



**REPORT OF: THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
TO: PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS  
COMMITTEE**

**ON: 18<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

**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 A report was presented to the 16th August 2018 Committee meeting, informing the Members of the Planning Service's current performance in processing planning applications which followed the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government publishing a document in November 2016 "Improving Planning Performance – Criteria for Designation". This set out the criteria the Government intend to use 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.
- 2.2 Members will recall in the autumn of 2015, the Council received notification from the Secretary of State that at that time during the initial assessment period i.e. the preceding 2 years, the local planning authority were at serious risk of being placed in "special measures" due to the performance of dealing with majors and non-majors application not meeting the criteria set. As a result of this, the Planning Service immediately produced a "Planning Performance Improvement Plan", which set out an action plan and monitoring framework to improve the Service's performance, and reduce any risk of the service being placed in "special measures". This included setting a local planning performance target to be adopted that is equivalent to the upper quartile performance level nationally; recruitment process for three additional planning posts; and the scheme of delegation being revised. With regards to the latter this has been in place now since the 1st October 2015.

### 3. RATIONALE

- 3.1 The publication of the national quarterly tables P152 and P154 resumed on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2017. This followed the resolution of technical concerns raised by the Government relating to some aspects of the appeals data used that led to the tables being suspended in 2015. The latest national planning performance statistics were published on the 20th September 2018, by the Government (up to June 2018). The first round of designation measures start from the September 2018 quarter. These figures will not be published until later in the autumn.
- 3.2 Figures 1 and 2 show extracts from the majors and non-majors tables, and are a fantastic example of how far Blackburn With Darwen Borough Council (BwDBC) has progressed since the Planning Service introduced the Improvement Plan in the autumn of 2015.
- 3.3 In the autumn of 2015, BwDBC were ranked 234<sup>th</sup> 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 June 2018, BwDBC rank has now rose to 32<sup>nd</sup> place with a performance of 98.4%, a significant improvement. The target set by the Government for the 2 preceding years is 60%. Within the Departmental Business Plan 2018/19, the target is 80%.
- 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 June 2018, BwDBC rank has now rose to 27<sup>th</sup> place with a performance of 97.1%, another significant improvement. The target set by the Government for the preceding 2 years is 70%. Within the Departmental Business Plan 2018 19, the target is 90%.
- 3.5 Whilst the Council 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.

**Table P151a: District planning authorities' performance - speed of major development decisions - % within 13 weeks or agreed extensions of time**  
 England, July 2016 to June 2018 <sup>P</sup>

Local Planning Authority	%	Position
Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation <sup>3</sup>	100.0	1
Rutland	100.0	2
South Tyneside	100.0	3
North East Lincolnshire	100.0	4
Dudley	100.0	5
Yorkshire Dales National Park	100.0	6
High Peak	100.0	7
St. Helens	100.0	8
Amber Valley	100.0	9
Plymouth	100.0	10
Harlow	100.0	11
Gedling	100.0	12
Three Rivers	100.0	13
Rotherham	100.0	14
Ipswich	100.0	15
Bury	100.0	16
Northumberland National Park	100.0	17
Coventry	100.0	18
Richmondshire	100.0	19
Sedgemoor	100.0	20
Islington	100.0	21
North Tyneside	100.0	22
Haringey	100.0	23
Tamworth	100.0	24
East Lindsey	99.5	25
Lancaster	99.0	26
Allerdale	98.9	27
Sutton	98.7	28
Hartlepool	98.5	29
Fenland	98.5	30
Horsham	98.5	31
<b>Blackburn with Darwen</b>	<b>98.4</b>	<b>32</b>

*Figure 1 – National Planning Performance Table – Speed of Major Planning Decisions – July 2016 to June 2018 – extract from MHCLG – Table 151a, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government*

**Table P153: District planning authorities' performance - speed of non- major development decisions - % within 8 weeks or agreed extensions of time**  
 England, July 2016 to June 2018 <sup>P</sup>

Local Planning Authority	%	Position
Bury	100.0	1
Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation	100.0	2
Rotherham	99.9	3
Coventry	99.8	4
Thurrock	99.8	5
East Lindsey	99.5	6
North East Lincolnshire	99.5	7
Northampton	99.5	8
Rutland	99.5	9
Amber Valley	99.3	10
North Tyneside	99.2	11
Ipswich	99.1	12
Lancaster	98.6	13
Northumberland National Park	98.3	14
Castle Point	98.0	15
Mid Sussex	97.9	16
St. Helens	97.9	17
East Staffordshire	97.8	18
Blaby	97.6	19
Mansfield	97.6	20
Dudley	97.5	21
Sedgemoor	97.5	22
Waverley	97.5	23
Kettering	97.4	24
Copeland	97.3	25
Tunbridge Wells	97.3	26
<b>Blackburn with Darwen</b>	<b>97.1</b>	<b>27</b>

*Figure 2 – National Planning Performance Table – Speed of Non-Major Planning Decisions – July 2016 to June 2018 – extract from MHCLG – Table 153, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government*

#### 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. Planning Cross Party Working Group.

**10. RECOMMENDATION**

10.1 That the Committee note the content of the report

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

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Background Papers: Planning & Highways Committee Report "*Planning Service Performance (Development Management)*" – 16<sup>th</sup> August 2018.