

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**DATE OF MEETING: 10 FEBRUARY 2020**

**TITLE OF REPORT: UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE**

**Report of: HEAD OF PLACE SERVICES**

**Cabinet member: COUNCILLOR GRAHAM COCKARILL**

### **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

**1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide the Planning Committee with an overview of the Planning Development Management function between the periods April to December 2020 (Quarters 1- 3).

### **2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1** That the Planning Committee notes the overview of the Development Management function.

### **3 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

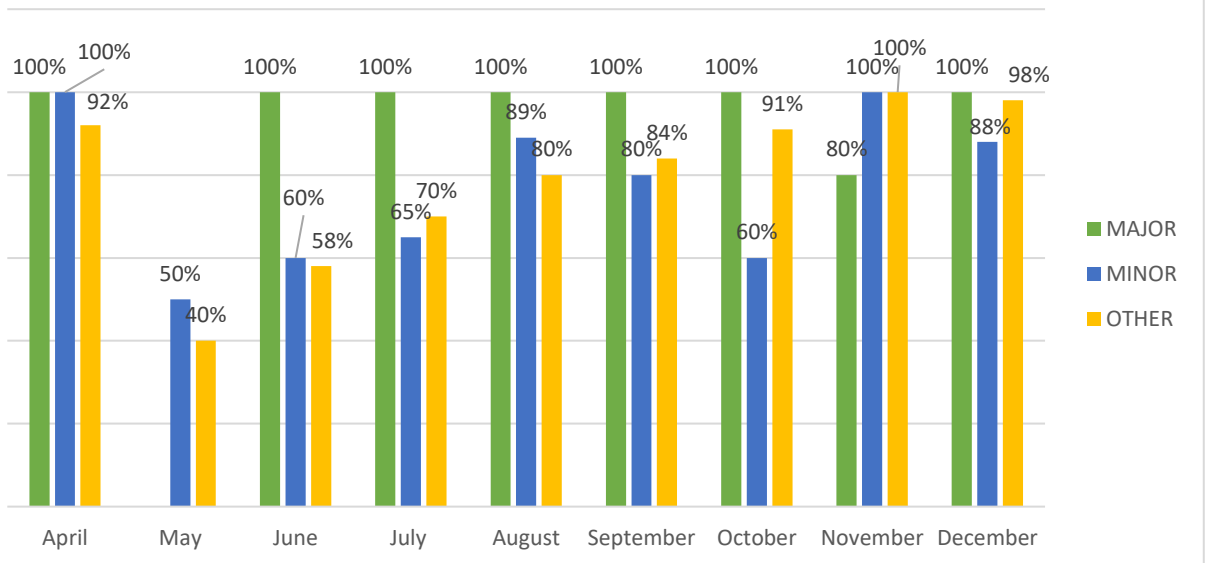
**3.1** The Planning Team's workload comprises of a variety of planning application types as well as discretionary services including pre-application advice requests. The Council has to report performance on certain types of application to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). These are known as PS1/2 applications and are sub-divided into Major, Minors and Others.

**3.2** Major applications are those with 10 or more dwellings, sites of 1 hectare or more, or provision of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> new floor area or more. Minor applications include (but are not limited to) up to 9 dwellings, gypsy and traveller sites and commercial proposals not falling within the major category. Others include (but are not limited to) householder, advertisements and listed building applications. Application types that are not included in the PS1/2 returns include prior approvals, Lawful Development Certificates and Discharge of Conditions applications as well as pre-application advice requests.

**3.3** MHCLG monitors planning authorities on their speed of decision taking over a rolling two year period. For example, 60% of Major applications should be determined within the statutory 13 weeks or agreed extension of time. In addition, the Council has its own Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

**3.4** Authorities who under-perform against their national target, will be classed as "poorly performing". Consequences for poorly performing authorities can be serious; applications for development can be made directly to the Planning Inspectorate. The Council would not receive any fee income for these applications but would still be expected to deal with the associated administration.

## % of Applications Determined in Time



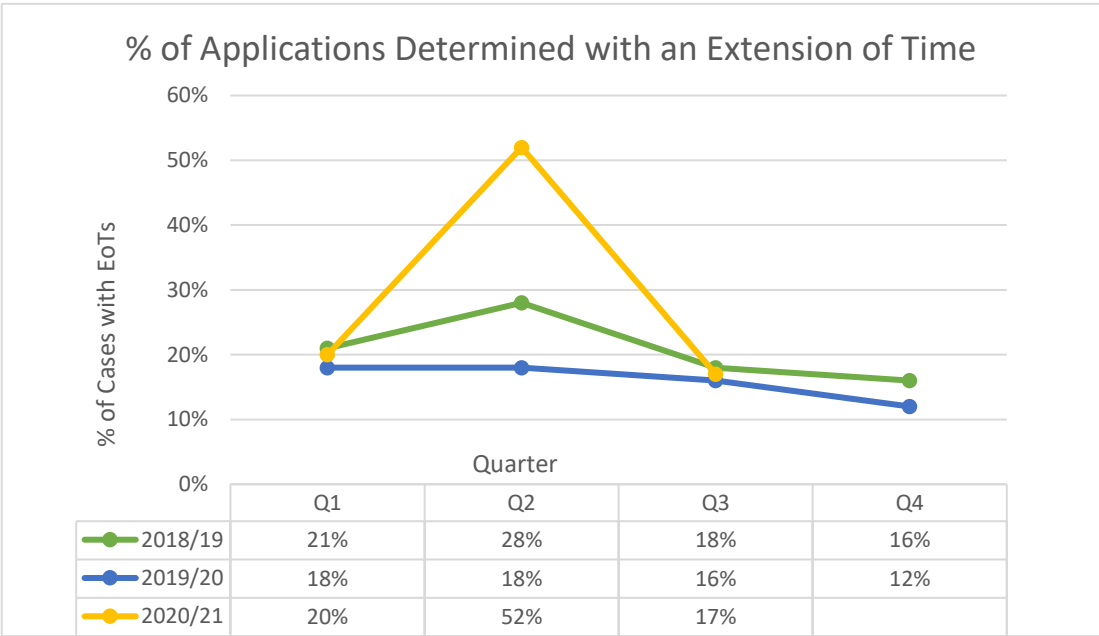
	Q1 March-June	
	In target	total
Major	3	3
Minor	19	24
Other	113	158
Non-Major	117	150

	Q2 July-September	
	In target	total
Major	13	13
Minor	29	32
Other	172	229
Non-Major	180	227

	Q3 October - December	
	In target	total
Major	10	11
Minor	34	40
Other	210	217
Non-Major	213	244

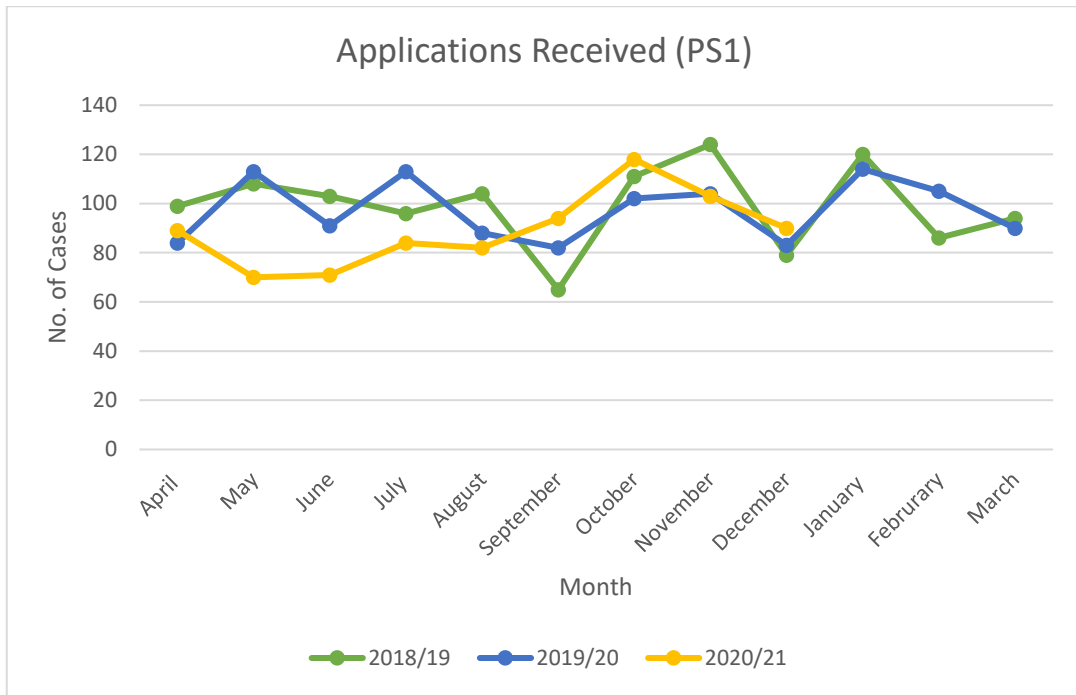
**3.5** Performance over the course of the last three Quarters has been varied especially in relation to Minors and Others. The drop in performance is linked to the Covid-19 pandemic. In particular there were restrictions in the first lockdown around site visits which not only restricted the number of applications that could be determined “on-time” but also created a backlog of cases pending determination. Officers have worked hard to clear the backlog that was created and performance has clearly improved in November and December. Performance in relation to Majors has remained strong throughout the year although it should be noted that the slight dip in December (88%) was caused by 1 out of 11 applications being determined out of time.

**3.6** Local Authorities are able to agree Extensions of Time with applicants. Extensions of time can be sought for a variety of reasons including seeking negotiations, complex applications and where applications must be reported to Committee. Extensions of time do not count against the Local Authority. Use of Extensions of time as a percentage of total number of applications determined are shown below.

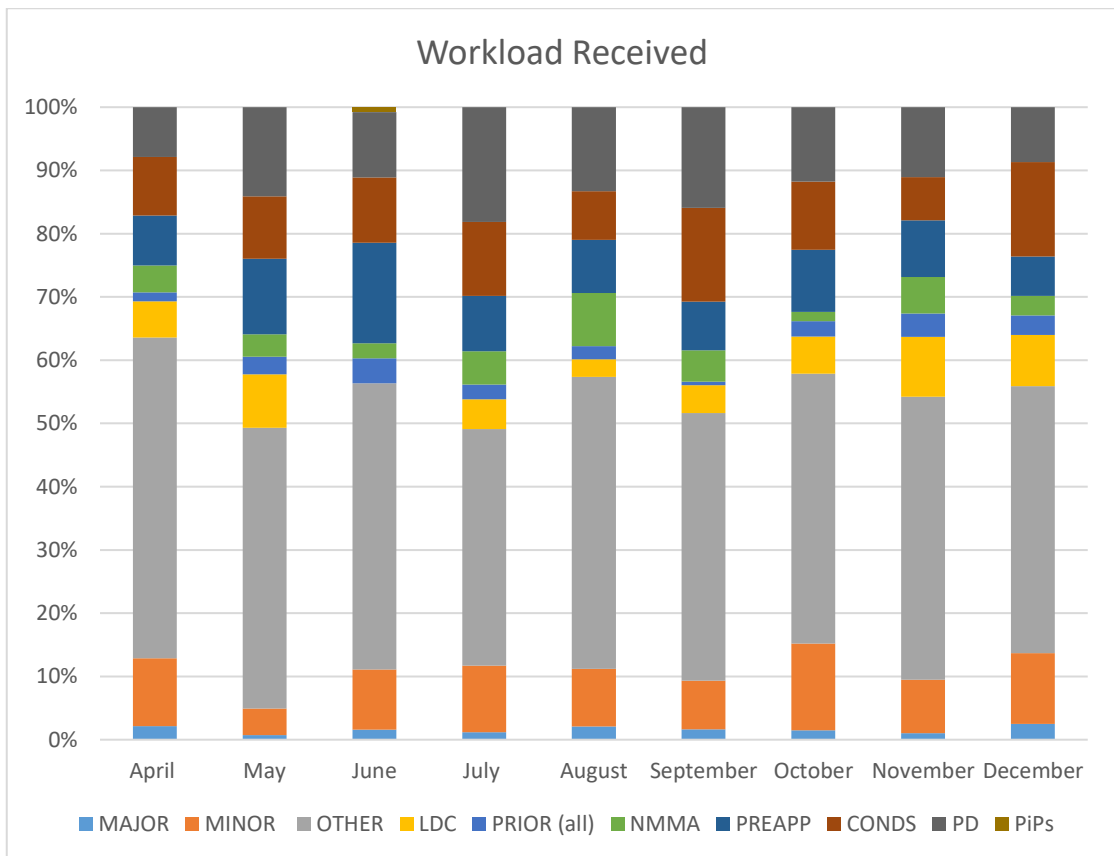


**37** The graph shows the use of Extensions of Time over the last three years. It can be seen that typically around 20% of applications determined will have an extension of time. However there was a peak in applications in the current year having extensions of time (52%) in Q2. This was directly caused by the first lockdown restricting site visits meaning that Officers secured extensions of time on delayed applications. The peak in the graph represents Officer’s clearing those delayed applications.

**3.8** The number of applications (Major, Minors and Others) submitted in the first two quarters of this year was below the numbers received in the same quarters in the last two financial years. The numbers of applications since August have returned to typical levels with the number submitted in October being higher than in the previous two years.



- 3.9** In total the Council received 712 PS1/2 applications in Quarters 1-3. In the same period a total of 729 applications were determined.
- 3.10** Planning Applications falling within the Major, Minor and Other categories only make up part of the workload of the Planning Team. For example, officers answer pre-application advice requests, deal with requests for non-material minor amendments, Certificate of Lawful Development applications and Discharge of Conditions applications. It can be seen from the graph below that whilst a significant proportion of workload is made up of Major/Minor and Other planning applications it is clear that other work often makes up as much as 50% of the workload received by officers.



**3.11** Based on the above, the team continues to perform well and we are recovering from the dips in performance and reliance on Extensions of Time caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. We are currently in a lockdown and there are once again restrictions on Officers being able to carry out site visits. Unlike during the first lockdown we have better procedures in place for dealing with this although it is likely that there will still be some impact on performance and the use of Extensions of Time will likely increase.

**3.12** Fee income has been monitored over the course of the year. Initially at the early part of the year fee income was significantly below expected levels. However MHCLG have awarded the Council a grant to cover reduced income between April-July 2020. We have also just received a large application for a solar farm with a large planning application fee. Taking both of these into account, this means that the Council is on course to receive the full year predicted income. Levels of pre-application advice income are below the predicted levels of income.

#### **4 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

There are no anticipated financial implications although workloads will continue to be monitored.

## **5 ACTION**

It is recommended that the Planning Committee notes the contents of this report.

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