

## REPORT TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

### MID-YEAR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/2022

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

To provide members with a mid-year report on the performance recorded for Development Management between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Figures for 2019/20 and 2020/21 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 Management Business Manager seek to maintain and improve performance of the Development Management team taking account of the targets set out in the Planning Service Plan for 2021/22.**

**(c) That the next 'Development Management Performance Report' be submitted to Committee around July 2022 reporting on performance for the complete year 2021/21.**

#### **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:**

This report is produced by the Head of Planning and Development Management Business Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning. 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, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22:** Contains quarterly and annual figures for the Performance Indicators applicable during 2021/21 (comparative figures for 2019/20 and 2020/21 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 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021 which reported on the performance achieved in 2020/21, and discussed appropriate targets.

The Council's 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%	100%*
<b>Speed of non-major development applications</b>	Less than 70%	98.9%*
<b>Quality of major development applications</b>	Over 10%	3.4%**
<b>Quality of non-major development applications</b>	Over 10%	0.8%***

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:

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

\*\* April 2018 – March 2020 (Table 152a)

\*\*\* January 2018 – December 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. The most up to date performance information published in the Live Planning Tables places the Council in the top quartile for 'Speed of Decisions' for 'Major' applications and 'Non-major' applications. This compares to second quartile performance on 'Major' applications and top quartile for 'Non-Major' applications at the end of the year 2020/2021.

### Local Performance Indicators (LPI)

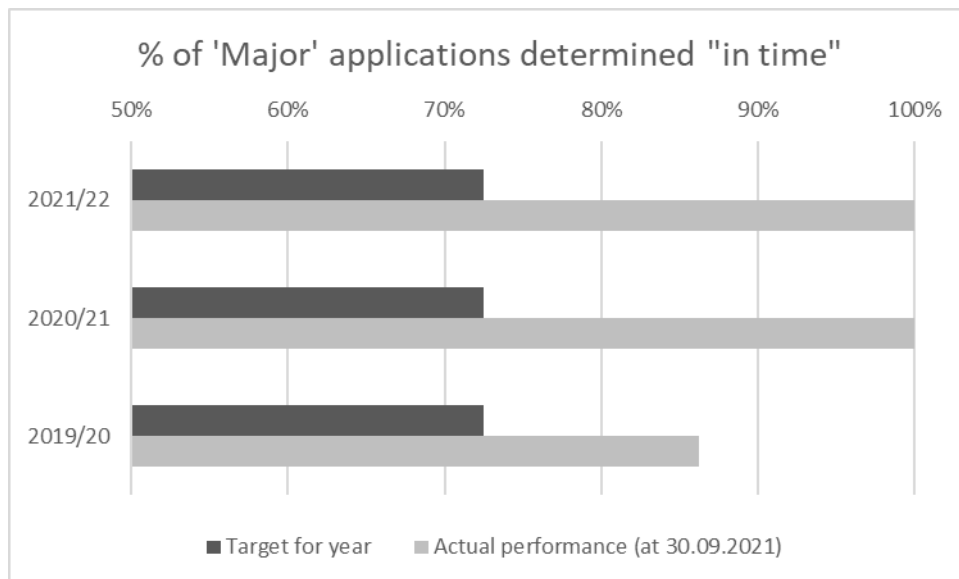
With regard to these 7 indicators are included in the Planning and Development Service Plan for 2020/21. These are referred to in the commentaries below.

#### **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>**

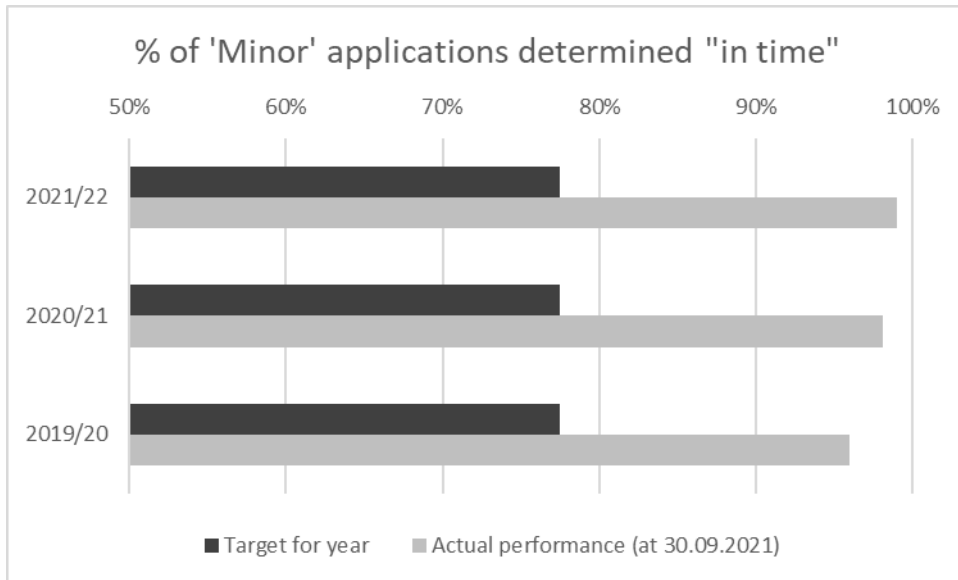
**(see footnotes set out at the end of this report)**

(1) In dealing with **'Major' applications** the LPI for majors is 72.5%. The figures to date for 2021/22 is 100%.



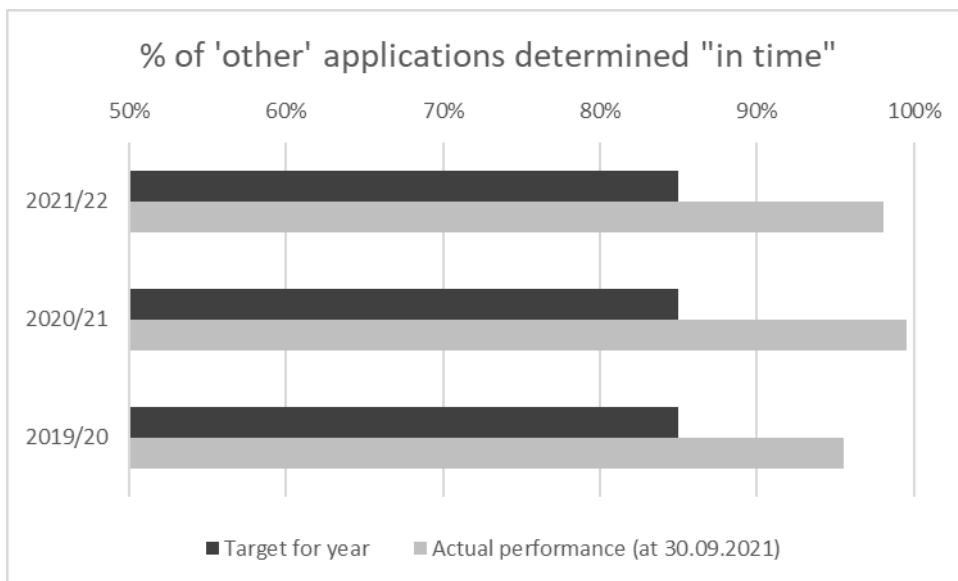
**TARGET FOR 2021/22 LIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED**

(2) In dealing with **'Minor' applications** the LPI for minor is 77.5%. The figures to date for 2021/22 is 99%. At this stage last year performance was 100%.



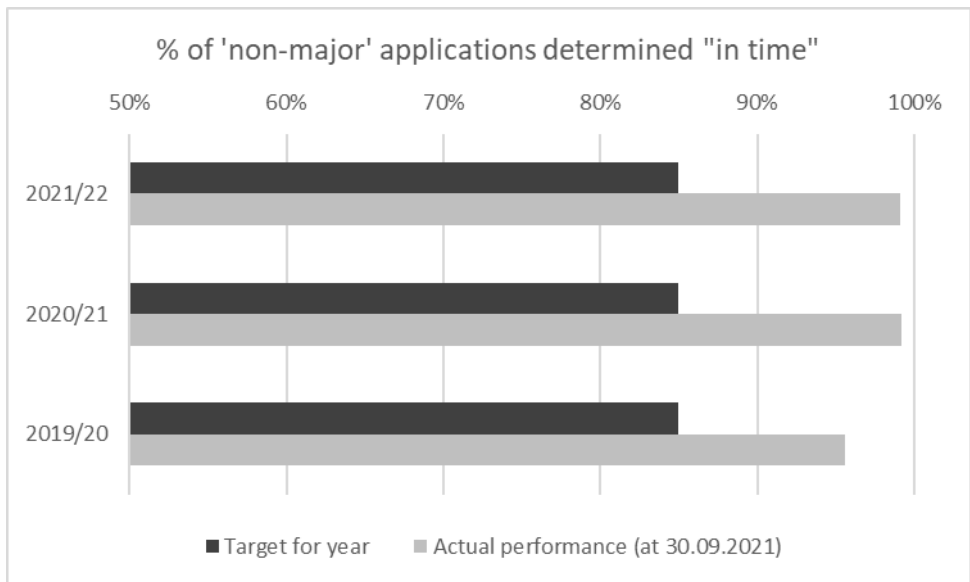
**TARGET FOR 2021/22 LIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED**

(3) In dealing with **'Other' applications** the 'LPI for minor is 85%. The figures to date for 2021/22 is 98.1%.



**TARGET FOR 2021/22 IS LIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED**

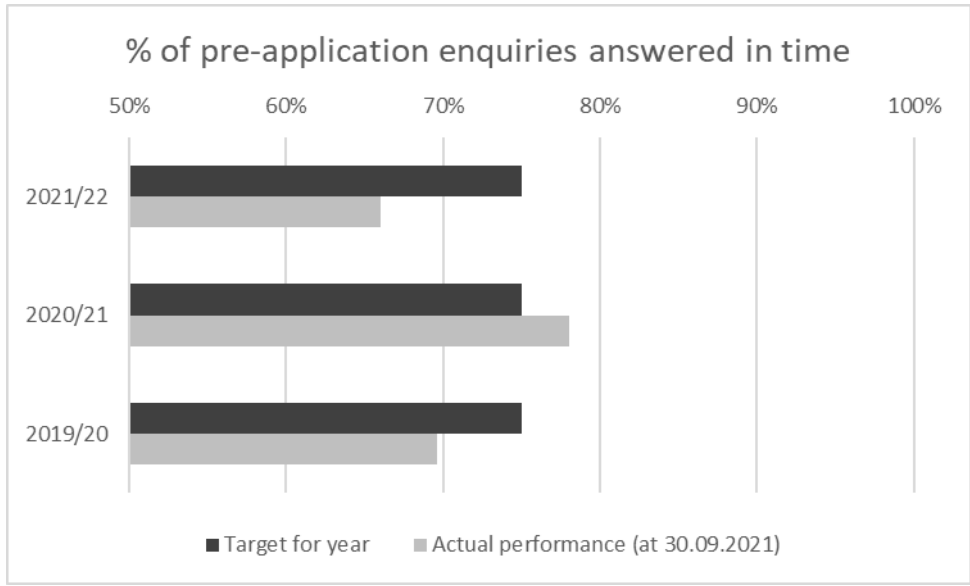
(4) In dealing with **'Non-major' applications** the 'LPI for minor is 85%. The figures to date for 2021/22 is 99.1%.



**TARGET FOR 2021/22 LIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED**

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

In dealing with 'Pre-application enquiries' the 'LPI for minor is 75%. The figures to date for 2021/22 is 66% below the target. At mid-year 2020/21 performance was at 84.2% which currently exceeds the target.

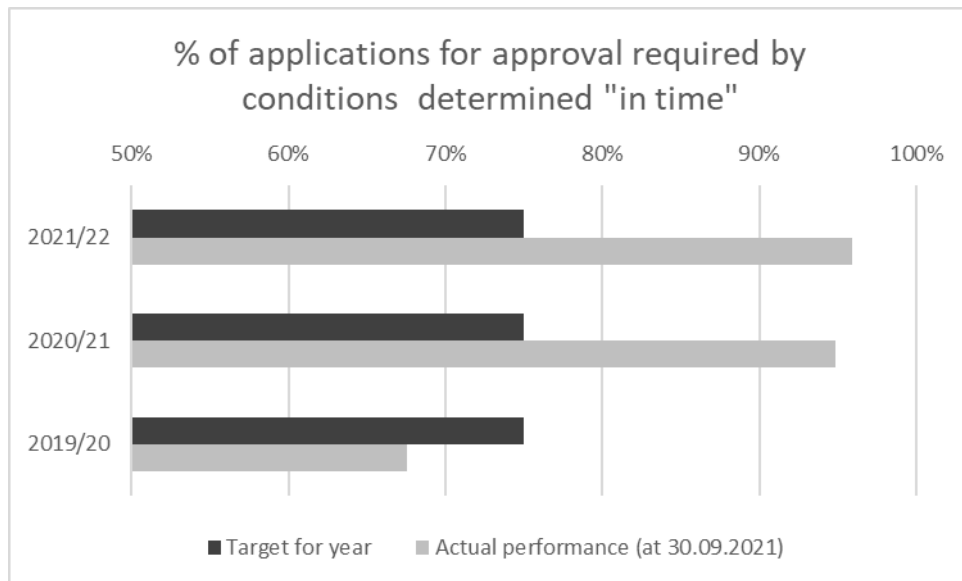


The Service received 259 pre-application enquiries up to the mid-point of 2021/22, similar to the same point in 2020/21 when 252 enquiries had been received. The Service has, however, determined considerably more planning applications given that at the mid-point in 2021/22 381 decisions on planning applications have been issued compared to 257 at the mid-point of the previous year. Whilst the Service continues to provide pre-application advice, the increased demands on officer time due to the increase in applications determined has led to delays that has impacted performance.

**TARGET FOR 2021/22 UNLIKELY TO BE ACHIEVED**

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

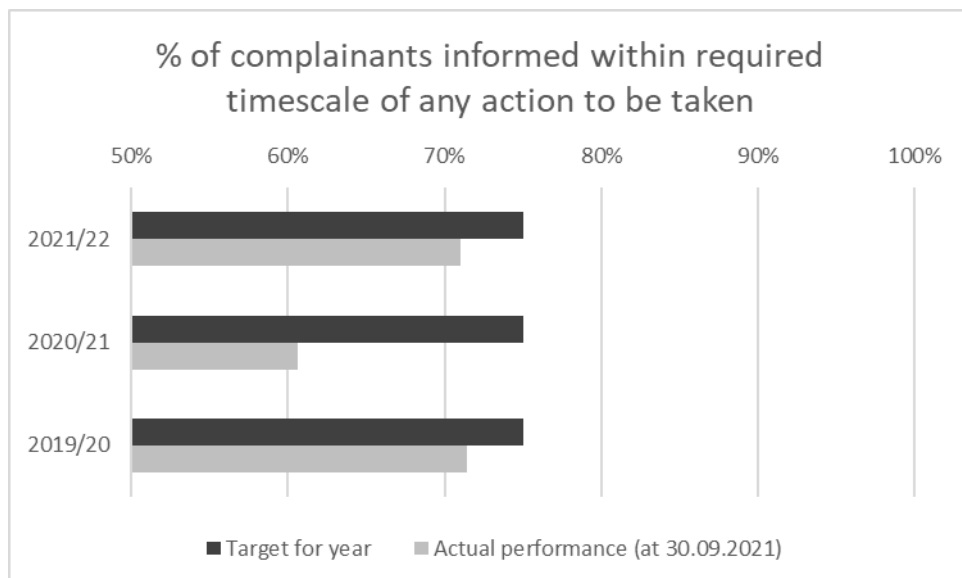
In dealing with 'Discharge of Condition applications' the LPI is 75%. The figures to date for 2021/22 is 95.9% which is significantly above the target.



**TARGET FOR 2021/22 LIKELY TO BE 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 to date for 2021/22 is 71% which is below target but a significant improvement on mid-year 2020/21 when 62% was achieved.



The improved performance has been achieved during a period when the number of cases received has increased to the mid-point of 2021/22 compared to last year and the number of complainants remains high, as can be seen in the table below.

	No of cases at mid-point	No of complainants at mid-point
19/20	130	120
20/21	143	200
21/22	165	193

Performance management tools continue to be developed and more time is being dedicated to enforcement. It is, however, predicted that this target will not be achieved although it is anticipated to be an improvement on previous achievements.

**TARGET FOR 2021/22 UNLIKELY TO BE 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:**

11<sup>th</sup> February 2022

**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](#)