



Report to Planning Committee 13 November 2025

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Report Summary	
Report Title	Development Management Performance Report
Purpose of Report	This report relates to the performance of the Planning Development Business Unit over the three-month period July to Sept 2025 (Quarter 2).
Recommendations	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. Please refer to ‘Quarterly planning enforcement activity update report’.

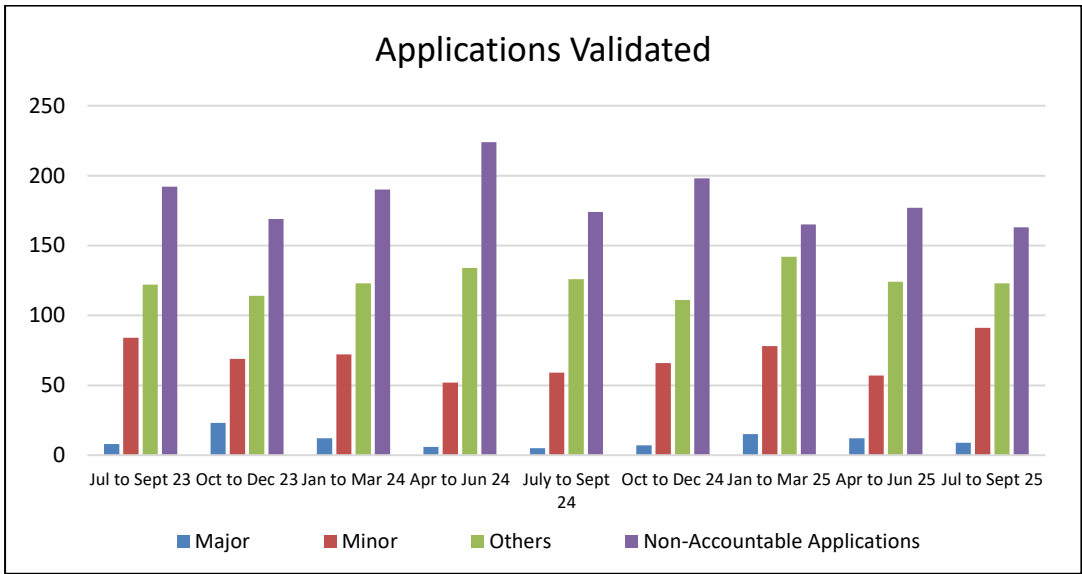
2.0 Performance

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

Category	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	July to Sept 25
Major	8	23	12	6	5	7	15	12	9
Minor	84	69	72	52	59	66	78	57	91
Others	192	114	173	134	174	111	142	124	123
All other*	369	352	399	402	390	407	369	350	380
Total	583	558	606	594	580	591	604	543	603

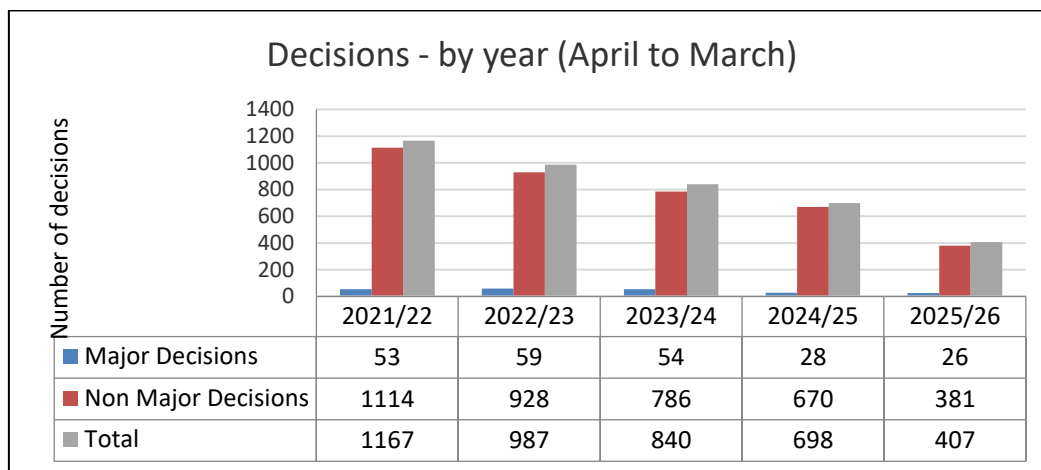
**Includes: Non – accountable applications, applications/S211 notices regarding protected trees and trees in a conservation area and Pre-application advice*

2.2 In the quarter July to Sept 2025, a total of 603 applications were validated. When comparing season trends, this quarter represents higher numbers than those reported against the same period in 2023 and 2024. Considering numbers validated in 2024, this quarter represents 4% increase. Applications within the ‘Minor’ category has seen the largest increase, with the figure being the largest number for at least 2 years. The remaining categories are considered consistent with the previous quarter, and although applications within the ‘Major’ category seeing a slight decrease, it is important to note, this is reflective of the national picture for planning application numbers. For awareness, nationally, between April to June 2025, district level planning authorities in England received 80,400 applications for planning permission, down 5% from the same quarter a year earlier (reference: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planning-applications-in-england-april-to-june-2025/planning-applications-in-england-april-to-june-2025-statistical-release>)



2.3 Potential factors for the reduction in majors could relate to patience in the building sector in readiness for government planning reforms and a raft of policy announcements. Biodiversity Net Gain has been a factor, albeit more typically in smaller sites. However, there are signs of major development picking up again and the business unit continues to remain optimistic about planning income.

2.4 Decisions for the year to date (April 2025 to September 2025), suggest, if recent (local) trends continue, will exceed those reported for the previous year. However, it is important to note, nationally, in Q1 2025, decided applications for planning permission, was reported to be down 1% from the same quarter a year earlier (reference: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planning-applications-in-england-april-to-june-2025/planning-applications-in-england-april-to-june-2025-statistical-release>)



- 2.5 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%.
- 2.6 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%	100%		
2024/25	100%	86%	91%	33%
2023/24	100%	93%	85%	92%
Minors – target 65% in 8 weeks				
2025/26	92%	91%		
2024/25	95%	87%	95%	89%
2023/24	94%	89%	92%	97%
Others – target 80% in 8 weeks				
2025/26	95%	84%		
2024/25	95%	97%	91%	96%
2023/24	94%	96%	86%	92%

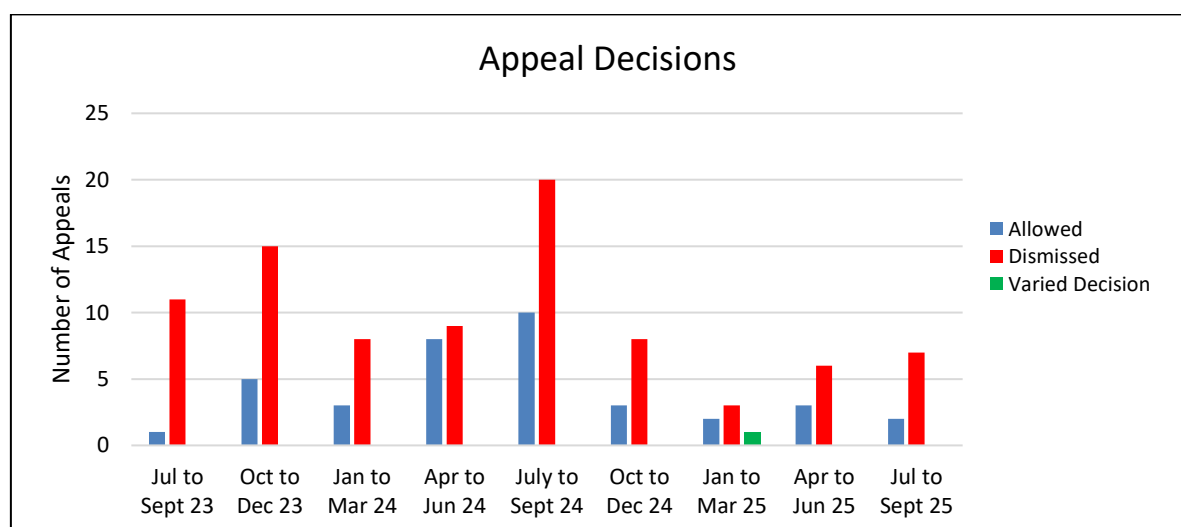
- 2.7 Performance at NSDC remains strong overall, with recognition of the decline observed in the 'Majors' category during Q4 2024/25. Results for the most recent quarter are exceptional, deciding 11 of 11 applications within the 13-week target date or agreed extension of time. As previously reported, performance can fluctuate according to the complexity of a scheme (note recent trends), negotiation undertaken, BNG as well as need for s106 planning obligation. Additionally, both 'Minors' and 'Others' categories have outperformed the national target, acknowledging a slight increase in 'Others'. The senior team continues to monitor this area of work with additional training and awareness undertaken.

Appeals

Appeal Decision	July to Sept 2024	Oct to Dec 2024	Jan to Mar 2025	Apr to Jun 2025	July to Sept 2025
Allowed	10	3	2	3	2
Dismissed	20	8	4	6	7
Total determined	30	11	6	9	9
LPA success rate	67%	73%	67%	67%	78%

Note: Figures do not include quashed decisions. A quashed planning appeal refers to a decision made by the planning authority to court that nullifies a previous decision on a planning application.

- 2.8 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.



- 2.9 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. Appeals are regularly reported to the Committee.
- 2.10 Overall, our appeal performance is good. The trend over the last 12 months is that we are seeing fewer appeals. However, given the 5 year housing land supply shortfall, we are anticipating an increase in challenges to refusals for greenfield sites at the edges of settlements. We have already seen a couple of examples of this

Trees

- 2.11 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.

TWCA Total Notifications	Jul 24	Aug 24	Sep 24	Oct 24	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sept 25
Total Notifications	36	32	44	53	37	37	38	32	38	21	27	29	40	30	39
Determined within 6 Weeks	30	31	42	53	36	37	38	32	38	21	27	29	38	30	39

- 2.12 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.

TPO Total Applications	Jul 24	Aug 24	Sep 24	Oct 24	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 25	Feb 25	Mar 25	Apr 25	May 25	Jun 25	Jul 25	Aug 25	Sept 25
Total Applications	6	10	7	9	5	11	5	5	8	7	3	3	13	5	10
Determined within 8 Weeks (or EOT)	4	6	4	8	5	10	5	5	8	7	3	3	13	4	10

- 2.13 This quarter's results for both TWCA notifications and TPO applications remain strong, with only a single S211 notification and TPO application exceeding the target dates. The case officer confirms a slight delay due to negotiations regarding works. 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 vacancy of the councils Trees and Landscape Officer.

3.0 Next steps

- 3.1 As previously reported, the past year have been extremely challenging and to support the team, we continue to utilise a planner consultant to assist with planning related application workloads, alongside ongoing commission of major projects officer, providing advice in support of several Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs - large scale projects). The business unit has also recently commissioned external support from a conservation and heritage professional to assist our conservation team with the demand for planning related consultee responses.
- 3.2 I can report, the councils tree officer has now left the Local Authority. The Business Manager and Planning Technical Support Manager are currently finalising an options report regarding the vacancy. However, the previous absence, which now exceeds one year, has had a significant impact on the workload of technical support colleagues and continues to necessitate external assistance.
- 3.3 Performance data indicates positive progress; however, there remains scope for further improvement. Government planning reforms suggest renewed focus on performance metrics and locally set fees. In our recent communication to government, we emphasised that the speed of decision-making should not be considered the sole indicator of quality, although it remains a key area for development. We will continue to prioritise effective pre-application advice and enhanced communication moving forward.
- 3.4 Furthermore, we have invited the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to provide an independent review and offer recommendations for improvement, with their visit scheduled for 26 November 2025. Salary benchmarking 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.

4.2 Legal Implications – LEG2526/9293

- 4.3 This report is for noting only.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The team has consistently met and surpassed performance expectations, and their ongoing support and dedication are commendable.