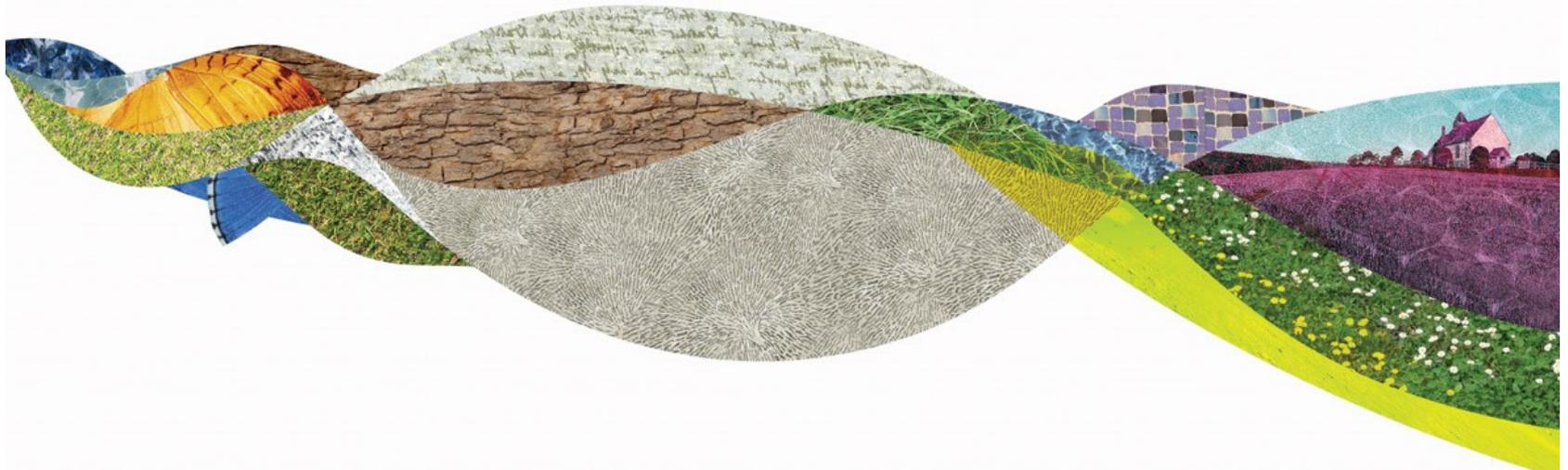


SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK



# Annual Review of Planning Performance - Financial Year 2018/19

Policy and Resources Committee – 26 September



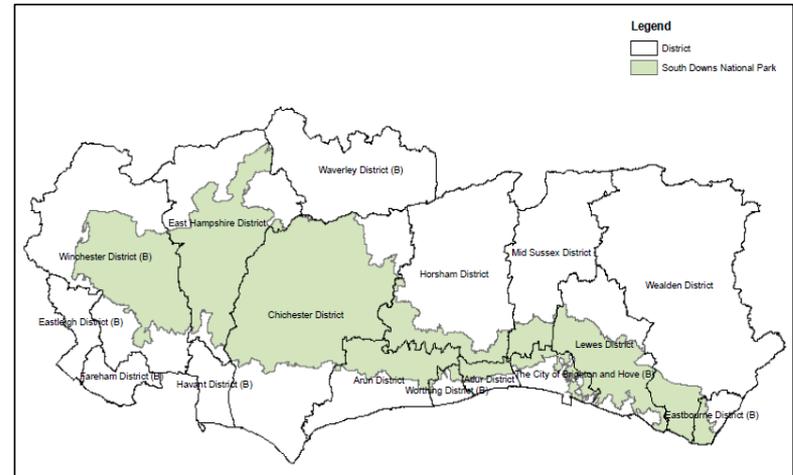
# Contents

- Overall Workload
- Section 101 agreements
- Validation
- Speed of decision making
- Appeals
- Enforcement
- Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Complaints and compliments
- Ensuring quality
- Current performance focus
- Challenges



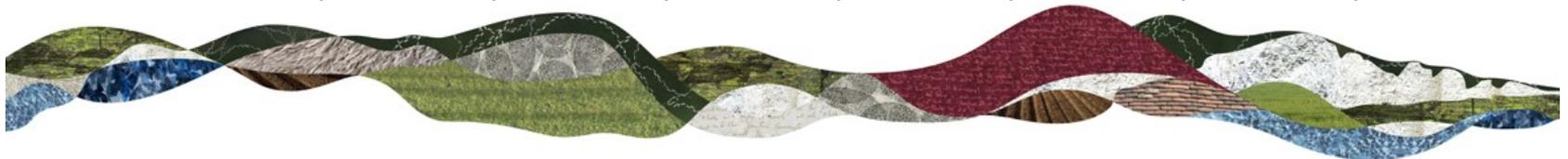
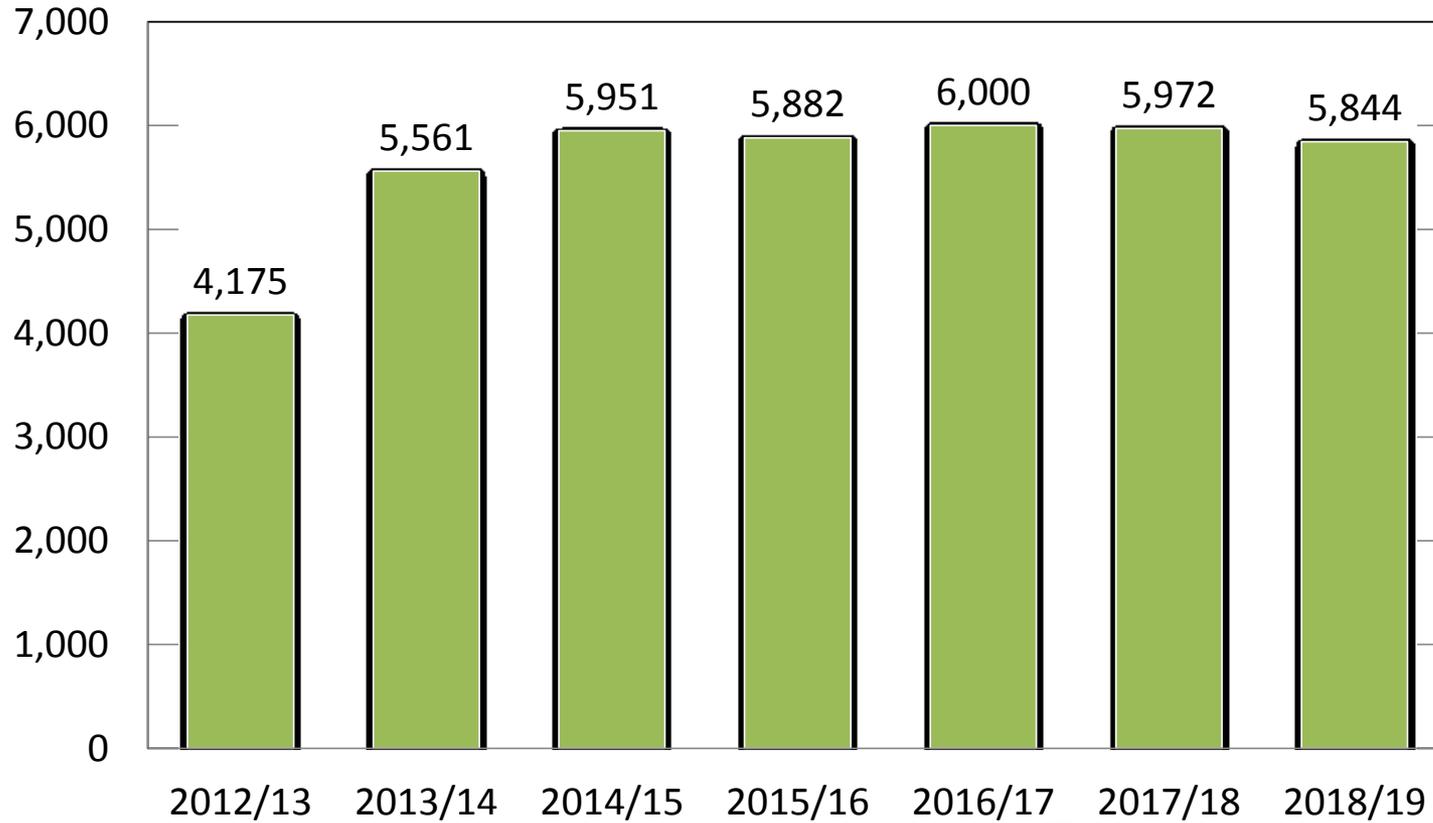
# Overall Workload

- The SDNPA is one of the largest Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in England:
  - Covers one of the largest geographic areas
  - Within the top 20 largest planning authorities in the country, as measured by the number of applications dealt with (there are just over 300 LPAs in England)
  - We determine more planning applications than most London Boroughs
  - We determine as many planning applications a year as the city of Manchester or Sheffield





# Overall Workload – All Cases



# Section 101 Contracts

- SDNPA itself deals with all planning matters (planning applications, enforcement and appeals) in the following District Council areas:
  - Adur
  - Arun
  - Brighton and Hove
  - Mid Sussex
  - Wealden
  - Worthing
- SDNPA calls in, for its own determination, the larger applications and those that have the potential to have most impact on the National Park
- SDNPA deals with all minerals and waste matters across the National Park (formerly dealt with by the County Councils)



# Section 101 Contracts

- We have contracts with 5 host authorities to deliver planning services (planning applications, enforcement and appeals) on our behalf.
- Over the last 2 financial years (at a cost of £2.26m for 2018/19) the percentage of the total planning application workload dealt with between us and the host authorities is as follows:

Chichester = 30.8%

East Hants = 20.9%

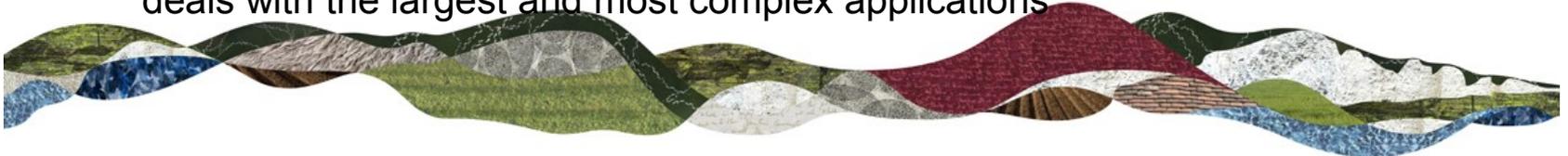
Ourselves = 17.9%

Lewes (also deal with Eastbourne cases) = 15.5%

Winchester = 11.6%

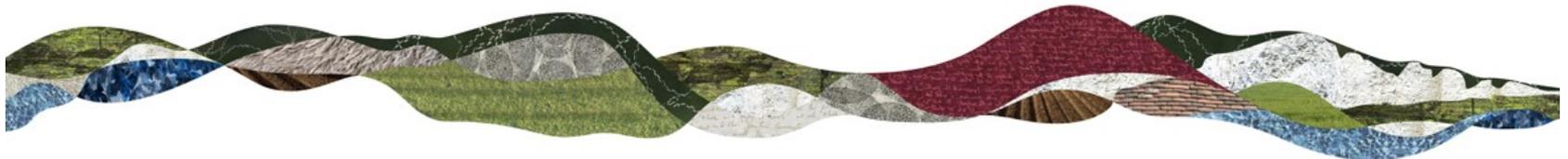
Horsham = 3.3%

- However caseload figures are not directly comparable as the SDNPA team deals with the largest and most complex applications



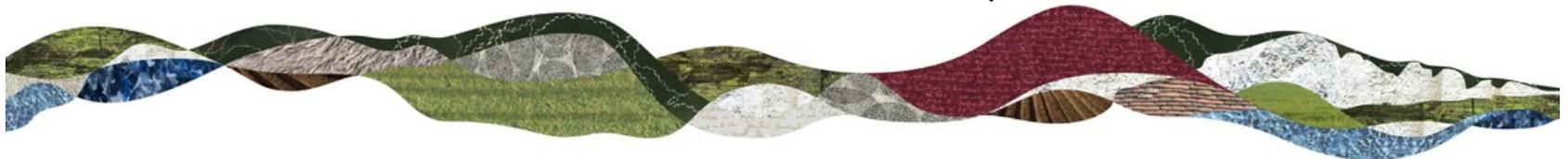
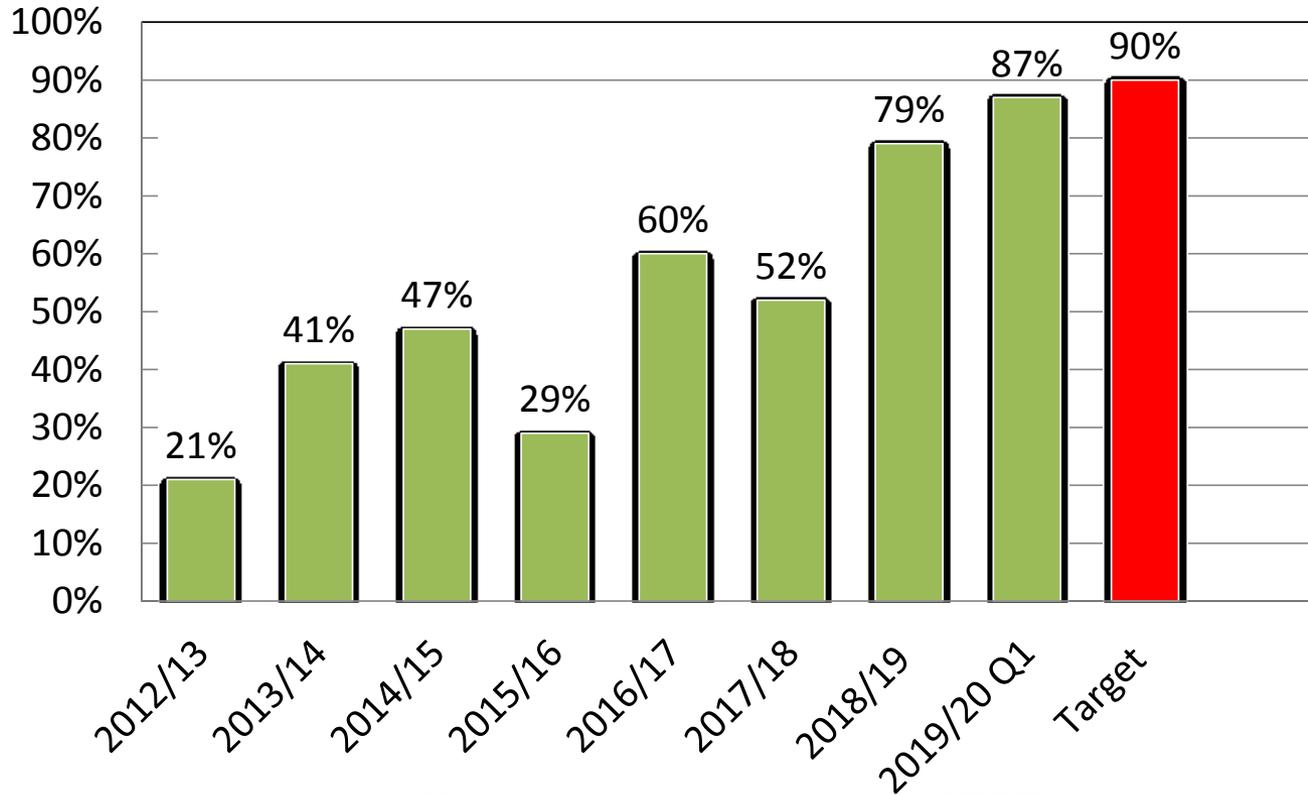
# Validation Performance

- Validation is the proportion of all applications that are either made valid or invalidated (with reasons) within 5 working days
- This is a SDNPA performance measure, we do not report this performance to Government
- Speed - and accuracy - of validation is an important factor in user's experience of the planning system
- Validation performance in the financial year is the strongest ever posted and in Q1 2019/20 just shy of the target
- There has been wide variation in host authority performance on this metric in the past – however as of January 2019 it is broadly consistent



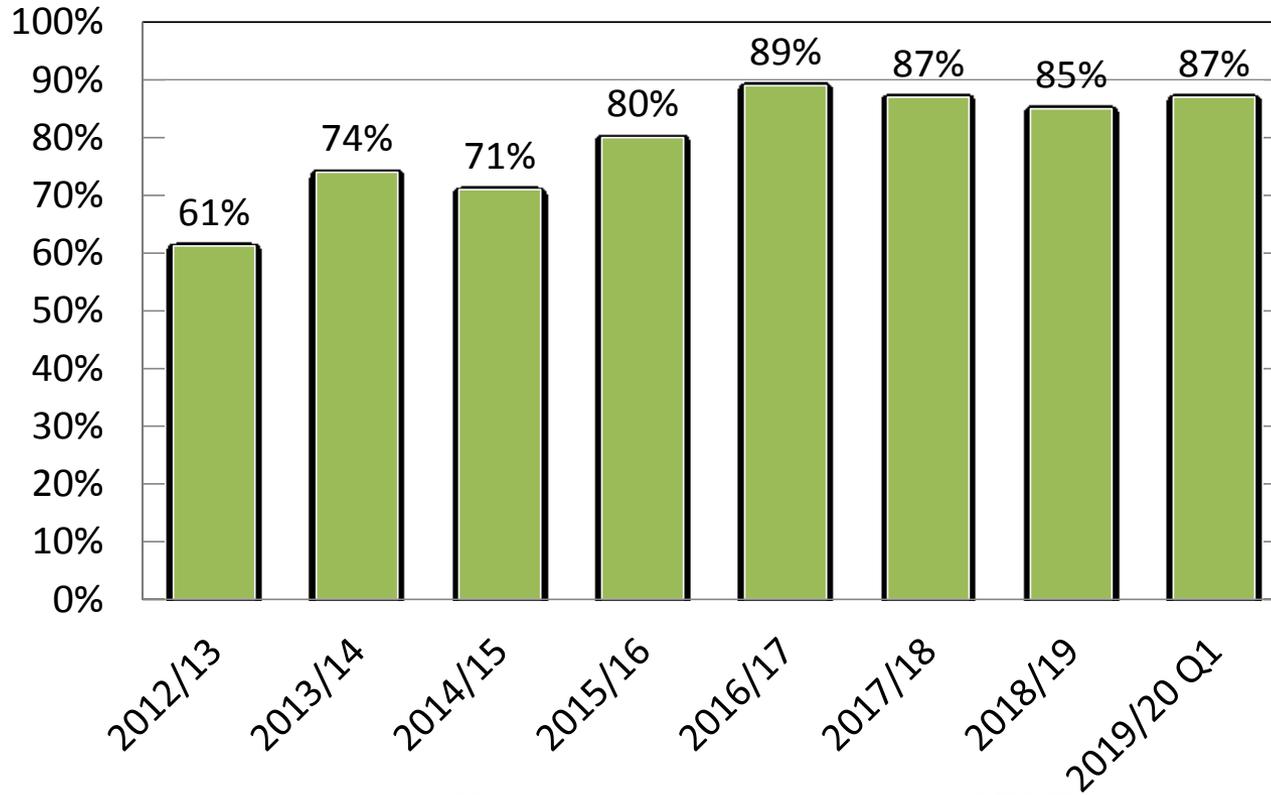


# Validation Performance (within 5 working days)





# Speed of Decision Making – PS2 applications in time



# Different types of planning applications

- **Major** = 10+ dwellings, over a 1,000 sq m of floorspace, site area exceeds a hectare, minerals applications, waste applications. 13 week target determination period (16 weeks if EIA development)
- **Minor** - 1-9 dwellings, up to 999 sq m of office, industrial, retail floorspace. 8 week target determination period
- **Other** - householders, change of use, listed building consent. 8 week target determination period
- A consistent benchmark for performance management and consultation requirements across England





# Speed of Decision Making

- Government set targets for speed of decision making which, if not met, could result in the Authority being put into special measures and having planning powers removed. The Authority is comfortably in excess of these targets

	Government Designation Criteria (applies October 2017 to September 2019)	Actual Percentage in time October 2017 to 31 August 2019
Majors	<b>Min 60%</b>	<b>80%</b>
Minors	<b>Min 70%</b>	<b>81%</b>
Others	<b>Min 70%</b>	<b>87%</b>

- There is also a quality criterion. No more than 10% of our total planning decisions can be overturned at appeal – from Oct 2017 1.2% of our total decisions have been overturned by the Planning Inspectorate





# Speed of Decision Making 2018/19 by Host Authority

## Majors

	Total Number of applications	%age in time
Chichester	8	100%
East Hants	5	100%
Horsham	4	100%
Lewes	2	50%
SDNPA	30	67%
Winchester	0	N/a

## Minors

	Total Number of applications	%age in time
Chichester	153	88%
East Hants	132	80%
Horsham	25	68%
Lewes	87	75%
SDNPA	98	71%
Winchester	59	88%

## Others

	Total Number of applications	%age in time
Chichester	597	91%
East Hants	392	92%
Horsham	83	84%
Lewes	335	77%
SDNPA	209	83%
Winchester	283	85%

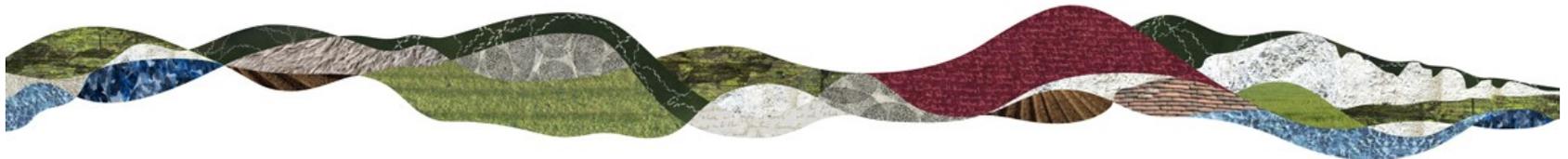




# Minerals and Waste

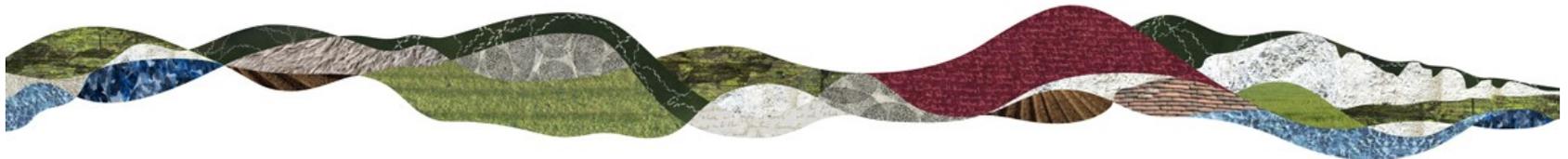
	Government Designation Criteria (applies October 2017 to September 2019)	Total number of applications determined October 2017 to 31 August 2019	Percentage in time October 2017 to 31 August 2019
Majors	<b>Min 60%</b>	13	69%

- Renewed emphasis on determining these applications in time
- Again there is a quality criterion from government. No more than 10% of our total minerals and waste decisions can be overturned at appeal. This means that if we lost just 2 appeals we would not meet this criterion and would be at risk of designation. This is a risk common to most Mineral Planning Authorities, given the low numbers of applications involved



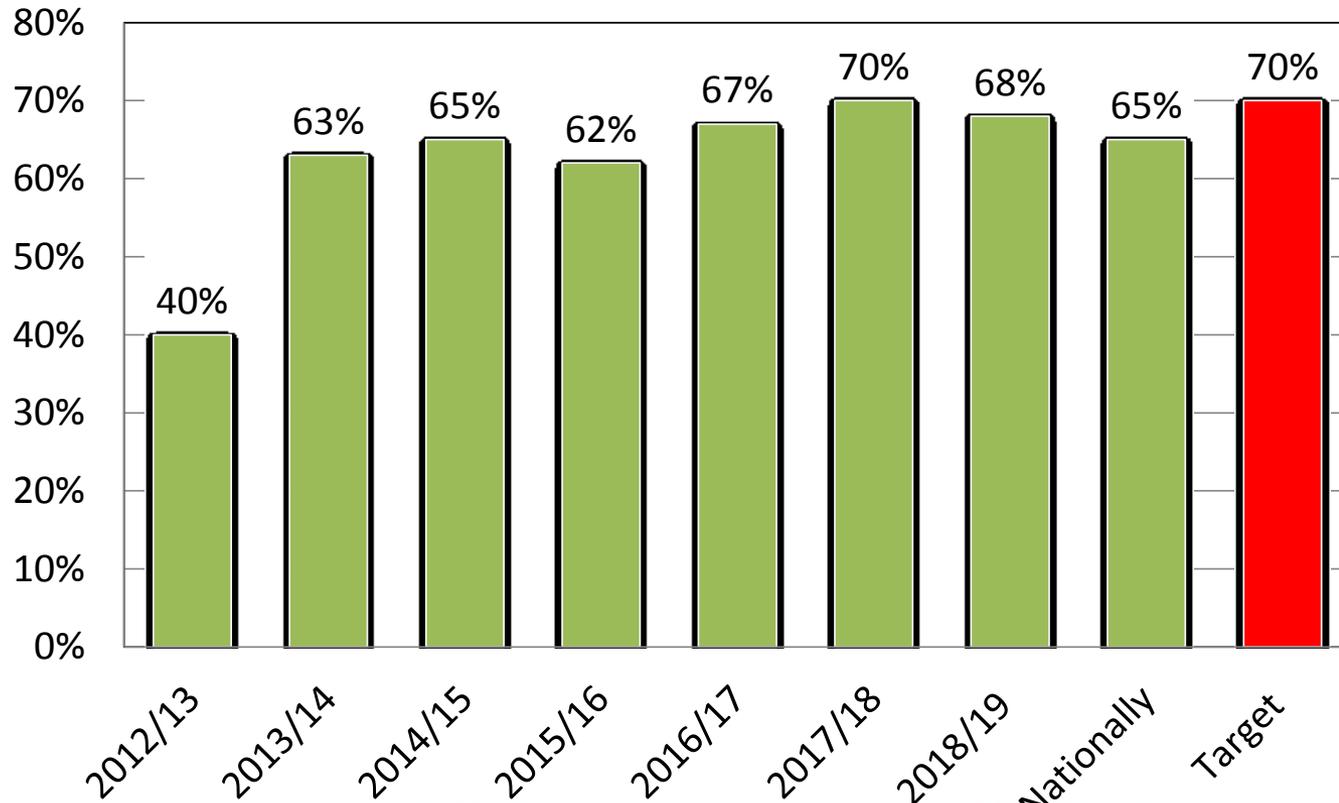
# Extensions of Time

- Planning applications should usually be determined within 8 weeks (most applications) or 13 weeks (majors)
- Where the applicant/agent agrees in writing this deadline can be extended and, if the decision is made within this agreed time, it counts as being determined 'in time' for the purposes of Government performance statistics. This applies across England
- This ability to extend the time, first introduced 6 years ago, is generally supported by agents as it allows extra time for amendments to be made to schemes (for example in response to consultee comments) to receive LPA support. However, if overused it does antagonise and some agents have commented that they consider they have little choice but to accept an extension of time. However this was not a major concern identified in the 2017 Customer Satisfaction Survey
- In 2018/19 36% of our applications were subject to an extension of time, compared to an average of 29% nationally





# Appeal Performance - Dismissed





# Appeal Performance

- Appeal performance between ourselves and the hosts is consistent with no significant variation – and this ought to be maintained in the future with a single Local Plan and consistent policies across the Park replacing many previous development plans and numerous policies.
- A summary of all appeal decisions is reported to Planning Committee quarterly



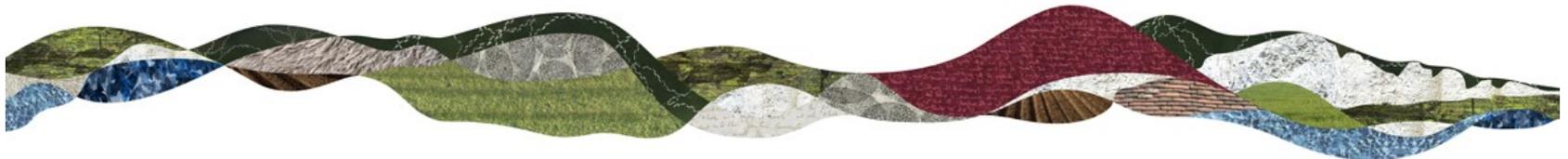
# Planning Enforcement

- We report the number of enforcement notices to Government each quarter but there is no requirement to report on speed of enforcement cases
- 750 enforcement cases dealt with in the financial year
- The Authority monitors the time taken to determine enforcement cases and Link officers run through older cases with host authorities every other month
- Most enforcement cases do not go to the Planning Inspectorate. However, where they do, there are long delays with the Inspectorate on enforcement appeals; this can be frustrating for residents



# Customer Satisfaction Survey

- We see Planning as a key customer service and have, from the beginning, sought ways to measure customer satisfaction
- Overall satisfaction with the planning service increased slightly from 67% in 2014 to 69% in late 2017 survey (survey of 500 users)
- Since 1 October 2018 a survey has been included with every decision notice issued.
  - 122 responses received as of 1 September
  - Positive results for providing a good customer service, providing helpful advice and information and communication
  - Respondents considered the website needed to be clearer and that officers needed to communicate more frequently during the planning process
  - The fact that communication was mentioned as a positive and a negative highlights its crucial importance to planning
- Regular Agent's Forum to be held, with the first scheduled for October





# Complaints and Compliments

	2017/18	2018/19
Complaints	56	35
Compliments	37	33

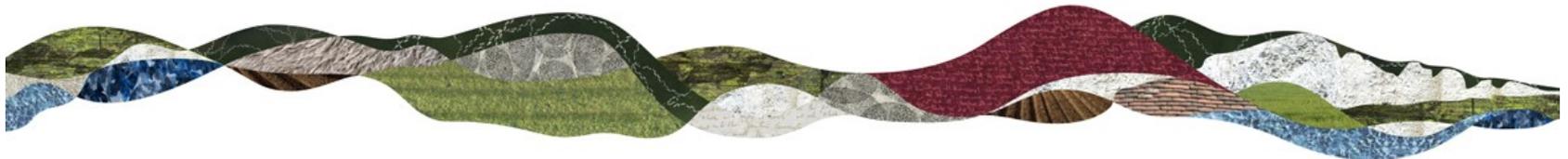
- Figures above relate to the Planning function only and include all complaints received by the host authorities acting on our behalf
- Since June 2017 we log, monitor and view all complaints, including those received directly by the host authorities
- The number of complaints received is broadly proportionate to the number of applications dealt with. Chichester District Council had a spike in complaints in 2017/18
- SDNPA speed in responding to complaints is very good, some of the host authorities less so and this is being followed up





# Ensuring Quality – Regular Performance Management

- Critical role of link officers
- Role of the Rangers
- Regular relationship meetings with senior staff at the host authorities
- Regular officer groups – development management, enforcement and technical support to share good practice and updated procedures
- Agreed action plans produced where there are specific matters of concern
- All complaints received reviewed
- Short customer satisfaction survey on every decision notice
- The planning team has secured 3 Royal Town Planning Institute Awards in the last 2 years (including a national award) and the Local Plan has just been shortlisted for an RTPI Regional Award



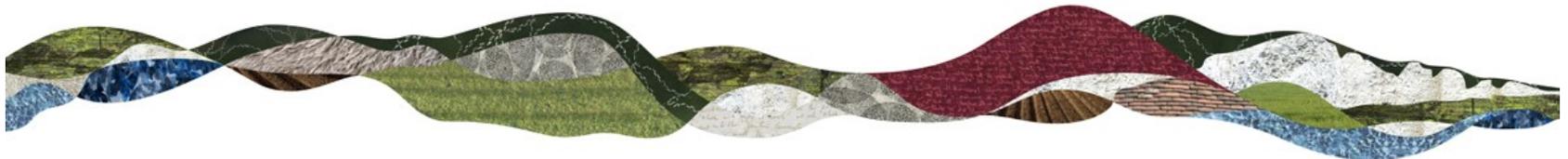
# Current Performance Focus

1. Assisting host authorities with the implementation of the new Local Plan
2. Addressing variation in performance which, although less than in previous years, has room for improvement around speed of decision making
3. Helping Lewes DC address the shortage of experienced planners (this has led to quality issues over the year)
4. Ensuring timely determination of minerals and waste applications
5. Speeding up dealing with enforcement cases
6. Emphasis on determining the small number of cases that have been on our books for some time
7. Ensuring host authorities deal with complaints quickly and efficiently
8. Schedule audit of host authority case officer reports to ensure Local Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plan compliance



# Main Challenges

- Continued difficulty recruiting qualified planners
- Maintaining and improving service quality given continued pressure on public sector budgets
- Variation in host authority performance
- Effective implementation of new, innovative Local Plan



# SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

