

 Reigate & Banstead BOROUGH COUNCIL Banstead Horley Redhill Reigate	TO:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
	DATE:	23 rd APRIL 2025
	REPORT OF:	HEAD OF PLANNING & REGULATORY SERVICES
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AGENDA ITEM:	6	WARD: All

SUBJECT:	DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT Q4 2024-25 PERFORMANCE
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To inform members of the Q4 and annual 2024/25 Development Management performance against a range of indicators
RECOMMENDATION:	To note the performance of Q4 and 2024/25

Planning Committee has authority to note the above recommendation

BACKGROUND

1. Development Management encompasses a wide range of planning activities including pre-application negotiations and engagement; decision making on planning applications through to compliance and enforcement.
2. It puts the Council's locally adopted development plan policies into action and seeks to achieve sustainable development.
3. It is a non-political, legislative system with all Development Management functions falling under the responsibility of the Planning Committee in the Council's Constitution. As such it is a non-Executive function falling outside the scope of the quarterly corporate performance reports that are presented to the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
4. Development Management performance has always been monitored and reviewed in line with statutory and local targets with quarterly reports sent to the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities. However, given that all functions of the Council as Local Planning Authority fall under the responsibility of the Planning Committee, the performance information has also been shared with the Planning Committee Chairman. This report enables the performance indicators to be noted by the Planning Committee itself.
5. This is the final quarterly report of the 2024/25 municipal year and provides the quarterly and annual performance and annual performance at Table 1. Also provided at Table 2 is the performance measure, relating to the time taken in total days from receipt of a valid application to its registration.

PERFORMANCE

	Applications determined	Target	23/24	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	24/25
1	Major applications	60%	92%	100%	100%	100%	66%	84%
2	Non-major applications	70%	89%	89%	97%	88%	85%	89%
3	Average days to decision	73	85	99	84	116	152	111
	Appeals							
4	Appeals Received	-	76	22	18	16	18	74
5	Major Appeals Decided	-	3	0	2	0	1	3
6	Major Appeals Dismissed	70%	2 (66%)	N/A	1 (50%)	N/A	0 (0%)	1 (33%)
7	Non-major appeals	-	41	7	9	10	14	40
8	Non-major appeals Dismissed	70%	26 (63%)	6 (85%)	8 (89%)	6 (60%)	7 (50%)	27 (67.5%)
	Enforcement							
9	Reported Breaches		408	132	129	89	103	453
10	Cases Closed		436	116	109	130	109	464
11	On hand at end of period		-	186	199	167	171	-
12	Cases over 6 months old		-	47	51	52	59	-
13	Priority 1 Enforcement	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Application Workload							
14	Received		1237 838HH	284 209HH	258 191HH	274 161HH	356 173 HH	1340 671 HH
15	Determined		1197	296	285	242	323	1383
16	On hand at end of period		384	357	275	242	265	265
17	Withdrawn		63	17	52	25	10	104

Table 1 - Development Management performance

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
5.9	7.8	9.1	6.1	3.4	4.7	4.3	3.9	4.2	4.7	5.1	4.4	4.1	3.7	5.5	7.4	5.5	6.6

Table 2 – Time taken from receipt to registration (working days)

Reason for delay	Number
Awaiting compliance check	1
Awaiting submission of application	14
Awaiting outcome of application	16
Written in past month chasing information/regularisation	1
Open/ongoing prosecution	4
Awaiting Appeal	17
Regularising works commenced but not yet complete	1
Chasing up of costs	1
Temporary Stop Notice Served	2
Awaiting planting of replacement tree	1
Delayed by probate	1

Table 3 – Reason for enforcement investigation over 6 months

Planning applications

6. 356 planning applications (173 householder) were received in Q4 which is significantly higher than the previous three quarters. It is yet to be seen whether this is a trend, reflecting an upturn in the economy and building sector or whether it was the result of increased planning fees on 1st April 2025, and applications made to avoid this. As a result of this strong quarter, applications for the year also exceeded submission last year.
7. The Town and Country Planning Development Management Procedure Order 2015 sets the statutory period for the determination of planning applications at 8 weeks for non-major applications and 13 weeks for major applications (10+ dwellings or 1,000+ sqm floorspace). This statutory period is relaxed where an extension of time is agreed between the applicant and local planning authority. To monitor the performance of local planning authorities, the Government sets targets for the determination of major and non-major planning applications within the statutory period or agreed extension of time. For major developments, this target is 60% and for non-major developments it is 70%.
8. In this Quarter the time indicator for both majors and non-majors was met at 66% and 85% respectively. Whilst lower than previous quarters for majors, this reflects one of three majors which was over-time, it being a historic case which also brought down the average days to decision. This has been higher across the year, mainly as a result of the backlog officer recruited from Government funding to clear historic cases from the books. Overall, across the year the targets were comfortably met at 84% and 89% respectively.

Planning appeals

9. Alongside the Government performance measures based on speed of determination of planning applications, is the other performance criteria set for local planning authorities aimed at assessing the 'quality' of decision making. This is measured as a percentage of total applications which result in an appeal allowed, broken down between major and non-major development proposals. The relevant target for both types of application is that not more than 10% of applications should be allowed at appeal.

For example –

If 100 major applications are determined by the authority over the qualifying two-year period and 9 are allowed at appeal that would result in a figure of 9% which is acceptable. However, if 100 major applications were determined and 11 of these ended up being appealed and the appeals allowed, this would result in a figure of 11% which fails the 10% target.

The assessment considers appeals allowed against applications refused by each authority across a two-year period. Over this latest two-year period 42 major applications were determined meaning 5 or more appeals allowed in the two-year period to 31st December 2024 will lead to the target being missed and likely poorly performing designation together with the loss of control by virtue of the ability to submit applications directly to the Secretary of State.

10. In this last quarter the only major appeal determined was Merstham library (a

Committee decision) which was allowed. Together with the allowed appeal in Q2, it brings the total for the year to 2 major appeals allowed, equal to that of last year. This should be sufficient to avoid the poor performance designation being met but it does bring it closer. For non-major appeals, 14 appeal decisions were made with 7 allowed but across the year it was 27 out of 40 which represents 67.5% dismissed, close to target. Of those 7 allowed, 2 were decisions of the Planning Committee – 8 Wood Close, Salfords and 60-64 Shelveys Way, Tadworth.

Planning Enforcement

11. There were 103 reported enforcement breaches in the quarter, which is higher than Q3 reflecting the reduced construction activity over winter and the Christmas and New Year period. This remains high compared to historically and appears to be a new normal, reflecting the ease of reporting and higher awareness seen post Covid. Overall, the number of cases on hand and over six months old has remained steady.

Registration

12. Table 2 shows performance in the time taken from receipt to registration of new applications which was 7.4 in January, reflecting the submissions made over Christmas and New Year period and 5.5 and 6.6 days in February and March. Whilst higher than last year, due to staff absences in the team, it still represents relatively quick processing compared to historically and nationally.

Summary

13. The number of planning applications on hand at the end of the period is low by historical standards which has, in part, been due to the additional resource secured by the Government's backlog funding which is helping to reduce the overall number of cases on hand. Although some of these cases were lying dormant (i.e. not being actively pursued through amendments or provision of information), the clearing them off the system helps get the house in order and reduces the risks associated with refunds under the 'Planning Guarantee'. However, mandatory biodiversity net gain introduced last year, continues to slow the determination of many applications, as applicants grapple with its requirements.
14. It remains to be seen what impact the higher fees introduced in April will have on submissions across the coming year, but it is likely to be low given it represents a small part of a build cost. There is also the potential for local fee setting to be introduced following the Planning and Infrastructure Bill published in March. The Bill also laid the foundations for changes to Committee thresholds and sizes, national development policies and spatial development strategies. Together with the changes associated Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution, there is likely to be significant change to Planning in the coming year(s) which the Officers are prepared for, and which will continue to be reported to Committee as and when appropriate.