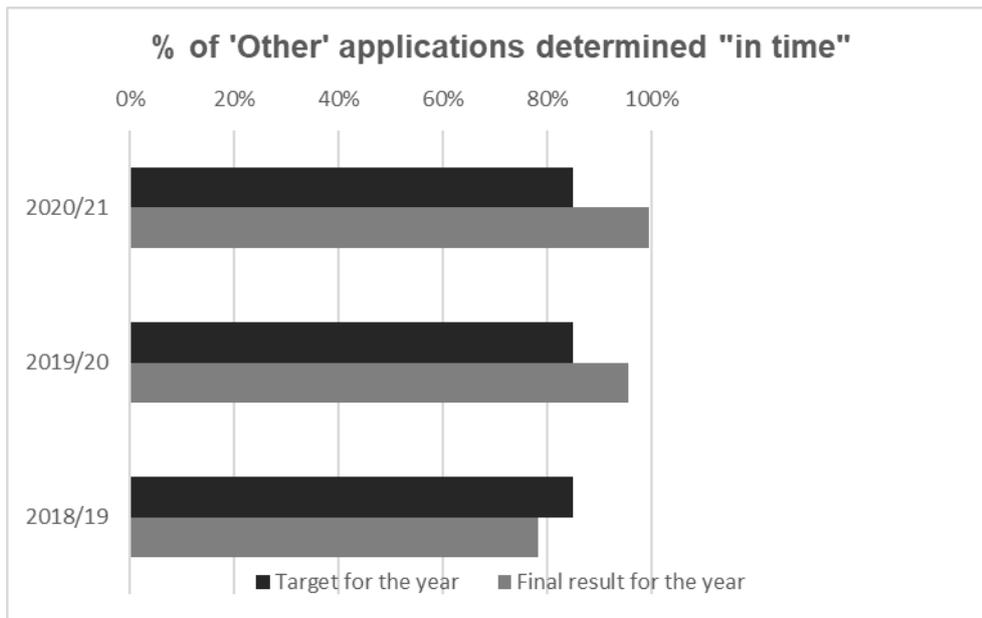
**TARGET FOR 2020/21 ACHIEVED**

(2) In dealing with 'Minor' applications the LPI for minor is 77.5%. The figures for 2020/21 is 98.1%.



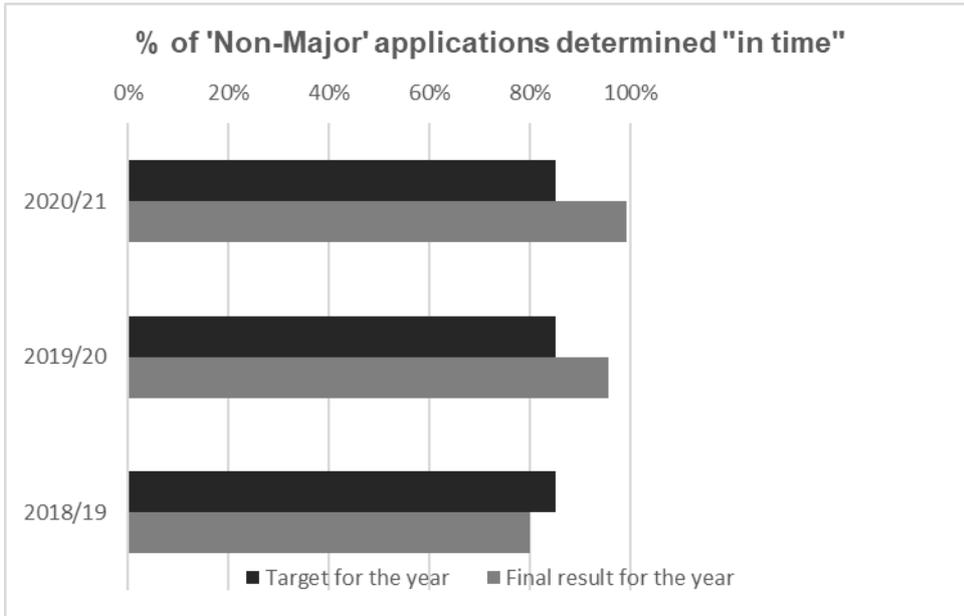
**TARGET FOR 2020/21 ACHIEVED**

(3) In dealing with 'Other' applications the 'LPI for minor is 85%. The figures for 2020/21 is 99.5%.



**TARGET FOR 2020/21 ACHIEVED**

(4) In dealing with 'Non-major' applications the 'LPI for minor is 85%. The figures for 2020/21 is 99.2%.

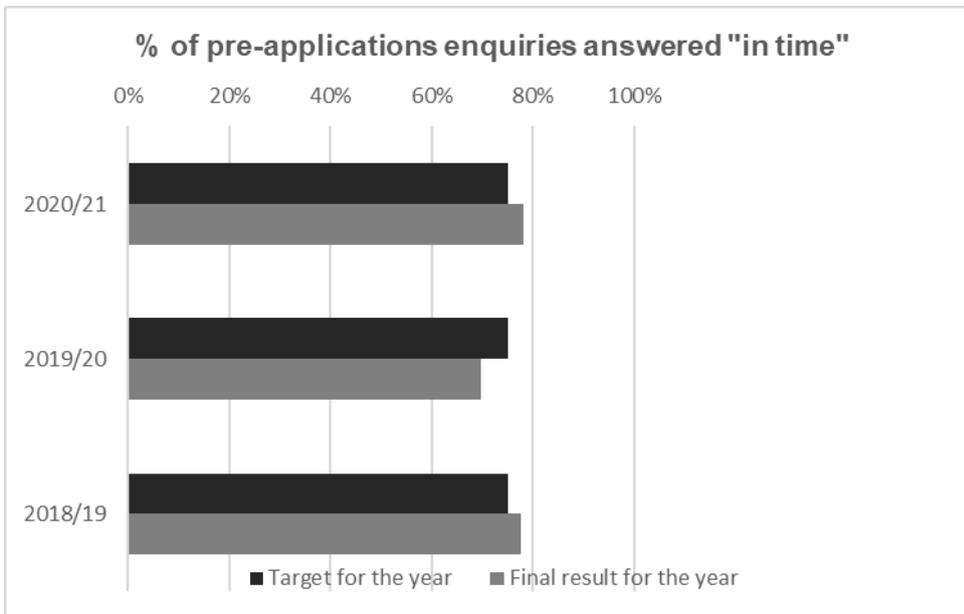


**TARGET FOR 2020/21 ACHIEVED**

In conclusion, all 4 four targets relating to the speed of determination of planning applications have been exceeded.

**INDICATOR - Percentage of pre-application enquiries answered in time**

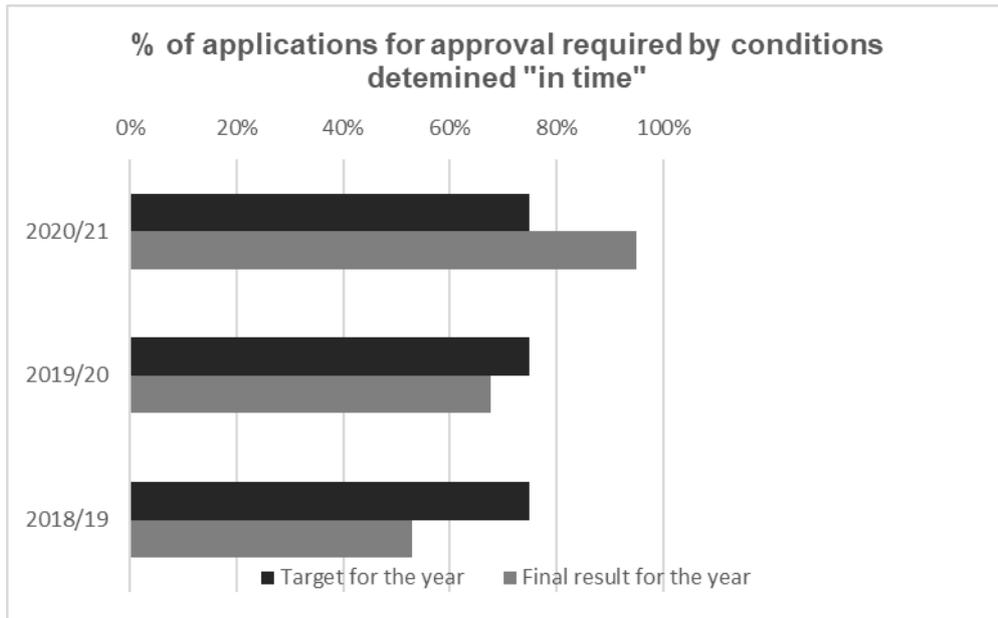
In dealing with **Pre-application enquiries** the 'LPI for minor is 75%. The figures for 2020/21 is 78% which is above target.



**TARGET FOR 2020/21 ACHIEVED**

**INDICATOR - Percentage of applications for approvals required by conditions determined within 8 weeks**

In dealing with **Discharge of Condition applications** the LPI for minor is 75%. The figures for 20120/21 is 94.4%.

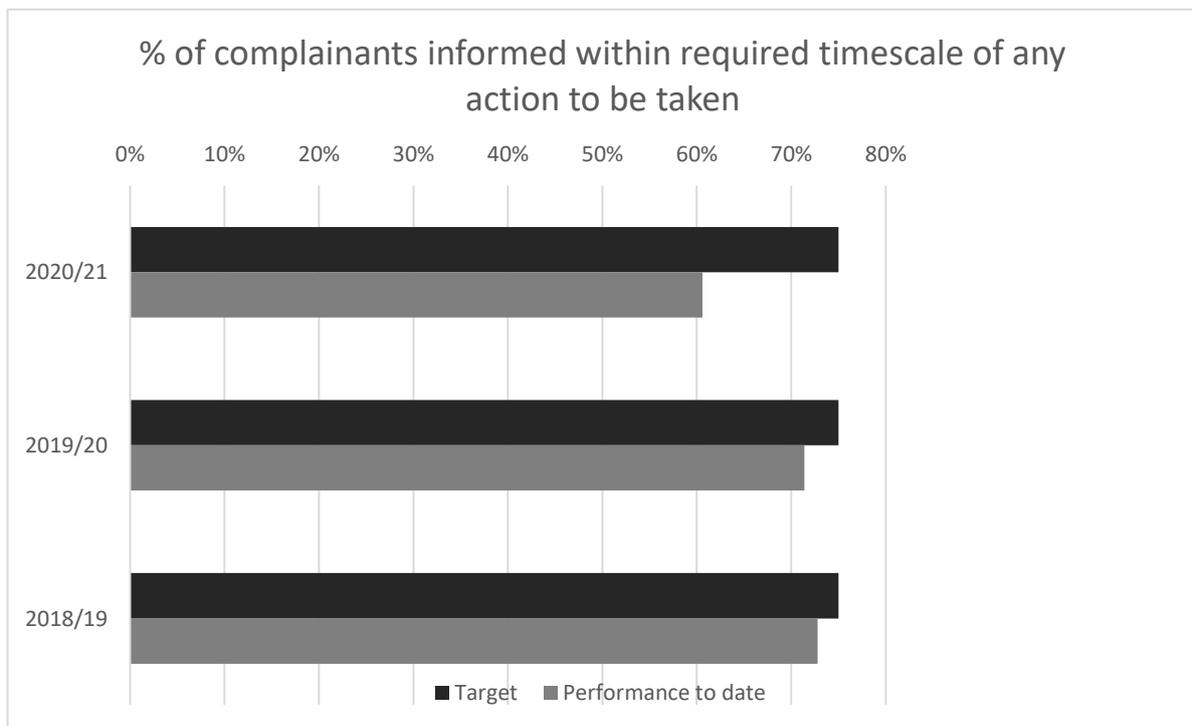


The introduction of performance management tools and this, together with additional staff and a very clear steer that they are to be dealt with the same priority as any other planning application, has led to the improved performance that is being reported.

**TARGET FOR 2020/21 ACHIEVED**

**INDICATOR - Percentage of complainants informed within the required timescales of any action to be taken about alleged breaches of planning control.**

In dealing with '**Enforcement complaints**' the 'LPI for this service is 75%. The figures for 2020 is 60.6%, slightly lower than was reported in the mid-year performance report 62%.



It will be noted from Appendix 1 that performance information for the entire 2020/21 year has not been included. The Local Planning Enforcement Policy (LPEP) was rolled out at the start of this year following adoption in 2020. The information that has been provided therefore relates to performance in the context of the previous Enforcement Policy. Performance under the LPEP will be reported at a later date.

## **TARGET FOR 2020/21 NOT ACHIEVED**

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### **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> 'Major' applications are defined as those applications where 10 or more dwellings are to be constructed (or if the number is not given, the site area is more than 0.5 hectares), and, for all other uses, where the floorspace proposed is 1,000 square metres or more or the site area is 1 hectare or more.

<sup>2</sup> 'In-time' means determined within an extended period of time beyond the normal 8 week target period that has been agreed, in writing, by the applicant.

<sup>3</sup> 'Minor' applications are those for developments which do not meet the criteria for 'Major' development nor the definitions of 'Other' Development.

<sup>4</sup> 'Other' applications relate to those for applications for Change of Use, Householder Developments, Advertisements, Listed Building Consents, Conservation Area Consents and various applications for Certificates of Lawfulness, etc.

<sup>5</sup> 'Non-major' means all 'minor' development and also householder development and development involving a change of use which fall within the 'other' development category.

### **Date report prepared:**

6<sup>th</sup> July 2021

### **Source of information/background papers**

- **General Development Control Returns PS1 and PS2 for 2018 – 2021**
- **Planning Services own internal records, produced manually and from its UniForm modules.**
- [Improving Planning Performance: Criteria for designation \(updated 2020\)](#)
- [MCHLG Live Planning Tables](#)
- **MHCLG Live Planning Tables.**