

REPORT OF:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE
TO:	
ON:	15th JUNE 2023
ORIGINATING SECTION:	PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT SERVICE)
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL
COUNCILLORS:	ALL

TITLE OF REPORT:

NATIONAL PLANNING PERFORMANCE TABLES

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present Members with an update on the recently published National Planning Performance Tables.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The last report on the National Planning Performance Tables was presented to the 15th September 2022 Committee meeting, informing the Members of the Government's intention to use the tables for designating a Local Planning Authority as underperforming and the thresholds that Authorities will be assessed against in the designation rounds which started in the first quarter of 2017/18. The thresholds were updated in December 2020, and this report is related to the current performance data reported against the updated thresholds and assessment period.

3. RATIONALE

- 3.1 The latest national planning performance statistics were published on the 30th March 2023, by the Government (up to December 2022).
- 3.2 Figures 1 and 2 show extracts from the majors and non-majors tables, and are further fantastic examples of how far Blackburn With Darwen Borough Council (BwDBC) are continuing to perform since the Planning Service introduced the Improvement Plan in the autumn of 2015. Figure 3 provides the summary position.

3.3 In the autumn of 2015, BwDBC were ranked 234th out of 336 local planning authorities relating to the determination of major planning applications within 13 weeks and agreed extensions of time (68.4%). Figure 1 below shows with the current figures published for the quarter ending December 2022, BwDBC's rank has now rose to **62nd place with a performance of 97.2%**, out of 329 local planning authorities (top 19%), a significant improvement. The target set by the Government for the 2 preceding years is 60%. Within the Departmental Business Plan 2019-23, the target is 80%.

FIGURE 1:

Table P151a: District planning authorities' performance - speed of major development decisions
England, January 2021 to December 2022 ^P

Local planning authority	ONS Code	% within 13 weeks or within agreed time without penalty for missing data	% within 13 weeks or within agreed time with penalty for missing data
Amber Valley		100.0	100.0
Barking and Dagenham		100.0	100.0
Barrow-in-Furness		100.0	100.0
Bolsover		100.0	100.0
Brentwood		100.0	100.0
Copeland		100.0	100.0
Corby ⁴		100.0	100.0
Dudley		100.0	100.0
East Cambridgeshire		100.0	100.0
East Staffordshire		100.0	100.0
Exmoor National Park		100.0	100.0
Gateshead		100.0	100.0
Gedling		100.0	100.0
Greenwich		100.0	100.0
Haringey		100.0	100.0
Hartlepool		100.0	100.0
Hastings		100.0	100.0
High Peak		100.0	100.0
Isles of Scilly		100.0	100.0
Kensington and Chelsea		100.0	100.0
Kettering		100.0	100.0
New Forest National Park		100.0	100.0
Newham		100.0	100.0
North East Lincolnshire		100.0	100.0
North Tyneside		100.0	100.0
Northampton ⁴		100.0	100.0
Redditch		100.0	100.0
Rotherham		100.0	100.0
South Tyneside		100.0	100.0
Southampton		100.0	100.0
Staffordshire Moorlands		100.0	100.0
Sunderland		100.0	100.0
Woking		100.0	100.0
North Kesteven		99.1	99.1
Ealing		99.0	99.0
Telford and Wrekin		99.0	99.0
Brent		98.8	98.8
Colchester		98.8	98.8

Sedgemoor	98.8	98.8
Plymouth	98.7	98.7
Havering	98.6	98.6
Oldham	98.6	98.6
St. Helens	98.6	98.6
Thurrock	98.6	98.6
Hillingdon	98.5	98.5
Stockport	98.5	98.5
Winchester	98.4	98.4
Swindon	98.3	98.3
Spelthorne	98.2	98.2
West Lindsey	98.2	98.2
Mid Sussex	98.1	98.1
Newcastle-under-Lyme	98.0	98.0
Redbridge	98.0	98.0
Wokingham	98.0	98.0
Lewisham	97.8	97.8
Trafford	97.8	97.8
Islington	97.6	97.6
Southend-on-Sea	97.6	97.6
Tunbridge Wells	97.5	97.5
Chesterfield	97.4	97.4
Lambeth	97.4	97.4
Blackburn with Darwen	97.2	97.2
Fylde	97.2	97.2
Allerdale	97.1	97.1
Hammersmith and Fulham	97.1	97.1
East Riding of Yorkshire	97.0	97.0
Cherwell	96.9	96.9
Bath and North East Somerset	96.7	96.7
Three Rivers	96.7	96.7
Blackpool	96.6	96.6
Sutton	96.3	96.3
Bury	96.2	96.2

- 3.4 During the same period with regards to non-majors applications (i.e. within 8 weeks and agreed extensions of time), BwDBC were ranked 332 out of 336 local planning authorities (39%). Figure 2 below shows with the current figures published for the quarter ending December 2022, BwDBC's rank has now rose to **39th place with a performance of 96.3%**, out of 329 local planning authorities (top 12%), another continued excellent performance. The target set by the Government for the preceding 2 years is 70%. Within the Departmental Business Plan 2019-23, the target is 90%.

FIGURE 2:

Table P153: District planning authorities' performance - speed of non-major development decisions ¹
 England, January 2021 to December 2022 ²

Local planning authority	ONS Code	% within 8 weeks or within agreed time without penalty for missing data	% within 8 weeks or within agreed time with penalty for missing data
Barking and Dagenham	E09000002	100.0	100.0
Rotherham	E08000018	100.0	100.0
Tamworth	E07000199	100.0	100.0
Chorley	E07000118	99.7	99.7
North East Lincolnshire	E06000012	99.7	99.7
Thurrock	E06000034	99.7	99.7
Bury	E08000002	99.6	99.6
North Tyneside	E08000022	99.6	99.6
Brentwood	E07000068	99.3	99.3
Mid Sussex	E07000228	99.2	99.2
Wokingham	E06000041	99.1	99.1
Hartlepool	E06000001	99.0	99.0
Northampton ⁵	E07000154	99.0	99.0
Northumberland National Park	E26000004	98.9	98.9
St. Helens	E08000013	98.9	98.9
Southend-on-Sea	E06000033	98.8	98.8
Dudley	E08000027	98.5	98.5
Maidstone	E07000110	98.3	98.3
Knowsley	E08000011	98.2	98.2
Telford and Wrekin	E06000020	98.0	98.0
Babergh	E07000200	97.8	97.8
Adur	E07000223	97.6	97.6
Islington	E09000019	97.5	97.5
Wellingborough ⁵	E07000156	97.5	97.5
Tunbridge Wells	E07000116	97.4	97.4
West Suffolk	E07000245	97.3	97.3
Copeland	E07000029	97.2	97.2
Fareham	E07000087	97.2	97.2
Newcastle-under-Lyme	E07000195	97.2	97.2
Preston	E07000123	96.9	96.9
Broxtowe	E07000172	96.8	96.8
Spelthorne	E07000213	96.8	96.8
The Broads Authority	E26000007	96.6	96.6
Amber Valley	E07000032	96.5	96.5
Swale	E07000113	96.5	96.5
West Lindsey	E07000142	96.5	96.5
Bolsover	E07000033	96.4	96.4
Colchester	E07000071	96.4	96.4
Blackburn with Darwen	E06000008	96.3	96.3
Ipswich	E07000202	96.2	96.2
Three Rivers	E07000102	96.2	96.2
Mid Suffolk	E07000203	96.1	96.1
Horsham	E07000227	96.0	96.0
Sedgemoor	E07000188	96.0	96.0
East Staffordshire	E07000193	95.9	95.9
Ealing	E09000009	95.8	95.8
Gravesham	E07000109	95.8	95.8
Watford	E07000103	95.8	95.8
Harlow	E07000073	95.7	95.7
Greenwich	E09000011	95.4	95.4
Havering	E09000016	95.4	95.4

FIGURE 3: Summary position.

<u>Jan 2021 – Dec 2022</u>	<u>Non-Majors</u>	<u>Majors</u>
BwD Score	96.3%	97.2%
<i>England average</i>	85.2%	86.5%
<i>Northwest average</i>	86.5%	88.8%
BwD Ranking	39th/329 (top 12%)	62nd/329 (top 19%)

- 3.5 Members are advised that on the 12th May 2023, it was announced that the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove MP (SoS) moved a step closer to stripping ten councils of their planning powers, stating he is looking to place them in “special measures” for slow decision-making, unless their performance improves by June. This would allow developers to submit applications directly to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) under powers outlined in section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act. The SoS wrote to the ten councils on the 12th April 2023, that failed to determine applications within the statutory determination period in the two years up to December 2022. The Councils were: Calderdale, Cotswold, Epsom & Ewell, Guildford, Hinckley & Bosworth, Pendle, Portsmouth, Vale of White Horse, Waverley and Peak District National Park Authority.
- 3.6 Research has shown the main reasons for the councils facing designation are:
- the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic;
 - followed by the significant increase in household applications that so many LPAs experienced in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic;
 - “significant” recruitment problems as the authorities have lost the bulk of their Development Management team.
- 3.7 It would appear the councils facing designation have been given the opportunity by the SoS to address the issues, and most are doing this by managing their performance, like agreeing longer time limits to determine applications with applicants, setting up planning performance agreements (PPAs) etc.
- 3.8 Whilst BwDBC is currently meeting the Government’s thresholds we must always remain mindful of performance targets as failure to meet the thresholds will see the Local Planning Authority being categorised as underperforming. If the Council were to be designated for poor performance, not only would there be reputational damage and a loss of confidence in the Local Planning Authority but applicants would be able to by-pass the Council and submit applications directly to the Planning Inspectorate for determination. This would be detrimental to the interests of local democracy. Therefore, it is important that the Council retains sufficient resources to enable the targets to be met and exercises caution in the refusal of major planning applications, ensuring that reasons for refusal can be robustly defended in any subsequent planning appeal. For the period April 2022 to April 2023, 93% of the decisions made by the Council were under delegated powers in accordance with the adopted Scheme of Delegation, and reflects the measures that were introduced in the 2015 Planning Service Improvement Plan.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None

8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The report is for information purposes only and does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

9. CONSULTATIONS

9.1. None.

10. RECOMMENDATION

10.1 That the Committee note the content of the report

Contact Officer: Gavin Prescott, Planning Manager (Development Management)

Date: 31st May 2023

Background Papers: Planning Performance Tables (Last updated 30th March 2023) - Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.