



Report to Planning Committee 7 August 2025

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Report Summary	
<b>Report Title</b>	Development Management Performance Report
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	This report relates to the performance of the Planning Development Business Unit over the three-month period April to June 2025 (Quarter 1), alongside a summary for the period April 2024 to March 2025.
<b>Recommendations</b>	For noting.

## 1.0 Background

1.1 The Planning Department undertakes a range of activities including the processing of planning applications and associated appeals, planning enforcement, conservation and listed building advice, tree applications, pre-application advice as well as other service areas including land charges, street naming and numbering and management of the building control service for the Council. This report relates to the planning related functions of the service area.

1.2 Regarding performance for planning enforcement area in line with our Planning Enforcement Plan (PEP), this is reported in a separately.

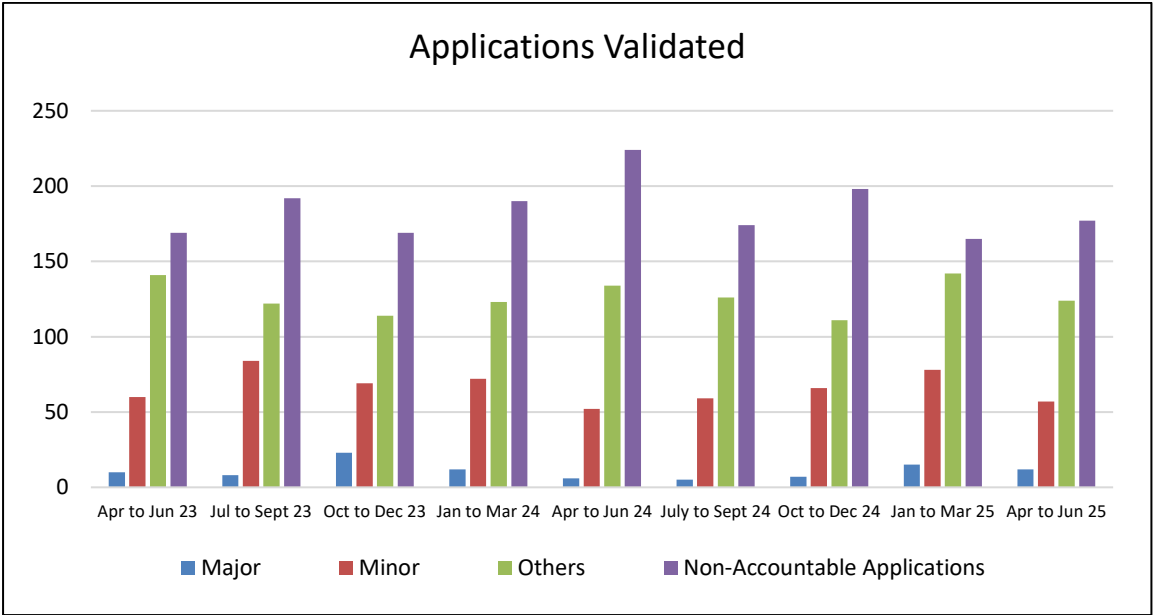
## 2.0 Performance

2.1 The table and graph below show the number of applications that have been received as valid each quarter from April 2024 to Jun 2025. They are presented in line with the Council's reporting to Government.

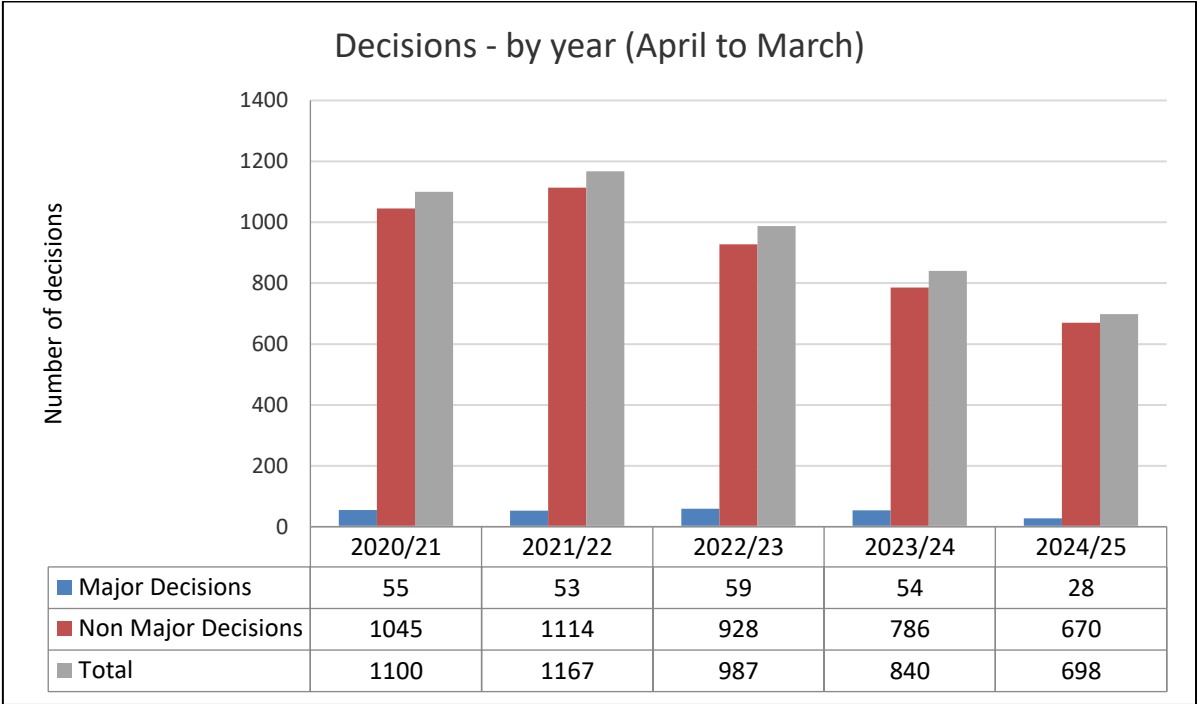
Category	Apr to Jun 23	Jul to Sept 23	Oct to Dec 23	Jan to Mar 24	Apr to Jun 24	July to Sept 24	Oct to Dec 24	Jan to Mar 25	Apr to Jun 25
Major	10	8	23	12	6	5	7	15	12
Minor	60	84	69	72	52	59	66	78	57
Others	141	192	114	173	134	174	111	142	124
All other*	342	369	352	399	402	390	407	369	350
<b>Total</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>531</b>

*\*Includes: Non – accountable applications, applications/S211 notices regarding protected trees and trees in a conservation area and Pre-application advice*

2.2 In the quarter April to June 2025, a total of 531 applications were validated. When comparing season trends, this quarter represents slightly less than the same period in 2023, however, compared to 2024, figures represent an 11% decrease. It is important to note, Major category applications validated continue to be in double figures, representing a 66% increase compared to 2024.



2.3 Potential factors for the reduction in majors could relate to the impact of Biodiversity Net Gain requirements. There has also been a change in government and a raft of policy announcements. However, there are signs of major development picking up again. Combining potential planning reform next year and likely fee increases, there is reason to be optimistic about planning income over the next 6-12 months.



2.4 Assessing local planning authorities’ performance was introduced in the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013. Planning performance is considered annually based on a defined previous 24-month assessment period that separately measures the speed and quality of

decision-making. Speed of decision-making is measured by the proportion of applications that are decided within the statutory determination period (8 weeks for non-major applications or 13 weeks for major applications), or an agreed extended period of time. The authority needs to achieve 60% for majors and 70% for non-majors. Quality of decision-making is measured by the proportion of total decisions, or non-determinations, that are allowed at appeal. Quality is set at 10%, this being the threshold for appeal overturns. Government is considering reducing this to 5%.

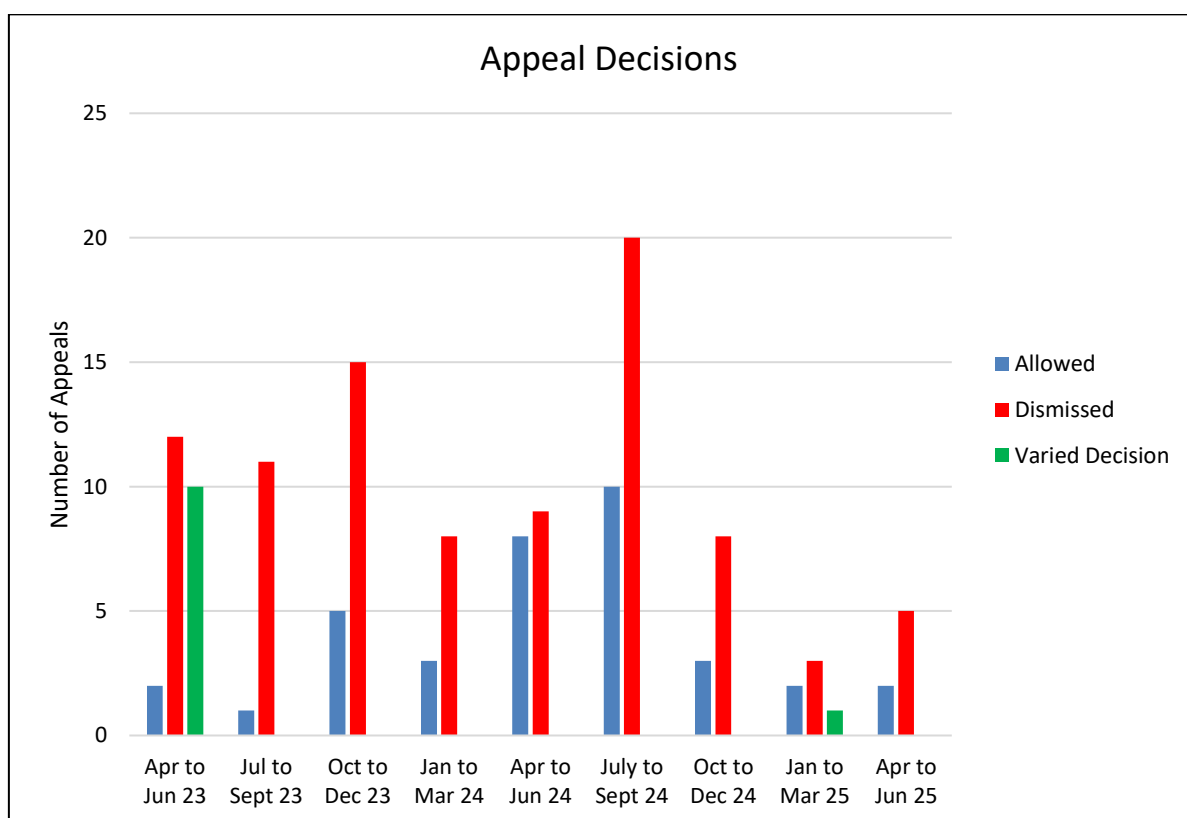
- 2.5 For authorities who under-perform against their national target, they will be classed as ‘poorly performing’ and applications for major development may be made by developers directly to the Planning Inspectorate. The Council would not receive the fees for these but would be expected to deal with all the associated administration.

Year	Q1 Apr to Jun	Q2 Jul to Sept	Q3 Oct to Dec	Q4 Jan to Mar
Majors – target 60% in 13 weeks				
2025/26	87%			
2024/25	100%	86%	91%	33%
2023/24	100%	93%	85%	92%
Minors – target 65% in 8 weeks				
2025/26	92%			
2024/25	95%	87%	95%	89%
2023/24	94%	89%	92%	97%
Others – target 80% in 8 weeks				
2025/26	95%			
2024/25	95%	97%	91%	96%
2023/24	94%	96%	86%	92%

- 2.6 Performance at NSDC remains strong overall, with recognition of the decline observed in the ‘Majors’ category during Q4 2024/25. Results for the most recent quarter are consistent with prior periods, as ‘Majors’ continue to exceed the national threshold. Additionally, both ‘Minors’ and ‘Others’ categories have outperformed the national target. It is important to interpret this performance within the context of recent staffing changes.
- 2.7 There is a right of appeal against most local authority decisions on planning permission and other planning decisions, such as advertisement consent, listed building consent, prior approval of permitted development rights, and enforcement notices. The table and graph below highlight the number of appeals and whether they were allowed or dismissed. In general, appeals are determined on the same basis as the original application. The decision will be made considering national and local policies, and the broader circumstances in place at the time of the decision.

Appeal Decision	Apr to Jun 2024	July to Sept 2024	Oct to Dec 2024	Jan to Mar 2025	Apr to Jun 2025
Allowed	8	10	3	2	2
Dismissed	9	20	8	4	5
Total determined	17	30	11	6	7
LPA success rate	53%	67%	73%	67%	71%

- 2.8 The appeal will be determined as if the application for permission had been made to the Secretary of State in the first instance. This means that the Inspector (or the Secretary of State) will come to their own view on the merits of the application. The Inspector will consider the weight to be given to the relevant planning considerations and come to a decision to allow or refuse the appeal. As Inspectors are making the decision as if for the first time, they may refuse the permission on different grounds to the local planning authority. Where an appeal is made against the grant of permission with conditions, the Inspector will make a decision in regard to both the granting of the permission and the imposition of conditions.



- 2.9 As discussed in the previous performance report, performance continues to fluctuate on a quarter-by-quarter basis. Performance for the period April to June 2025 represents a 4% increase compared to the previous quarter. Furthermore, compared to the corresponding quarter during April to June 2024, performance represents an overall increase of 18%.

- 2.10 Trees in a conservation area that are not protected by an Order are protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These provisions require people to notify the local planning authority, using a 'section 211 notice', 6 weeks before carrying out certain work on such trees, unless an exception applies. The work may go ahead before the end of the 6-week period if the local planning authority gives consent. This notice period gives the authority an opportunity to consider whether to make an Order on the tree. Below is the Council's performance on s211 Notices (TWCA) over the last 12 months.

<b>TWCA Total Notifications</b>	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25
Total Notifications	23	36	32	44	53	37	37	38	32	38	21	27	29
Determined within 6 Weeks	22	30	31	42	53	36	37	38	32	38	21	27	29

- 2.11 When determining applications for consent under a Tree Preservation Order, the authority may: grant consent unconditionally; grant consent subject to such conditions as it thinks fit; refuse consent. The authority must decide the application before it, so it should not issue a decision which substantively alters the work applied for. The authority could, however, grant consent for less work than that applied for. The authority should make absolutely clear in its decision notice what is being authorised. This is particularly important where the authority grants consent for some of the operations in an application and refuses consent for others. The Council's performance on TPO applications is set out below.

<b>TPO Total Applications</b>	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25
Total Applications	3	6	10	7	9	5	11	5	5	8	7	3	3
Determined within 8 Weeks (or EOT)	3	4	6	4	8	5	10	5	5	8	7	3	3

- 2.12 This quarter's results for both TWCA notifications and TPO applications remain strong, matching last quarter's performance. This reflects the dedication and hard work of the tech support officers and specialist arboricultural assistance from AWA Tree Consultants who continue to support the team during the absence of the councils Trees and Landscape Officer.

#### **April 2024 to March 2025 summary of performance**

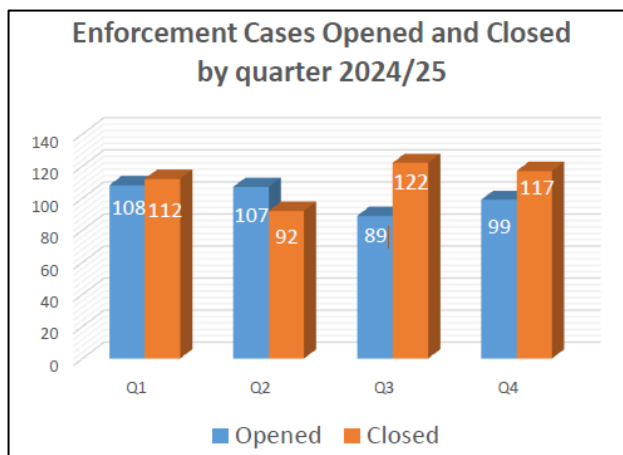
- 2.13 Overall, for the year April 2024 to March 2025, the business unit has far exceeded national government targets regarding speed of decision in all three categories.

Major <i>28 decisions made</i>		Minor <i>215 decisions made</i>		Others <i>455 decisions made</i>	
Target	Performance	Target	Performance	Target	Performance
60%	78.5%	65%	91.5%	80%	93.5%

- 2.14 It is important to highlight that the business unit has experienced significant personnel changes and has operated with several vacancies over the past year. Decisions, particularly within the 'Major' category, often fluctuate due to factors such as scheme complexity, ongoing negotiations, Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, and the necessity for Section 106 planning obligations. Despite these challenges, I would like to commend the team for their continued commitment and dedication, which have ensured we maintain a high level of performance. Furthermore, a total amount of 698 applications were decided across the three categories.
- 2.15 Turning to numbers of applications validated, including non-accountable applications (e.g. discharge of conditions, Non-Material Amendments, tree works and pre-application advice), the team validated 2369 applications across the 12-month period. This figure represents a 3% increase compared to the previous year.
- 2.16 Overall, for the year, The Planning Inspectorate issued 64 appeal decisions (planning related applications and enforcement notices), of these, 64% were dismissed, providing an indication of the quality of decisions being made at both officer (delegated) and committee level.
- 2.17 Other notable areas of work include ongoing measuring of our address data across the district against the 2024/25 Address Improvement Schedule – The local authority (street naming and address management team) recently awarded Platinum status in this year's Exemplar Awards (supply of address data throughout 2024/25). The Platinum Award for Address and Street Data is awarded to authorities that have maintained 'Gold' status across all criteria of the Annual Improvement Schedule for 10 out of 12 months up to the end of March 2025. This prestigious recognition highlights our dedication to maintaining the highest standards of data quality throughout the year - a truly outstanding accomplishment and a testament to the consistent excellence of the team.
- 2.18 The business unit held its first 'Agents Forum' in September 2024, with 26 planning agents from the region participating, along with members of the Business Unit. The event covered updates on recent developments, proposed national reforms, current and future service provision, and challenges including BNG. Feedback was positive, and the next forum is planned for September 2025.
- 2.19 From the start of the 2024-2025 financial year, HM Land Registry have been, for local authorities who have migrated their local land charges register, issuing them with their Local Land Charges performance metrics over the past quarter. These reports cover everything from number of late charges added, to the number of searches conducted on our dataset. Furthermore, it breaks them down into sub-percentages, before giving the LA an overall score and a colour grading, i.e. gold, silver, bronze, special measures (red). The lower the percentage, the better the score. Unfortunately, due to timings of reporting, we can only report on the previous quarter. I am pleased to confirm we continue to maintain gold grading.
- 2.20 In addition to their development management and planning policy work, the Ecology Team have also undertaken outreach work. This has included presentations to the Guardians of Sherwood Farmers Group in January 2025 and to the South East

Nottinghamshire Farmers Group in February 2025 on the topic of Biodiversity Net Gain. This work resulted from the Ecology Team building up a good relationship with the Nottinghamshire Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) representative for the county.

- 2.21 In February 2025, an Ecologists Forum was run at Castle House. This was attended by over 37 professional ecologists representing over 26 ecological consultancies that undertake work in the Newark and Sherwood District. They were joined by 9 Nottinghamshire local planning authority ecologists and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust ecologists, The forum proved to be a great success with encouraging and positive feedback from attendees. A key objective of the event was to develop good professional working relationships with ecologists working in the district to encourage good practices and provide appropriate support.
- 2.22 The planning enforcement team has continued to investigate a considerable number of alleged breaches of planning control. This has included numerous highly complex and controversial sites which have required officers to display their professionalism, knowledge and skill sets to resolve matters that have a very real impact on residents' lives.
- 2.23 Overall, the team received over 400 new cases/ investigations (in addition to those ongoing investigations that were submitted in previous years owing to the lengthy process involved in investigating breaches of planning control). Despite this, and due to an increased resource, officers have managed to close over 430 cases, many of which have involved formal notices being issued, court action and appeals (graph below).



### **3.0 Next steps**

- 3.1 The last 12 months have been extremely challenging. Of the 16 planning posts comprising planners, senior planners and planner conservation specialists, we have seen 13 posts replaced. Whilst four of these have comprised internal promotions, the rest have required external recruitment. We have used several planner consultants to supplement the periods with staffing shortages. The tree officer's prolonged absence has had a significant impact on the workload of tech support colleagues and also required external support.

- 3.2 The performance outlined above shows that we are moving in the right direction, but as ever, always things to improve. Government planning reforms suggest that performance will be looked at again. In our recent response to government, we have outlined that speed of decision should not be a marker of quality, but it remains a performance area that we will need to work to. Elements such as effective pre-application advice and better communication are areas we will be working on.
- 3.3 We have also invited the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to come in as a critical friend to the planning team and advise on areas we could improve (currently penned in for September/October period). Salary bench-marking will be a potential area to review to ensure we support staff retention.

#### **4.0 Implications**

- 4.1 In writing this report and in putting forward recommendation's officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

#### **5.0 Conclusions**

- 5.1 Performance has continued to be met and exceeded, despite challenges within and without the organisation.