

This report is Public.	
Planning Performance Report	
Committee	Planning Committee
Date of Committee	16 April 2026
Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, Councillor Jean Conway.
Date Portfolio Holder agreed report.	08 April 2026
Report of	Assistant Director for Planning – David Peckford

Purpose of report

This report details the Council's performance in determining planning applications for the Government's targets on Speed and Quality, as well as general performance figures.

1. Recommendations

The Planning Committee resolves:

- 1.1 To note the position on planning performance contained within the report.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This is a report to the Planning Committee on the Council's performance in respect of determining planning applications, with particular reference to major¹ and non-major² applications based on government targets.
- 2.2 Performance is measured using the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) 'Improving Planning Performance: Criteria for Designation (updated 2022). If a Local Planning Authority (LPA) is designated as underperforming in either 'major' or 'non-major' applications then applicants for those types of applications could apply directly to the Secretary of State for determination of those applications, i.e. the LPA potentially lose the power to determine these applications.
- 2.3 The above guidance states that DLUHC will determine whether to designate a LPA as underperforming based (approximately) on the performance **of the previous 2 years.**

¹ Major development is defined as the (a) winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits; or (b) waste development; or (c) the provision 10 or more dwellinghouses;- or a development on a site area of 0.5 hectares or more if it is not known how many dwellings are proposed; or (d) the provision of a building(s) where the floorspace to be created is 1,000 sqm or more; or a development carried out on a site area of 1 hectare or more.

² Non-major development is defined as any applications for planning permission for development which is not major development.

2.4 The table below sets out the designation thresholds:

Measure and type of Application	Threshold
Speed of major Development	60%
Speed of non-major Development	70%
Quality of major Development	10%
Quality of non-major Development	10%

2.5 **Speed** is measured on the percentage of decisions made:

- (a) within the statutory determination period (8 weeks for non-major development, 13 weeks for major development and 16 weeks for EIA development (applications subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment)), or
- (b) within such extended period as has been agreed in writing between the applicant and the LPA.

2.6 **Quality** is measured on the percentage of the total number of decisions on applications made by the LPA during the assessment period being overturned at appeal.

Implications	Commentary
Finance	<p>This report is provided for information only. However it is important to note that the quality of major decisions have exceeded the 10% threshold in 2025. Should Cherwell District Council be designated as underperforming, applicants may choose to submit their planning applications directly to the Secretary of State. In such cases, application fees are paid to and retain by the Secretary of State, resulting in a potential loss of income for Cherwell District Council.</p> <p>Also, the cost of defending appeals can be costly, with additional risk of significant costs when exceeding the 10% quality threshold. To date, expenditure on appeals is £304,882.11 against a budget of £100,000. These costs are currently being managed within the</p>

	<p>service, supported by additional Development Management income generated from the recent national fees increase in planning fees.</p> <p>If the service is no longer able to absorb appeal related costs, a request may need to be made to draw on the appeals reserve.</p> <p>Kimberley Digweed – Finance Business Partner – 07 April 2026</p>			
Legal	<p>As this report is purely for information there are no legal implications arising.</p> <p>Denzil Turbervill, Head of Legal – 07 April 2026</p>			
Risk Management	<p>This is an information report where no recommended action is proposed. As such there are no risks arising from accepting the recommendation. Any arising risk, as per the indicated on the finance implications, will be managed through the service operational risk and escalated to the Leadership Risk Register as and when necessary.</p> <p>Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 07 April 2026</p>			
Impact Assessments	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equality Impact				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		Not applicable. This is an information report where no recommended action is proposed. As such there are no equality implications arising from accepting the recommendation. Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance Team Leader, 07 April 2026
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		Not applicable
Climate & Environmental Impact				Not applicable
ICT & Digital Impact				Not applicable
Data Impact				Not applicable

Procurement & subsidy				Not applicable
Council Priorities	Not applicable			
Human Resources	Not applicable			
Property	Not applicable			
Consultation & Engagement	Not applicable in respect of this report			

Supporting Information

3. Report Details

Speed of Decisions

3.1. The table below sets out the Council's performance against the National Target for 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. It also sets out the current performance for 2026.

Speed	Major applications (13/16 week target or agreed extension of time)	Non-major applications (8 week target or agreed extension of time)
National Target	60%	70%
CDC performance 20/21 (Apr 2020 to Mar 2021)	92% (54/59 apps)	79% (600/895 apps)
CDC performance 21/22 (Apr 2021 to Mar 2022)	96% (72/75 apps)	91% (1289/1409 apps)
CDC performance 22/23 (Apr 2022 to Mar 2023)	96% (52/54 apps)	93% (1145/1230 apps)
CDC performance 23/24 (Apr 2023 to Mar 2024)	88% (49/56 apps)	83% (914/1096 apps)
CDC performance 24/25 (Apr 2024 to Mar 2025)	87% (48/55 apps)	87% (846/978 apps)
CDC performance 25/26** (Apr 2025 to Mar 2026)	79% ** (31/39 apps)	80% ** (656/824 apps)

*** The data for 2026 is not yet complete, as it runs to the 31st March 2026*

- 3.2. In summary, the Council have been achieving and exceeding the National Targets for the past 6 years.
- 3.3. In a recent article published by Planning Resource, the Council is identified as being within the bottom 20 Council's with the lowest percentage of 'non-major' decisions made within eight weeks or agreed time in 2025 (12 months to December 2025) with percentage at 80.7% (the monitoring period is different to the table above). This remains above the threshold of 70% but is a matter to monitor and manage going forward.

Quality of Decisions

- 3.4. The table below sets out the Council's performance for 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 based on the government's quality of decision requirements for major and non-major applications.

Quality	Major applications % allowed at appeal	Non-major applications % allowed at appeal
National target	No more than 10%	No more than 10%
CDC performance 2023 (April 2021 to Mar 2023)	5.0% (7 appeals allowed out of 141 decisions made by the LPA)	1.1% (27 appeals allowed out of 2381 decisions made by the LPA)
CDC performance 2024 (April 2022 to Mar 2024)	10.4% (12 appeals allowed out of 115 decisions made by the LPA)	1.1% (21 appeals allowed out of 1943 decisions made by the LPA)
CDC performance 2025 (April 2023 to Mar 2025)	11.6% (13 appeals allowed out of 112 decisions made by the LPA)	1.5% (31 appeals allowed out of 2079 decisions made by the LPA)
CDC performance 2026*** (April 2024 to Mar 2026)	5.3% *** (5 appeals allowed out of 95 decisions made by the LPA)	1.3% *** (23 appeals allowed out of 1804 decisions made by the LPA)

*** The data for 2026 is not yet complete, as it runs to the 31st March for decisions on applications, then allows a period until December 2026 for the appeals of applications decision between Apr 2024-Mar 2026 to be decided.

- 3.5. In summary, the Council has met the National Targets for non-majors Quality for the past four years.
- 3.6. For Major Quality decisions, we went over 10% in 2024. MHCLG wrote to us in March 2025 advising that we had breached the threshold (for 2024 accounting period) and gave us an opportunity to put an exceptional circumstances case to them to avoid designation. This was submitted and MHCLG agreed that the Council, while going over the 10% threshold was not poor performing, recognising the improvements the Council was putting in place, but that they “will continue to closely monitor the authority’s performance. If the authority fails to show continued improvement, the Secretary of State may designate the authority in the future”.
- 3.7. We have gone over 10% again for Major Decisions in 2025 (11.6%). We have now received a letter from MHCLG and been provided with the opportunity to put an exceptional circumstances case forward. Given it is a two year accounting period a number of the appeal decisions were also contained in the 2024 accounting period.
- 3.8. For 2026 accounting period for major decisions we are currently at 5.3%. However, at present we have three outstanding appeals, and one refusal where an appeal is expected. If all four of these appeals are allowed this would take the number of appeals allowed up to 9.5%. if any other major applications are refused and also appealed and successful at appeal, this could result in the number of major appeals being allowed to go over 10% for the third year running.

Comparison with neighbouring councils on Speed

- 3.9. The tables below show a comparison of the performance figures with neighbouring district councils for the year 01/10/2024 to 30/09/2025 (which is the most recent data available).
- 3.10. The tables focuses on Majors applications
- 3.11. In addition to performance figures, additional data is provided regarding the total number of applications received; the use of Extensions of Time (EOT) and Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) and the percentage of applications granted.

Major Applications						
Council	Total number of	Number determined	% within	Number determined	% within	%

	applications determined	within time or EOT	time or EOT	within time without using EOT	time without EOT	granted permission
Oxford City Council	33	31	94%	1	3%	100%
South Oxfordshire District Council	41	37	90%	8	20%	73%
Buckinghamshire Council	158	140	89%	36	23%	86%
West Oxfordshire District Council	28	25	89%	3	11%	91%
West Northamptonshire Council	66	58	88%	8	12%	92%
Cherwell District Council	47	41	87%	9	22%	94%
Stratford Upon Avon District Council	64	54	84%	7	11%	75%

- 3.12. The tables show that we are meeting and exceeding government targets on determining applications in time. Whilst CDC is second from the bottom of the list we are roughly in line with the authorities that share a border with this district. Furthermore, the percentage of applications determined without the need for Extensions of Time is one of the best compared to our border authorities.
- 3.13. The table also shows that CDC has one of the highest percentage of applications granted compared to the surrounding authorities.
- 3.14. As part of ongoing. planning improvement, we will be enhancing our performance monitoring.

4. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1. None. This report is submitted for information.

5. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

Speed

- 5.1. Speed of determination for major and non-major applications exceeded the Government's performance targets for 2023 and 2024.

Quality

5.2. Based on the quality of decisions, the Council has met the Government's performance for Quality for 2023 (majors and non-majors), but only achieved the target for non-majors in 2024, narrowly missing the target for majors.

Decision Information

Key Decision	Not applicable
Subject to Call in	Not applicable
If not, why not subject to call in	Not applicable
Ward(s) Affected.	Appeal dependent

Document Information

Appendices	
Appendix 1	None
Background Papers	None
Reference Papers	None
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