

INFORMATION ITEM FOR COUNCILLORS, NOVEMBER 2021

PLANNING PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER TWO, 2021-22

Executive Director: Place, Planning and Regeneration

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on planning performance. It is an information item setting out a range of planning performance data for the second quarter of 2021/22, it includes figures for the previous quarter for comparison.

2. IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS

- 2.1 The level of service maintained during the pandemic is indicated in the table below which shows the numbers of applications determined during 2020/21 along with the figures for 2019/20.

Quarter / Year	Q2 2019/20	Q2 2021/22	Change
Application Type	Applications Determined		
Majors	14	6	-8
Minors	37	51	+14
Others	160	134	-26
Total	221	191	-30
	Applications on Hand		
Total on hand	257	435	+178

- 2.3 The table shows that during the second quarter of 2021/22, some 30 fewer applications were determined than for the same quarter of 2019/20.
- 2.4 The high level of applications over recent months has resulted in the currently high number of cases in hand (435) which is an increase of 178 on the number on hand at the end of the same quarter of 2019/20. This is taking take some time to clear but the number is now some 40 lower than it was at the start of the second quarter of the current year. Additional resources have been secured which is to helping to deal with the backlog. Further recruitment is also being pursued within planning and other contributing services to help deal more quickly with applications on an ongoing basis.
- 2.5 The high numbers of applications combined with resourcing issues in planning and other contributing services has resulted in some applications taking longer to process than usual as can be seen in the performance figures in the next section of this report. This is the experience of most planning authorities at present and a warning about timescales has been placed on the Council website and on the acknowledgement letters sent to applicants.

- 2.6 Despite the current pressures, officers endeavour to provide a high quality of service and this was recently acknowledged by an applicant who took the trouble to write to the Council in the following terms:

Email to customer services from applicant for proposed conversion of Methodist Church, Winkfield Row

Hi,

I would just like to pay compliment to the planning department and in particular the case officer Olivia Jones.

We recently had an application and there were some issues with the original design. Olivia worked with us and requested changes and reports as needed so that she could be in a position to approve the application.

In the end we did not get the scheme we originally wanted but a compromised version which the client was happy with in the end. It was down to Olivia looking for solutions and working with us rather than simply refusing the application. The result was a scheme which was praised by last nights' committee.

I also watch a lot of planning committees and I thought her presentation of the committee was first class. She was polite and courteous throughout and an absolute pleasure to deal with. I deal with several Councils in my role as an agent and I assure you that such high-quality service is sadly very rare these days.

Thanks very much.

3. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Table 1 below shows the planning performance figures for the previous two quarters. The targets for 2021/22 are unchanged from the previous year and are to deal with 90% of Minors and Others and 85% of Majors within the relevant statutory 8 or 13-week period, or within an agreed extension of time.

Table 1 Planning Applications Determined

	% determined including with extension of time	Target	No. determined with extension of time	Total no. determined
Q2 2021/22				
Majors	84%	85%	3	6
Minors	89%	90%	43	51
Others	77%	90%	76	134

Total			122	191
Q1 2021/22				
Majors	86%	85%	5	7
Minors	76%	90%	21	38
Others	94%	90%	95	154
Total			121	199

- 3.2 Table 2 below shows how many applications were on hand at the beginning and end of each of the last two quarters.

Table 2 Applications on Hand

Quarter	On hand at beginning of period	On hand at end of period	Change
Q2 2021/22	475	435 est.	-40
Q1 2021/22	435	475	+40

- 3.3 The data show that performance on major applications has declined very slightly in the second quarter from the previous one, and at 84% is just 1% below the 85% target. Performance on minor applications has significantly improved from 76% for the previous quarter to 89% for the first quarter of the year which is just 1% below the 90% target. Performance on other applications has reduced significantly from 94% in the previous quarter down to 77% for the second quarter – some 13% below the 90% target. This is largely due to the very high workloads being experienced.
- 3.4 The number of cases on hand has decreased by 40 following 6 consecutive quarters when it had increased. It still remains at a historically high level at around 435 cases on hand given that in pre-covid times it was normally well below 300.

4. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

- 4.1 Table 3 shows the number of enforcement cases opened, closed and on hand in the latest quarter along with the same figures for the previous quarter.

Table 3 Enforcement Caseload

Quarter	Opened in Period	Closed in Period	On hand at end of period
Q2 2021/22	54	75	97
Q1 2021/22	62	56	118

- 4.2 The table above shows that 21 more cases were closed than opened during the quarter. The target for 2021/22 remains to keep the number of cases on hand below 100 and this quarter's figures show that, following a period when it has been well above 100, it is again being achieved. 8 fewer cases were opened in the latest

Quarter than in the previous and the number of cases closed increased by 19 over the previous period.

- 4.3 Table 4 shows the numbers of current enforcement cases that are over 6, 12 and 18 months old.

Table 4 Older Enforcement Cases

	Q2 2021/22	Q1 2021/22	Change	Change %
Current cases over 6 months old	56	47	+9	+19%
Current cases over 12 months old	32	31	+1	+3%
Current cases over 18 months old	24	23	+1	+4%

- 4.4 Table 4 above shows that, over the previous quarter there has been a notable increase in the number of cases over 6 months old. For the numbers of cases over 12 and 18 months old there have only been slight increases of one case which represents 3% and 4% increases respectively. Now that the coverall caseload has reduced to below 100 cases on hand it is hoped that further progress can be made on the more complex older cases.
- 4.5 The cases are regularly monitored and action is prioritised in accordance with the updated Local Enforcement Plan. Despite the increase in workload there have been some notable successes during the quarter. A particularly notable example has been the removal of the concrete batching plant at Buckhurst Moors following the successful outcome of an enforcement appeal which was reported in the previous report.

ENFORCEMENT CASE STUDIES

- 4.6 The photographs below illustrate one of the enforcement cases successfully resolved during the quarter with before and after pictures.

Case 1: compliance with the enforcement notice at Buckhurst Moors concrete following successful outcome of enforcement appeal

Before:



After:



Case 2: Clearance of unauthorised material at Palm Hills, London Road, Bracknell

Before:

After:



5. PLANNING APPEALS

5.1 The table below summarises the numbers of appeals determined during the quarter, the numbers allowed and dismissed and the percentage dismissed with the same figures for the previous quarter and for the full year for comparison.

Table 5 Planning Appeal Decisions

	Decisions	Allowed	Dismissed	% Dismissed	Target
Q2 2021/22	8	2	6	75%	66%
Q1 2021/22	8	3	5	62.5%	66%

5.2 Planning appeals performance has improved since the previous quarter and exceeded the target of 66% with 75% of appeals dismissed.

5.3 The dismissed appeals included land adjacent to Silver Trees, Birch Lane, Ascot. This was an application for the erection of a two-storey dwelling. In dismissing the appeal, the Inspector concluded that it would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. Costs awards claims were made by both parties to the appeal but neither was upheld by the Inspector.

5.4 Another dismissed appeal was for a proposed extension and basement at The White House, Crouch Lane, Winkfield which is located in the Green Belt. Here the Inspector found that the extent of the proposed extensions meant that it comprised inappropriate development in the Green Belt. They also concluded that an extant permission for alternative extensions did not provide very special circumstances to justify approval of the proposed extension which had a greater overall volume.

6. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) AND S106 PAYMENTS

6.1 Table 6 below shows the total value of the CIL liability notices issued (normally issued with, or just after, a planning permission). It also shows the value of CIL demand notices issued (normally issued just prior to commencement of a development). The final column shows the amount of CIL actually received by the Council. The CIL received is the gross amount before the Parish and Town Council proportions and the administrative allowance are deducted.

Table 6 Community Infrastructure Levy

	CIL Liabilities Issued		CIL Demand Notices Issued		CIL Received
	No.	Net Amount	No.	Net Amount	Gross Amount
Q2 2021/22	6	£642,121	7	£233,583	£448,249
Q1 2021/22	6	£1,226,423	4	£1,337,985	£1,015,121

6.2 Table 6 shows that there has been a decrease in CIL income from the previous quarter, but that the Council still secured over £448K. Similarly, over £642K was achieved during the quarter for CIL Liabilities issued but this is a significant drop from the over £1.2 million achieved in the previous quarter. Of concern for the future pipeline of CIL income, it is notable that CIL Demand Notices issued amounted to just over £233K in the second quarter which is a large drop from the over £1.3 million achieved in the preceding quarter. While the second quarter does include the main holiday period, this is a concern and probably reflects to some extent sentiment within the construction industry where shortages of skilled workers and materials are causing problems.

Table 7 Amounts Secured and Received via S106 Agreements

S106 2020/21	Amount secured in s106 Agreements	Amount received from s106 Agreements
Q2 2021/22	£724,275	£1,508,999
Q1 2021/22	£1,665,662.94	£2,702,543.00

6.3 Table 7 shows that, similarly to CIL income, amounts secured and received from S106 contributions are both significantly lower than the previous quarter.

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 **It is recommended that Members note the information contained in this report.**

Contact for further information

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