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Title of meeting:	Planning Policy and City Development Portfolio Meeting
Subject:	Update of Development Management Performance
Date of meeting:	19 July 2023
Report by and Authored by:	Ian Maguire Assistant Director for Planning and Economic Development
Wards affected:	All

1. Requested by

- 1.1 This report was requested by the Planning Policy and City Development Portfolio holder, Cllr Hugh Mason

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This report provides an update on performance of the Council's Development Management service. This follows previous report on the same subject to Cabinet in February 2022 and the Portfolio February 2023 and summarises monthly updates provided to the Portfolio Holder in weekly briefings.

3. Information Requested

- 3.1 Performance in Development Management is monitored according to prescribed approaches given by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The assessment of performance is limited to the speed of determination following the receipt of valid applications, expressed as a targeted threshold of applications being within their statutory determination period of 8 to 16 weeks depending on the application type, or a longer time agreed with the applicant.
- 3.2 Within the Council however a key matter of concerns has been identified as the 'backlog' of undetermined cases. An LPA will always have some applications "in hand" while they take time to progress through the consultation, assessment and determination processes, and applicants would expect this. However through comparison with other periods where similar process and resource consideration

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applied we can identify an excess number of applications which through no fault of applicants are unnecessarily delayed due to a lack of resource to process them to resolution. Internal service improvement and a target Decision Delivery Drive in 2022 which used newly introduced more efficient processes created with the support of Interventionist from the Council's Systems Thinking team reduced the backlog of cases by over half, from around 330 to closer to 150 excess open cases. Further ongoing work has reduced this backlog down to under 90 cases, which in light of the need to take some case to Planning Committee may in fact represent a reasonable scenario where no systemic backlog can now say to exist. Details of the current performance and the impact on the backlog can be seen in the performance graphs provided in Appendix 1.

- 3.3 Since January 2023 the Council has been liaising with DLUHC to respond to their identified risk of designation for the speed of its decisions on applications for non-major development under section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This is because in the relevant assessed period, 24 months to September 2022 the Council determined 63.2% of non-major applications within time, compared to a government target of 70%. The current PCC performance, across all development types not just 'non-major' development is detailed in the '% in Time' graph in Appendix 1. Around 20 local authorities were similarly written to in January with a requirement to detail any exceptional circumstances that they considered relevant to DLUHC consideration as to designation, Portsmouth City Council's letter to this effect was issued on 2nd February 2023. The Councils have since been further requested to update the Secretary of State on ongoing work since then and the further, and likely final letter to this effect was issued on 14th July 2023 and is appended in Appendix 3. This letter provides the relevant update on the exceptional circumstances still effecting Portsmouth and the current performance of the Planning Service which shows the previous underperformance has been reversed with nearly 99% of application in the non-major category now being determined in time.
- 3.4 While statistical performance has been enhanced the Service recognises the need for ongoing continuous process improvement and has therefore invited the support of the Planning Advisory Service ('PAS'), part of the LGA. PAS visited the Council in June and provided a report on key aspects of the Development Management processes earlier this month. That report is appended as Appendix 2. Many of the recommendations they have provided have already been delivered and the Service will now work with Members to ensure the delivery of other service improvements for customers and residents.



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Signed by (Director)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - DM performance chart

Appendix 2 - DM process review - July 2023 - Planning Advisory Service

Appendix 3 - Response to DLUHC regarding risk of designation in respect of speed of determination of non-major applications

Background list of documents: None

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Update on Development Management and increase in capacity - Report to Cabinet 08.02.2022	
Letter to Department of Levelling up Housing and Communities - 02.02.2023	



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