

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS: ALL</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE</b> Development Management Performance Report		
<b>REPORT OF:</b> Director of Economy, Regeneration and Investment		
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO:</b> Planning Committee	<b>DATE</b> 4 November 2024	
<p><b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b></p> <p>This report provides an update on performance within Development Management including: applications, pre-application submissions and local land charges for the period of Quarter 1 &amp; Quarter 2 of 2024/25.</p> <p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b> No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b></p> <p>Jenna Litherland Planning Improvement and Support Manager - Development Management 5 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG Tel: 020 7974 3070 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Jenna.Litherland@camden.gov.uk">Jenna.Litherland@camden.gov.uk</a></p>		
<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p>The Planning Committee is asked to note the report.</p>		

Signed:



Director of Economy, Regeneration and Investment

Date: 23 October 2024

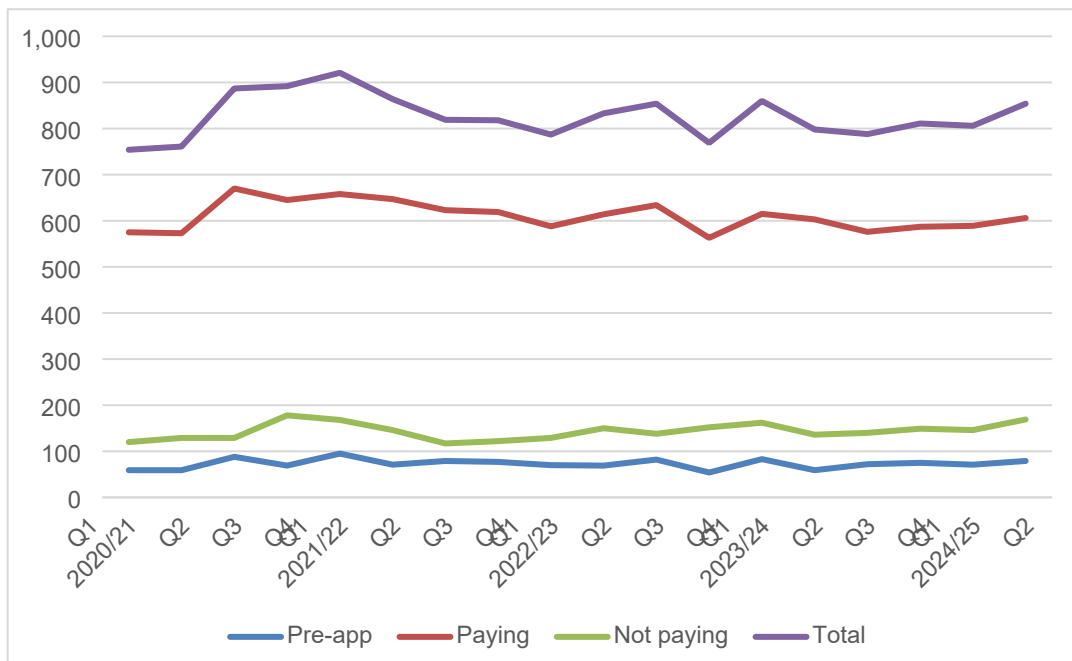
# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the Development Management service's performance in Quarter 1 (Q1) & Quarter 2 (Q2) of 2024/25.
- 1.2. The report analyses trends in terms of the volume and type of applications being submitted, and evaluates performance taking account of local and national targets. The way in which performance within Development Management is monitored is currently in a period of change. In March 2024, the previous government announced that national performance targets would change from October 2024, following the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' consultation on 'An Accelerated Planning System'. Two key proposed changes were: 1) removal of the right for parties to extend the time-frame to determine a planning application in some cases, making the 8 and 13 week statutory deadlines a rigid requirement; and 2) Amendment of the national performance thresholds to 50% majors and 60% non-major applications. Despite the change in government, it seems likely that many of the proposed changes set out in the consultation will be implemented, although this has yet to be confirmed. Over Q1 and Q2, the department has amended its processes and procedures in order to better prepare for the new performance regime and has been working to clear the backlog of old applications. The report also provides an update on the performance of the Local Land Charges Service over the same period.

# 2. Planning Applications

- 2.1. Figure 1.1 shows a breakdown of the total number and types of applications received from the beginning of 2020/21 to date.

*Figure 1.1 - Applications submitted*



- 2.2. The number of applications submitted over the past 3 years has remained relatively consistent. We have seen some troughs such as at the end of 2022/23 and a small peak was seen at the beginning of 2023/24. In Q1 and Q2 2024/25 the number of submissions remain high with Q2 seeing 854 submissions, the highest number since the peak in Q1 2023/24. The change in numbers show a similar pattern across both fee paying and non-fee paying applications.
- 2.3. The number of pre-application requests also remain reasonably steady and consistent. Pre-application performance is discussed in greater details in Section 3 of this report.
- 2.4. Figure 1.2 shows the number and type of applications submitted in the past five years.

*Figure 1.2 - Applications by type*

Year	Advert Consent	Approval of Details	Full Planning Permission	Householder Application	Listed Building Consent	Others	Pre-apps	Total
<b>2024/25 (Q1 &amp; Q2 only)</b>	105 (6%)	279 (16%)	527 (29%)	215 (12%)	250 (14%)	253 (14%)	158 (9%)	1,787
<b>2023/24</b>	187 (6%)	490 (15%)	987 (30%)	407 (12%)	450 (14%)	447 (14%)	289 (9%)	3,257
<b>2022/23</b>	169 (5%)	493 (15%)	994 (31%)	417 (13%)	431 (13%)	464 (14%)	275 (8%)	3,243
<b>2021/22</b>	198 (6%)	471 (14%)	1,065 (31%)	486 (14%)	424 (12%)	456 (13%)	322 (9%)	3,422
<b>2020/21</b>	120 (4%)	529 (16%)	1,003 (30%)	444 (13%)	393 (12%)	530 (16%)	275 (8%)	3,294

- 2.5. Over the 5 years the proportion of different types of applications being submitted has remained largely consistent.

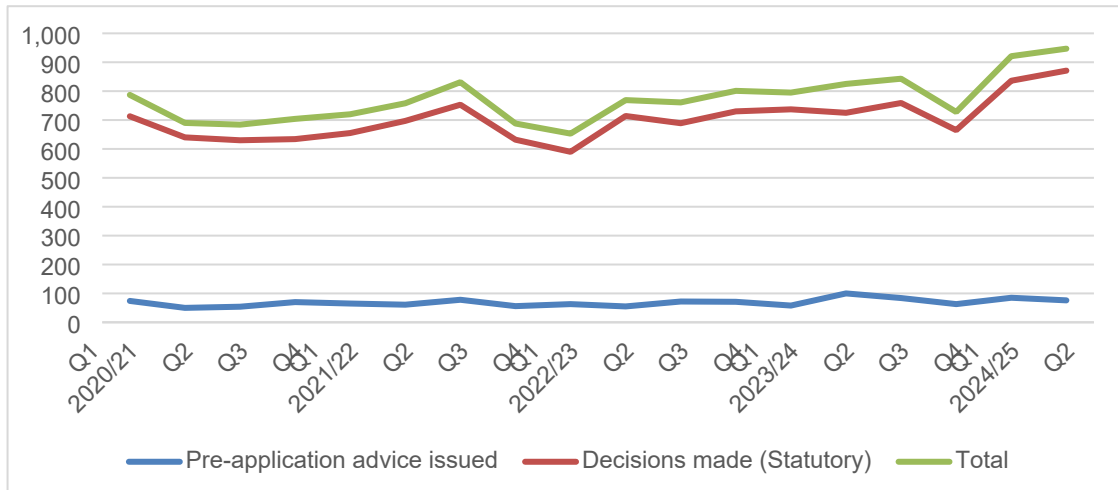
*Figure 1.3 – Income from applications*

Year	Total statutory	Total from majors (approx)	Total non majors (approx)	% of income from majors
<b>2024/25 (Q1 &amp; Q2 only)</b>	471,214	81,314	389,900	17%
<b>2023/24</b>	1,192,778	457,141	735,637	38%
<b>2022/23</b>	1,028,002	274,523	753,479	27%
<b>2021/22</b>	1,506,074	657,064	849,010	44%
<b>2020/21</b>	1,292,041	694,614	597,427	54%

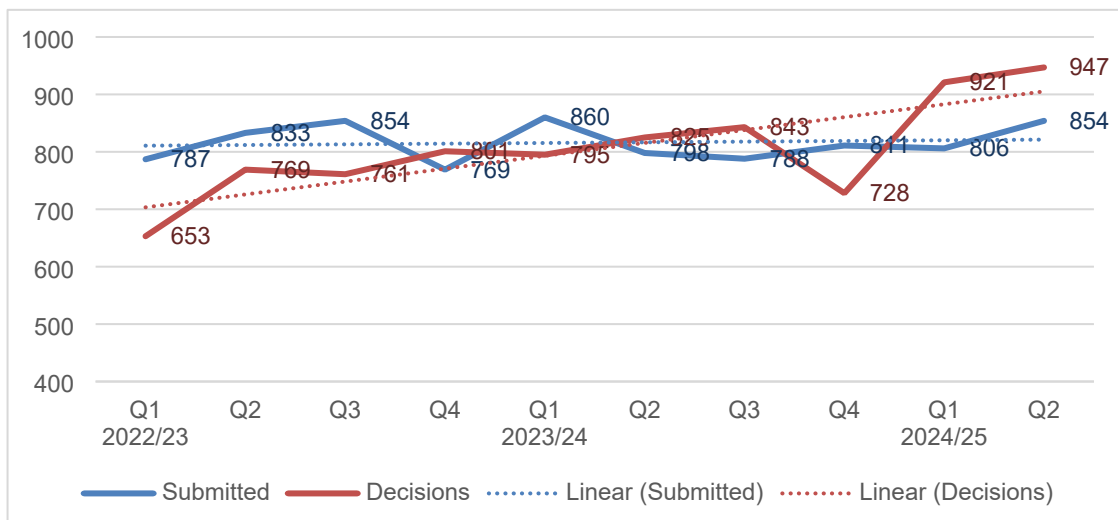
- 2.6. As can be seen in Figure 1.3, despite the overall number of applications submitted remaining fairly consistent, the associated income from applications in Q1 and Q2 is lower than we would expect it to be taking account of the income received each year over the past 5 years. The breakdown shows that this is due to receiving fewer major applications (which is not to say that there

aren't large development projects being progressed by the team, but many are amended major schemes coming in as S73 applications which has a fee of £234). Income from minor applications is consistent with previous years. The timing of major application submission is impacted by a number of factors and this lower level of income over the past two quarters is not a significant concern as there remains a good number of new major development projects in the pipeline.

**Figure 1.4 – Applications decided by quarter**



**Figure 1.5 – Comparison of application submitted and decided by quarter**



2.7. As can be seen in Figures 1.4 and 1.5 above Q1& Q2 2024/25 has seen an increase in the number of decisions being determined, exceeding any quarter in the past 5 years, with 921 applications determined in Q1 and 947 applications determined in Q2. This increase is a result of the process changes and backlog clearance work which has been undertaken to ensure that the new performance measures outlined in the Accelerated Planning System consultation can be achieved. This is discussed in greater detail in the performance measures section of this report (See Section 4). One initiative which made a significant impact on the number of applications determined in

the past two quarters was the creation of a backlog team of 5 officers for a temporary period. This team took on 265 applications of backlog cases on top of their own caseloads and cleared these applications over an 8 week period. Other measures have been to recruit additional planning officers into temporary positions and to reduce negotiation on proposals during the course of applications. Figure 1.5 demonstrates the positive effect these measures has had on reducing the backlog, reducing the number application in hand by 115 in Q1 and 93 in Q2.

*Figure 1.6 – Decision route and outcome*

Year	Total decisions	Total delegated decisions	% delegated	Number presented to Members' Briefing Panel	% Members' Briefing Panel of all decisions	Number Presented to C'tee	Number referred to committee from Members' Briefing	% C'tee	Total approved decisions	% approved
2024/25 (Q1 & Q2 only)	1,848	1,711	93%	125	7%	12	4	0.65%	1,686	91.58%
2023/24	2,886	2,608	90%	242	8%	36	4	1.25%	2,702	94.02%
2022/23	2,723	2,441	90%	242	9%	40	3	1.47%	2,533	93.26%
2021/22	2,737	2,454	90%	227	8%	53	11	1.94%	2,496	91.40%
2020/21	2,617	2,337	89%	242	9%	37	8	1.41%	2,412	92.80%

2.8. As can be seen in Figure 1.6 the number of applications determined is increasing year on year with Q1 and Q2 of 2024/25 being the highest. There has been a small % decline in the number being presented to Members Briefing and in absolute numbers to Committee, however this is not significant and will vary year on year depending on the nature and scale of the proposals being determined and local views on them. There has been a 2.5% decrease in the percentage of applications being approved which is due to taking a stricter approach on negotiations and determining applications within the statutory timeframe (8 weeks for minors and 13 weeks for majors). This change is a response to the Accelerated Planning System proposals where we need to determine applications quicker to avoid the risk of being 'designated'.

### 3. Pre- application advice

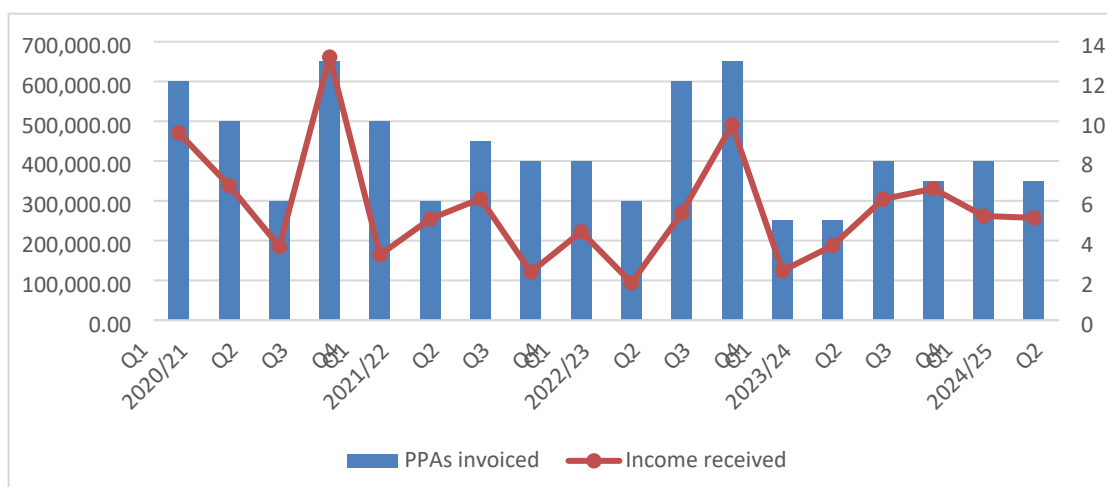
*Figure 1.7 – Pre-application advice requests by type*

Year	Large Major	Major	Medium	Minor	Householder	Listed Building Consent	Total	Income (inc PPA)
2024/25 (Q1&Q2 only)	9	4	15	66	37	27	158	£0.69m

<b>2023/24</b>	23	21	35	76	87	47	289	£1.36m
<b>2022/23</b>	17	17	53	68	95	25	275	£1.68m
<b>2021/22</b>	19	27	48	73	116	37	320	£1.66m
<b>2020/21</b>	6	25	52	68	88	36	275	£2.52m

- 3.1. Over the past 5 years the number of pre-application requests has been relatively consistent following some fluctuation in 2021/22. Looking at the total number of requests in Q1 and Q2 2024/25 there appears to be a small increase in use of the pre-application service, half way through the year we have had more than half of the total number of requests received in 2023/24. In terms of type in 2023/24 there was a higher than usual proportion of major and large major pre-application requests. However, Q1 and Q2 has seen a decrease in these type of requests. Due to the nature of planning it is not always possible to predict the flow of requests. The peak in 2023/24 and the trough in Q1 and Q2 could balance each other out. That said, based on requests in the pipeline we are on track to receive a similar level of income from pre-application requests and Planning Performance Agreements as 2023/24. The number of requests and associated income is closely monitored and we are aware of a number of pre-application requests and PPAs in the pipeline for Q3 and Q4 2024/25 and beyond.
- 3.2. In light of the changes proposed by the Accelerated Planning System and the reduced scope for negotiation during the course of an application, greater emphasis needs to be placed pre-application advice. Increasing take up of the pre-app service will help ensure that there is no significant increase in refused applications and it will allow us to ensure we secure the highest quality development. In order to enable this and ensure the pre-application service provides what customer's need we are working with the Council's Strategy and Design team to review and improve the service with a particular focus on small scale projects (particularly householders). We have identified the key constraints and deficiencies of the current offer with input from our customers and are now in the process of designing a new service offer which can be tested before the changes are implemented. As part of this we are considering new service options which could replace the Duty Planner Service. Further information on this project can be found in Report 2 the Digital Team Update. The changes will not impact medium and large scale pre-application requests which will continue to operate in this same way, we received good feedback from customers on medium and large scale pre-application requests and PPAs successfully provide a structure, timeframe and resourcing certainty for our customers.

**Figure 1.8 – Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)**



3.3. Figure 1.8 demonstrates the number of PPAs secured by quarter and their associated income. The income in Figure 1.8 is for the PPAs only and not standalone pre-application meetings. In Q1 and Q2 2024/25 the number of PPAs remains consistent with the last two quarters of 2023/24. There is a decent pipeline of schemes at early pre-application stage which will likely result in a PPA, however considering the lower number of PPAs in 2023/24 as a whole this needs to be carefully monitored.

3.4. We rely on PPAs to identify key planning considerations and allow issues to be addressed up front. They enable the Council to develop a programme for the proposals to be worked up and negotiated with the project team. They help ensure meaningful consultation is undertaken with the relevant stakeholders and help the Council secure high quality development. The emphasis on meaningful consultation and engagement at pre-application stage is only going to increase as a result of the changes to be implemented as part of the Accelerated Planning System. PPAs are also used to agree target dates for submission and determination.

**4. Review of performance against national and local indicators**

4.1. Development Management performance is monitored against national and local targets: nationally set targets on speed and quality of decisions and locally the timeliness of decision-making and customer satisfaction.

**National Targets**

4.2. At present the national targets are for 60% Major and 70% non-major applications to be determined within the statutory time limit or with an Extension of Time (EoT) or Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). The accelerated planning system changes propose that the targets are adjusted

to 50% Major and 60% non-major applications within the statutory time limit (excluding EoTs and PPAs). This figure is calculated over a 12 month period.

- 4.3. From October 2024 planning authorities will be measured on the basis of both the current and new performance targets, so in 12 months time we need to demonstrate that we are meeting the relevant targets. There would be a risk of designation if we do not meet the current targets, or we do not meet the new targets, or we do not meet either of them.
- 4.4. The Accelerated Planning System also changes the use of extensions of time, including ending their use for householder applications and only allowing one extension of time for other developments, which links to a proposed new performance measure for local planning authority speed of decision-making against statutory time limits.
- 4.5. These changes have affected the way in which we process applications. In recent years the focus has been on getting the right outcome and working with applicants to negotiate on proposals to get high quality developments we can support and using EoTs to allow time within the application process to do so.
- 4.6. Changes we have implemented in Q1 and Q2 2024/25 to reduce the risk of designation going forward include:
  - in May 2024 we altered the process for allocating applications so that applications are allocated within 1 working day of submission and validated within 3 working days;
  - at the same time we changed the allocation process, we created a temporary backlog team to work through older applications received prior to May 2024. This team took on 265 applications of backlog cases on top of their own caseloads and cleared these applications within an 8 week period;
  - recruiting additional planning officers into temporary positions to clear through applications on officers caseloads received prior to May 2024;
  - all applications received from May 2024 onwards to be determined within statutory timeframes without the use of EoTs. This has the benefit of applications being determined quicker, however it does mean there is limited opportunity to negotiation changes to schemes.
- 4.7. The positive impact of the changes are already apparent and include more application being determined within statutory timeframes, a reduction to the size of officer's caseloads and the total number of cases in hand across the service, and a reduction in the number of complaints in respects of delays to the process. There have been a small number of complaints from customers frustrated that they cannot negotiate and make numerous changes to proposals during the course of an application, however the overwhelming feedback appears to be positive.



## Performance against current targets

*Figure 1.9 - Percentage of decisions made within the target deadline or agreed extension of time for 24 months to June 2024 (current target)*

Area	Average 2024	Average 2023	Average 2022
<b>Majors</b>			
Camden	<b>84.6%</b>	85.2%	94%
Inner London Boroughs Average	93.5%	93.5%	93.36%
London Boroughs Average	93.7%	92.7%	90.8%
<b>Minors</b>			
Camden	<b>82.1%</b>	79.7%	80%
Inner London Boroughs Average	88%	86.8%	82.4%
London Boroughs Average	88.2%	85.6%	83.7%

- 4.8. There is currently a national target for 70% of non-majors and 60% of majors to be decided within the target timeframe. Failing to meet these targets can result in ‘designation’ – meaning the authority’s Development Management function and decision making could be taken over by central government.
- 4.9. Camden is falling below the London average in respect of both major and minor applications. It is important to note that the data is collected over a 24 month period ending in June, during a time where we have been clearing significant backlogs. We do ask for EoTs but it is harder to secure those when determination of applications is delayed or the outcome is a refusal. We have more recently made improvements in terms of determining applications within the statutory timeframes which will be reflected when we report data from the current period in the future. The figures significantly exceed the government targets meaning there is little risk of ‘designation’ at this time based on this performance measure.

## Performance against new Accelerated Planning System targets

- 4.10. The Accelerated Planning System changes propose that the targets are adjusted to 50% Major and 60% non-major applications within the statutory time limit (excluding EoTs/PPAs). The paper states that the new targets are likely to come into force in October 2025, however it will be looking at data from the past year at this point. Therefore, we need to be meeting these targets from October 2024.

*Figure 1.10 Performance against Accelerated Planning System targets*

	Majors in time with EoTs	Majors in time excluding EoTs	Minors in time with EoTs	Minors in time excluding EoTs
Q1 2024/25	100%	20%	84%	58%

Q2 2024/25	75%	25%	76%	57%
------------	-----	-----	-----	-----

Majors

4.11. Looking at Q1 2024/25 all major applications were determined either within the statutory time frame or within an agreed EoT or PPA. If you exclude EoTs, which the new target will, this drops to 20% of major decisions being within the statutory time period. For Q2 75 % of major applications were determined either in time or within an agreed EoT or PPA. Excluding EoTs this drops to 25%. We will need to ensure the from October 2024 onwards the number of major applications being determined in time increases to a minimal level of 50% to avoid designation, this is going to be very challenging given the complexity of these schemes and the need for S106 legal agreements. This point was raised in our response to the accelerated planning system consultation.

Minors

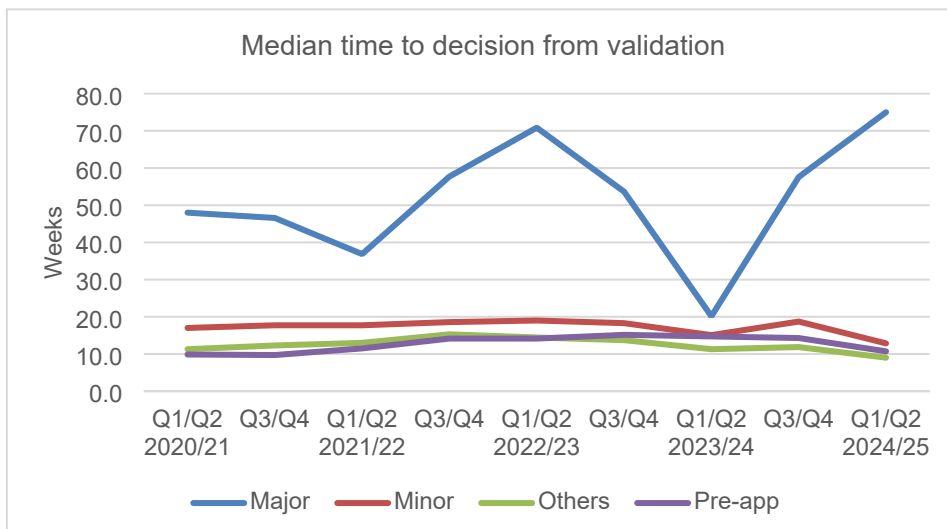
4.12. In Q1 84% of minor applications were determined either within the statutory time frame or within an agreed EoT. Excluding EoTs this drops to 58% of major decisions being within the statutory time period. For Q2 76 % of minor applications were determined either within the statutory time frame or within an agreed EoT. Excluding extensions of time this drops to 57%, this will need to increase to 60% from October to avoid risk of designation.

4.13. We have over the past two quarters been focusing on clearing a backlog of applications, which has included a number of older applications, the data above reflects this. The clearing of the backlogs and implementation of new processes such as allocating applications to case officers on submission and validating within 3 days of submission stands the Council in a good position for meeting these targets going forwards.

**Local measures**

Time taken to determine applications

*Figure 1.11 – Timeliness of decision making*



4.14. Figure 1.11 shows that in Q1 and Q2 2024/25 the time taken to determine applications has fallen across minor and other applications, and pre-application requests. The majority of minor and other applications submitted since May 2024 are being determined within the 8 week statutory timeframe, however the average shown above is 12.9 weeks for minors, and 9 weeks for others which is elevated by older backlog applications which are still being cleared through. For major applications a sharp increase is shown, however given the lower number of major applications this could be skewed by one application which has taken longer to determine. We expect to see further decreases in the time taken to determine applications as our new ways of working are embedded.

Customer satisfaction

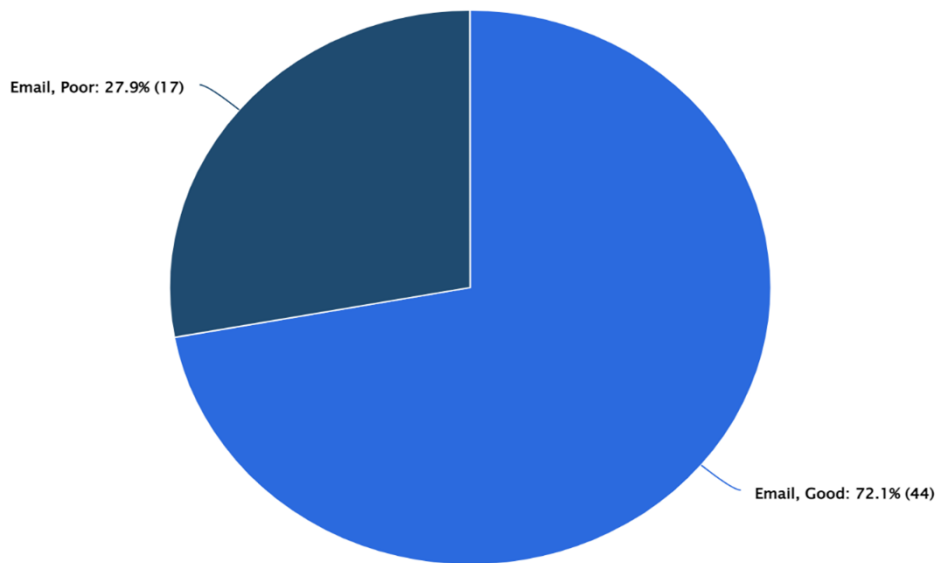
4.15. During Q2 2024/25 we launched a new customer satisfaction survey using Govmetrics which is a citizens experience solution. The survey has been running for just 7 weeks. As we are still in the early days of the survey, the analysis we can do at this stage is limited.

4.16. The survey is sent to planning agents or applicants via email following the determination of their applications. The take up response rate for the survey is currently at 17% which is a good rate and is certainly much higher than our previous survey which for the previous period had a return rate of 2%. This means the response will be more meaningful and representative of customers experiences.

4.17. The survey results are detailed in figures 1.12 to 1.17 below.

Figure 1.12 Overall Experience

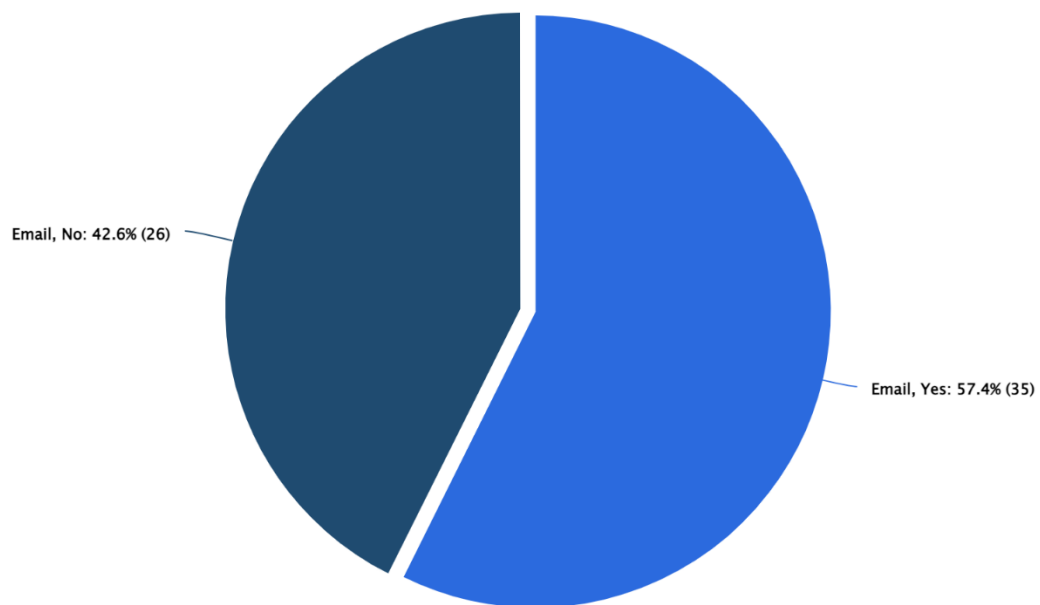
*Question: Putting aside the outcome of your planning application, how would you rate the service you received with regards to the planning application process?*



- 4.18. Figure 1.12 shows that 72% of the survey respondents reported their overall experience of the service was good. This is a reduction from the 100% positive experience reported by the survey covering the previous period. The current survey results are considered to be more representative due to the higher overall response rate. 28% of respondents reported a poor service. The new reporting survey enables results to be analysed further and it can be seen that those who reported a poor level of service include applications which were caught up in the backlog of applications, something which the service has actively been seeking to address over the past few months.

*Figure 1.13 Speed of contact*

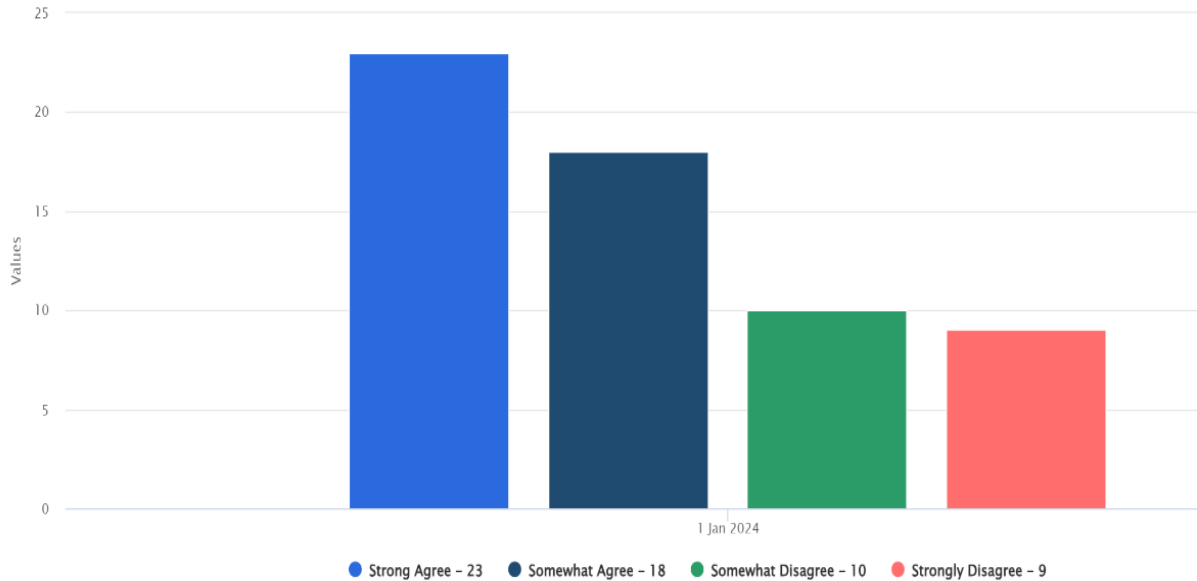
*Question: Did the planning officer contact you within 7 working days from when you submitted your application?*



- 4.19. Figure 1.13 shows a new question which has been added to the survey, partially in light of the Accelerated Planning System proposed changes. This enables the department to measure the success of allocating applications to a case officer on submission and ensuring that applications are validated within 3 days and the applicant contacted within 7 days of submission. At present the feedback is not where we want to be, but is being skewed by the fact that some of the respondents may have had old backlog cases determined. We hope to see the figures in response to this question improving as our new ways of working become normalised.
- 4.20. A key benefit of the new survey is that questions can be amended and added to reflect the needs and monitoring requirements of the service. However, we need to be careful not to make too many changes so we can measure change over time across key themes.

**Figure 1.14 Kept informed**

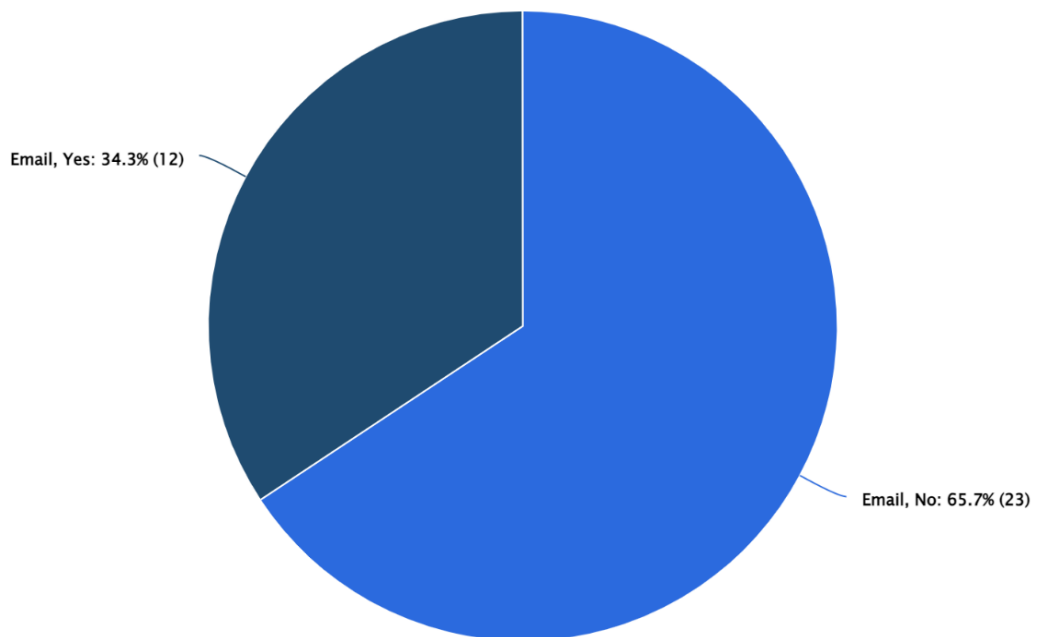
*Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I felt informed about how my application would be dealt with?*



4.21. 30% of surveyed customers responded negatively in relation to being kept informed during the course of the application, this is an issue which has also been raised in complaints during this period. Although this is a minority result the surveys demonstrate that further work is required to ensure that all officers understand the importance of communication and keeping applicants informed of progress.

**Figure 1.15 Pre-application advice**

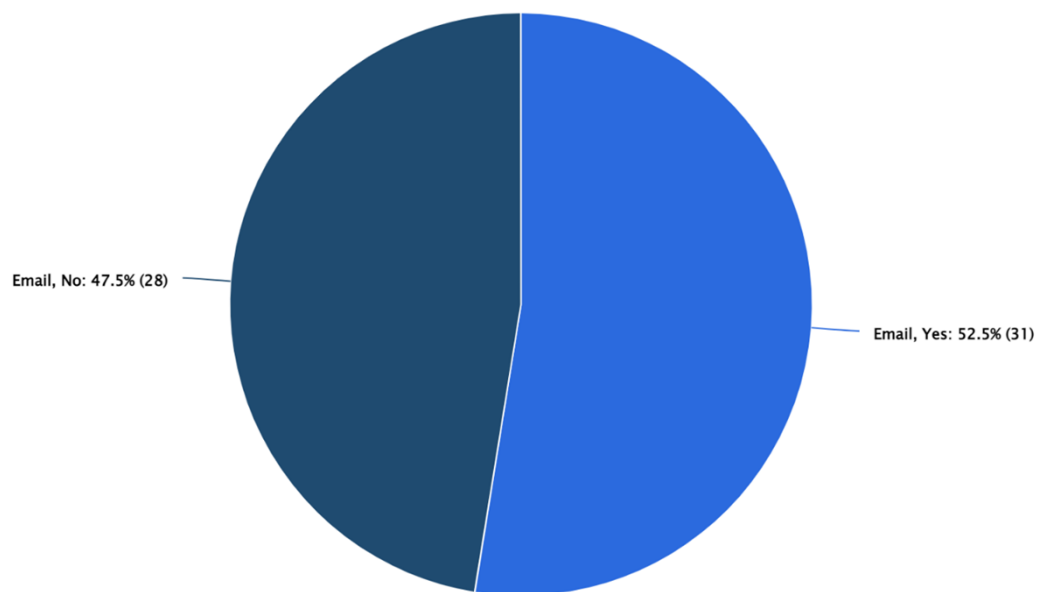
*Question: Did you seek pre-application advice on this proposal prior to submitting your application?*



4.22. Figure 1.15 details the response from another new question on the survey to measure the use and success of the pre-application service which is currently being reviewed. This data will help us to measure the success of the changes proposed going forward. It is clear from the responses that at present the majority of applicants do not apply for pre-application advice before submitting their application, this impacts on the quality of the submissions we receive, the extent of amendments which might be required to make a scheme acceptable and the outcome of the decision. A good and well used pre-app service should enable better quality applications which are compliant with the development plan and which can be determined more quickly.

Figure 1.16 – Application amendments

*Question: Did you make changes to your application following advice from the planning officer?*

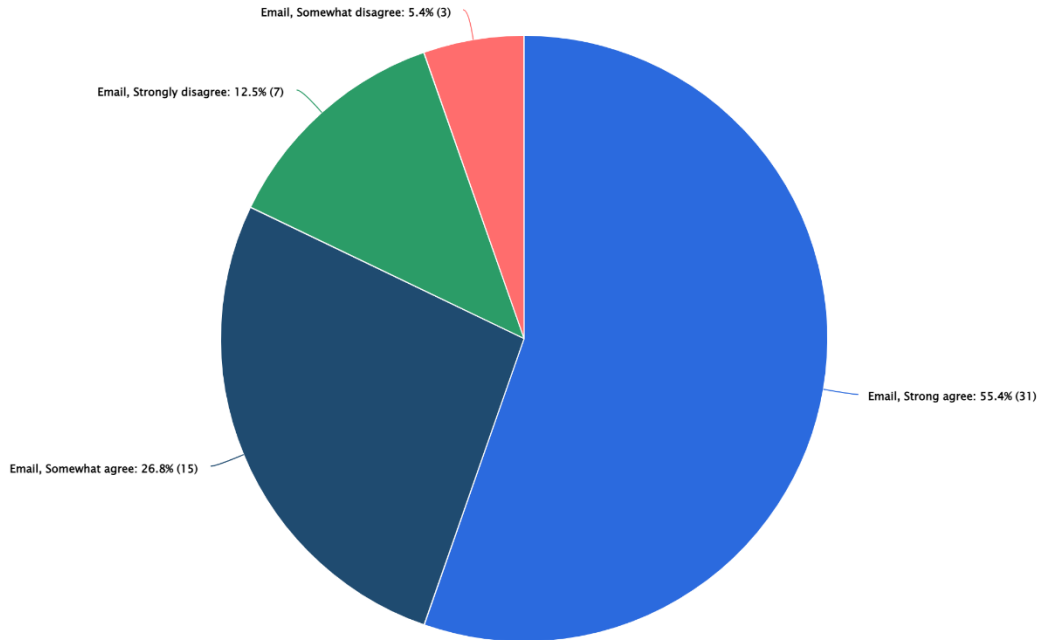


---

4.23. Figure 1.16 highlights another new question for the planning survey in respect of whether changes were made to the application following advice from the planning officer. The results show that the majority of applications were amended which will, in most cases, result in value added to the proposal in respect of the built environment. As we are now required to determine applications more quickly, we may see a reduction in amendments to schemes to comply with timeframes. Officers' role of adding value to schemes will need to be front loaded to the pre-application stage and the work we are doing redesigning the pre-application service with Strategy and Design will support this.

Figure 1.17 – Clarity of decision

*Question: I received clear advice about the reasons for the decision or recommendation on my application.*



- 4.24. The question in Figure 1.17 relates to the end of the process and whether clear reasoning was provided for the decision. 82% of the respondents agreed that the reason for the decision was clear which is positive. Drilling down into customers who strongly disagreed, this related to applications which were part of the backlog of applications and the overall feedback provided was also negative. Moving forward, early contact from officers and determining applications more quickly will help to alleviate this issue. However, if dissatisfaction in response to this question increases we would need to review clarity of decision in detail.
- 4.25. Overall the results of the survey are positive and reflect the hard work of Officers in the service. There are some areas for improvement which we are actively working on to continue to reduce end to end times on applications and maintaining good communication throughout the process.
- 4.26. The survey provides a small snapshot of customer feedback and must be considered in the context of the hundreds of people that use the planning service each quarter.
- 4.27. The customer satisfaction survey is not the only way in which our customers feedback to the department. Whilst Managers continuing to get complaints in relations to delays to the process and not being happy with a decision, they are decreasing in number.

4.28. There will always be stakeholders, applicants and neighbours who have a different view on whether a scheme should be approved or not, but it feels as though people are expressing these views more strongly. Planning involves change to the built environment which means it affects people's homes and there are also financial implications, it is unsurprising therefore that it is an issue which can generate a lot of emotion, upset and complaints, particularly at the current time. Even the best performing local planning authority will have complaints from an applicant or community unhappy with the outcome of an application. It is almost impossible to please everyone, although that is of course what we are striving for.

4.29. We do get many letters of thanks and social media posts, a few of the recent ones are quoted below:

- **From a planning agent – June 2024** – *“Many thanks for your e-mail. Very pleased to note that the Certificate of Lawfulness has been approved and granted. I really want to thank you for all your assistance, guidance, and advice regarding this application and your prompt response to any queries that I had. Please do let me know if there is any survey/feedback link, because I really want to give you 10/10 feedback!”*
- **From a planning agent in relation to a backlog application – June 2024** – *“Thanks for sending across the Decision Notice it is well received. The length of time prior to your arrival has been a big disappointment. However, I would very much like to sincerely extend my thanks towards yourself since you have taken over the handling of the application. Your role in getting this application over the line is certainly not lost on me. You have been contactable, responsive, and pro-active. It was fantastic to have acted as the agent with yourself as the officer and I sincerely hope that our paths cross on more applications. I firmly believe that the London Borough of Camden Council have a true asset in the team.”*
- **From a planning agent – October 2024** – *“I would like to say thank you for working with us on this application to get a pass result for our client, they are over the moon with the result. We need always a working relationship like this as refusals are a nightmare for everyone, you cannot imagine the distress we receive from applicants when receiving refusal notices especially when case officers have no return feedback just an outright refusal, this situation is a nightmare, it's like the end of the world has just happened. On behalf of all the staff here at ...I want to thank you for this smooth transition on the whole dealings with this application, an amazing service.”*



## 5. Local Land Charges

*Figure 1.18 – No. of searches received and completed*

Quarter		Total searches received	Total searches completed	Total Searches created	% of searches completed within time (from date received)
2024/25	Q2	1,186	1,588	1,534	19%
	Q1	1,146	1,150	1,053	6%
2023/24	Q4	1,075	932	1,140	10%
	Q3	896	719	738	30%
	Q2	988	910	912	78%
	Q1	1,181	1,183	1,136	95%
2022/23	Q4	978	1,083	1,080	61%
	Q3	1,021	1,286	1,200	24%
	Q2	1,190	1,218	1,154	7%
	Q1	1,377	1,183	1,296	26%
2021/22	Q4	1,187	1,117	1,138	42%
	Q3	1,069	1,111	1,063	33%
	Q2	1,137	1,263	1,025	23%
	Q1	1,424	1,450	1,705	14%

*Figure 1.19 – No of working days to complete searches*

Quarter		Average days from receiving to completion (EIR)	Average days from receiving to completion (non-EIR)
2024/25	Q2	22.1	23.1
	Q1	27.3	31.5
2023/24	Q4	30.7	30.9
	Q3	17.6	29.2
	Q2	8.9	9.1
	Q1	4.6	5.4
2022/23	Q4	16.7	15.6
	Q3	20.8	27.2
	Q2	24.3	32.5
	Q1	27.6	22.8
2021/22	Q4	14.1	16.6
	Q3	17.9	15.6
	Q2	25.9	16.3
	Q1	29.0	28.5

- 5.1. Figure 1.18 shows that the number of searches being submitted in Q1 and Q2 2024/25 has increased following a drop in 2023/24. This is promising and suggests confidence in the market.

- 5.2. Figure 1.19 demonstrates that in Q1 the average time taken to return search requests peaked at 31.5 days, exceeding the statutory time period. This was due to the team being asked to prioritise data improvement works by HM Land Registry as part of the project to migrate the Local Land Charges Register to HM Land Registry. This work has been delayed due to matters outside of the control of the team and will remain ongoing for the next 6 months. During Q2 the team have managed to clear the backlog of search requests that had accumulated and for the past month search requests are being returned within the statutory 10 working day timeframe (at the time of writing the report the turnaround time is about 4 working days).
- 5.3. The purpose of the HM Land Registry migration project is to help speed up the conveyancing process and will enable customers to have instant online access to conduct a search of the Local Land Charges Register. It is expected that the Local Land Charges Register will be fully migrated to HM Land Registry by Autumn 2025.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1. As this report evidences, the Development Management and Local Land Charges services have had to deal with backlogs which have accumulated for different reasons, but despite this performance is above local and national targets and there is no risk of designation. Development Management has adapted its processes and procedures in response to changing performance standards which may be introduced by the Accelerated Planning System, this has resulted in positive outcomes for the service and customers. Pre-application requests remain steady, but we have seen a reduction in income due to receiving fewer major pre-application requests. Whilst, we do receive complaints in respect of delays within the service the number is reducing and the vast majority of applicants remain satisfied with the service they are receiving. The Local Land Charges team have worked hard to complete the necessary data improvement work to enable the HMLR Migration project to move forward and resolve the backlog of search requests.

## **7. Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services**

- 7.1. Whilst temporary staff brought in to specifically work on clearing the backlog of applications have been meeting this objective as mentioned in section 2.7. This has created a budget pressure of £180,000 over Q1 and Q2 and is forecasted to cause a full year budget pressure of £279,000. New ways of working are being trialled to solve and reduce agency spend once the backlog is cleared.

**8. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor**

8.1. The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no legal comments.

**9. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Cases referred to Planning Committee from Members' Briefing Panel

**REPORT ENDS**

Appendix 1: Cases referred to Planning Committee from Members' Briefing Panel  
(April 2024 – September 2024)

Address	Ward	No. of objections	Proposal	Recommendation	Committee decision
Utopia Village 7 Chalcot Road London NW1 8LH	Primrose Hill	123	2023/4757/P - Demolition of existing lean-to structures along the eastern boundary, erection of infill extension, alterations to the exterior of the building including replacement/alteration of windows and doors, removal of external services and plant, improvement of some external finishes, replacement of sections of roof, recladding of external stair case, installation of vents and over-cladding to plant room, refurbishment of bridge structure, installation of air intake/exhaust features associated with ventilation/heating/cooling systems, external courtyard landscaping works and replacement of entrance gates.	Granted	Granted
187 Kentish Town Road London NW1 8PD	Kentish Town South	17	2024/0601/P - Change of ground floor use from Cinema (Sui Generis) to Flexible Use for Cinema (Sui Generis) / Class F.1 / Class F.2 / Class E	Granted Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement	Resolved to -Grant Subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement