

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Planning Committee

Date **13 September 2023**

Report of: **Director of Planning and Regeneration**

Subject: **PLANNING PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

SUMMARY

The Government measures the planning performance of all planning authorities in England in terms of the speed of decision making and the quality of decision making. The following report provides an update for Members in respect of planning performance at Fareham.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the contents of this report.

INTRODUCTION

1. All local planning authorities in England are required to submit information relating to their Development Management function to the Government on a quarterly basis. The type of information local planning authorities are required to submit includes the following (this is not an exhaustive list):
 - Number of planning and related applications on hand at the beginning of each quarter, received, withdrawn, called in or turned away during the quarter;
 - The number of decisions and delegated decisions;
 - Number of consents Councils grant to themselves for development either they will undertake or will be implemented by others
 - Number of decisions on applications for prior approval
 - Development types
 - Whether permission/consent was granted or refused; and
 - The time taken from application submission to decision.
2. All of the information received from local planning authorities is collated into tables and published on the Government's website.

MEASURING PLANNING PERFORMANCE

3. The Government separately measures the planning performance of each local planning authority in England. The Government measures the performance in four main areas:
 - The speed of decision making for major planning applications
 - The speed of decision making for non-major planning applications
 - The Quality of decision making for major planning applications
 - The Quality of decision making for non-major planning applications
4. The following section of the report looks firstly at the speed of decision making at Fareham Borough Council followed by the quality of decision making.

Speed of decision making

5. The Government specifies the period of time within which decisions should be made on planning and related applications. If the Council and an applicant agree, the period of time for deciding a planning application can be extended beyond the period specified by the Government.
6. For major applications, the time specified by the Government within which decisions should be made is 13 weeks from the date of receipt of a valid application. (Major applications include those which propose 10 or more dwellings; where a site is 0.5 hectares or more and it is not known how many houses are proposed; the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created is 1,000 square metres or

more; or a development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more).

7. For non-major applications, the time specified by the Government within which decisions should be made is 8 weeks from the date of receipt of a valid application.
8. The Government's assessment of speed of decision making is undertaken over a two-year period from the beginning of October to the end of September. The last assessment completed by the Government looked at 1st October 2020 to 30th September 2022.
9. The Government sets out the criteria as to how it assesses the performance of local planning authorities in terms of speed of decision making. The Government's current criteria is that:
 - at least 60% of major applications must be decided either within the time period specified by the Government or within an extended period agreed between the Council and the applicant;
 - At least 70% of non-major applications must be decided either within the time period specified by the Government or within an extended period agreed between the Council and the applicant;
10. For the period of 1st October 2020 – 30th September 2022, Fareham Borough Council was assessed as follows:
 - **Major applications:** 91.7% decided either within the time period specified by the Government or within an extended period agreed between the Council and the applicant.
 - **Non-major applications:** 97.3% decided either within the time period specified by the Government or within an extended period agreed between the Council and the applicant.
11. For both major and non-major applications, the Council's speed of decision making substantially exceeded the Government's minimum requirements. When the assessment is completed for 1st October 2021 – 30th September 2023, Officers are expecting to see very similar results.

Quality of decision making

12. The Government measures the quality of decision making by looking at the percentage of the total number of decisions made by the authority on applications that are subsequently overturned at appeal. Major and non-major applications are assessed separately.
13. The Government's assessment of quality of decision making is undertaken over a two-year period from the beginning of April to the end of March.
14. The Government sets out the criteria as to how it assesses the performance of local planning authorities in terms of quality of decision making. The Government's current criteria is that:
 - No more than 10% of an authority's total number of decisions on major applications

made during the assessment period should be overturned at appeal;

- No more than 10% of an authority's total number of decisions on non-major applications made during the assessment period should be overturned at appeal;
15. The current assessment period for quality of decision making is 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2023. Following the end of the assessment period the Government allows a further 9 months for any planning appeals in the system to be decided before completing the assessment.
16. The 9 month 'lag' period runs up to 31st December 2023. Based upon the data available, along with that published by the Government, Officers are able to forecast the results to some extent.

- **Major applications:** Within the assessment period, 48 major planning applications were decided by the Council. Of these 48 applications, 2 have been subject to appeals which have been allowed. At the time of writing this report, 4.2% of this Council's total number of decisions on major applications made during the assessment period have been overturned at appeal.

There are three other major planning applications decided during the assessment period which are the subject of appeals to the Planning Inspectorate. It is unclear at present whether any of these appeals will be decided by 31st December 2023. The appeals are:

P/21/1317/FP – Land adjacent the diving lake at Oslands Lane Sarisbury

P/22/0337/OA– Land at Daedalus (live/work units)

P/22/0363/OA – Residential development at Pinks Hill Wallington

- **Non-major applications:** In the assessment period from 1st April 2020 – 31st March 2022 this Council made just under 1,900 non-major decisions, of which 33 were appealed with 8 appeals being allowed. This resulted in 0.3% of this Council's total number of decisions on non-major applications made during the assessment period being overturned at appeal.

For the current assessment period of 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2023 a very similar number of appeals have been allowed in respect of non-major applications. Whilst there has been a slight reduction nationally in the number of planning applications received over the assessment period, Officers do not anticipate any material change in the total number of decisions on non-major applications made during the assessment period being overturned at appeal.

RISK ASSESSMENT

17. If the Council does not achieve the Government's minimum thresholds in respect of speed of decision making or exceeds the Government's maximum thresholds for quality of decision making, the Government could consider formally designating the Council as 'underperforming'.
18. If the Council were designated as underperforming, applicants would have the choice of submitting applications directly to the Planning Inspectorate rather than to the

Council for the type of applications for which the Council had been designated (major or non-major).

CONCLUSION

19. This Council has strong measures in place to ensure that applications are determined within the Government's specified time periods or within periods agreed with applicants.
20. The Council seeks amendments to many planning applications which are not acceptable at first submission. This approach ensures that the Council deals with applications once where possible and reduces the number of planning appeals which are submitted.
21. As a result of the Council's approach to deciding planning applications, the number of planning appeals the Council receives each year as a percentage of the total number of non-major applications it decides is very small (less than 3%).
22. The total number of major planning applications the Council decides each year typically varies between 20 and 25 in number. Because the total number of major applications is modest, a relatively small number of appeals being allowed could result in the Government's 10% threshold being exceeded. This aspect of planning performance in particular will continue to be closely monitored.
23. Officers will continue to provide regular updates to Members of the Planning Committee on the Council's planning performance against the thresholds set out by the Government.

Enquiries:

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