

Planning Application Performance (Quarterly)

MINOR & OTHER APPLICATIONS	Oct - Dec 15	Jan - Mar 16	Apr - Jun 16	Jul - Sept 16	Oct - Dec 16	Jan - Mar 17	Apr - June 17	Jul - Sept 17	Oct-Dec 17	Jan- Mar 18
	82%	76%	76%	56%	42%	31%	20%	20%	32%	78%
MAJOR APPLICATIONS	Oct - Dec 15	Jan - Mar 16	Apr - Jun 16	Jul - Sept 16	Oct - Dec 16	Jan - Mar 17	Apr - June 17	Jul - Sept 17	Oct-Dec 17	Jan- Mar 18
	85%	84%	89%	93%	45%	45%	50%	46%	86%	83%

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government monitor local planning authorities performance in determining planning applications. The criteria are that 60% of major applications and 70% of minor and other applications need to be determined within designated timescales.

Southampton City Council has over the last few years consistently achieved high performance figures well in excess of these targets, and in summer 2016 we hosted a visit from Cabinet Office which concluded that, at that time, our model for planning performance was exemplary.

However, our performance on minor and other applications dipped significantly in the summer of 2016, when we lost a significant number of staff (6 FTE's). At the time there was a recruitment freeze, there were difficulties in attracting the right calibre of agency staff to cover these posts temporarily and there were issues with the implementation of the Digital Transformation programme in the planning service area. As a result it became difficult to maintain performance of minor and other applications since that time.

Our performance has improved enormously – from just under 20% in the April - June 2017 quarter to 77.73% in the most recent quarter from January – March 2018. This improvement to well above the target has led to the Secretary of State confirming that he will not be designating the Council for poor performance on minor and other planning applications. The latest quarter's (January – March 2018) performance for major applications was 83.33%, which is well above the 60% target.

Between February and March 2018 the Planning Advisory Service has undertaken a 4 day support programme with the Planning team and this has led to the service developing a detailed Development Management Service Improvement Plan. Accompanying this is a detailed IT Improvement Plan, both of which are now being implemented.

Furthermore the recently introduced 20% planning fee increase is being re-invested to create additional posts within the Development Management team. An additional Planning Enforcement Officer post is also being recruited. These posts will provide additional resource and resilience to ensure that our performance continues to be above government targets.

Sam Fox

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