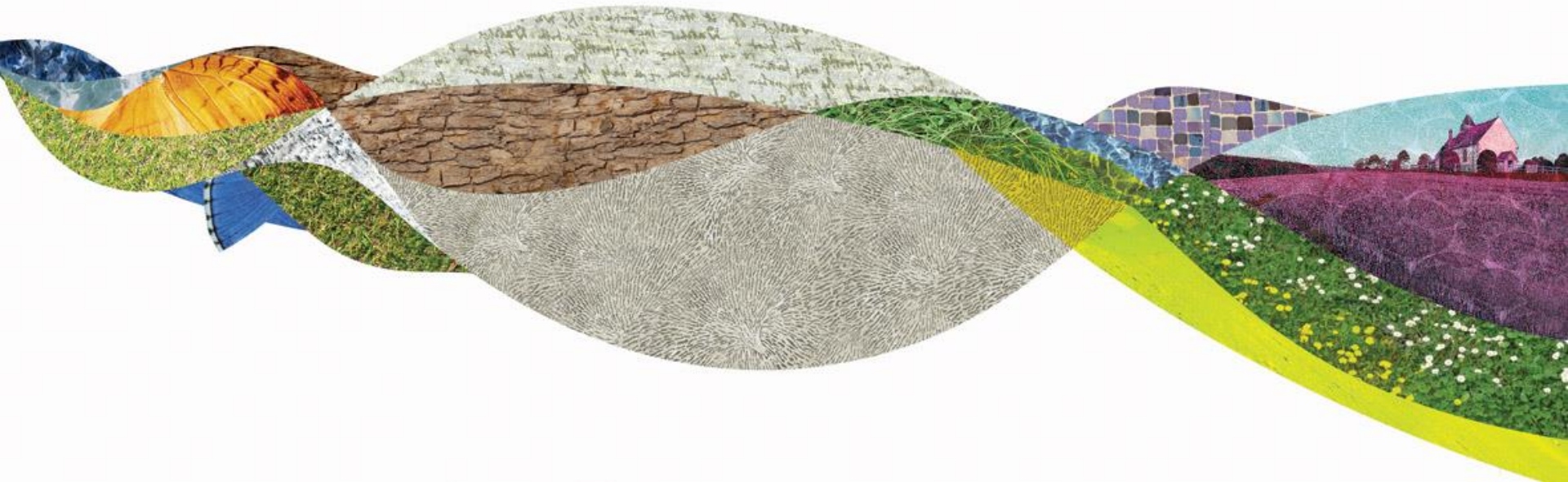


# Annual Review of Planning Performance - Financial Year 2019/20

## Policy and Resources Committee – 16 July



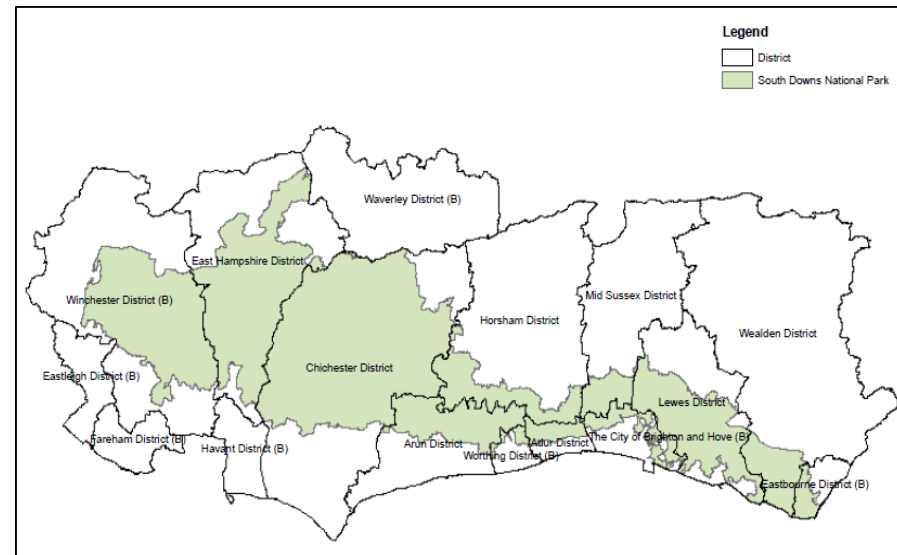
# Contents

- Overall Workload
- Section 101 agreements
- Validation
- Speed of decision making
- Appeals
- Enforcement
- Impacts of Covid 19
- Ensuring quality
- Current performance focus
- Challenges

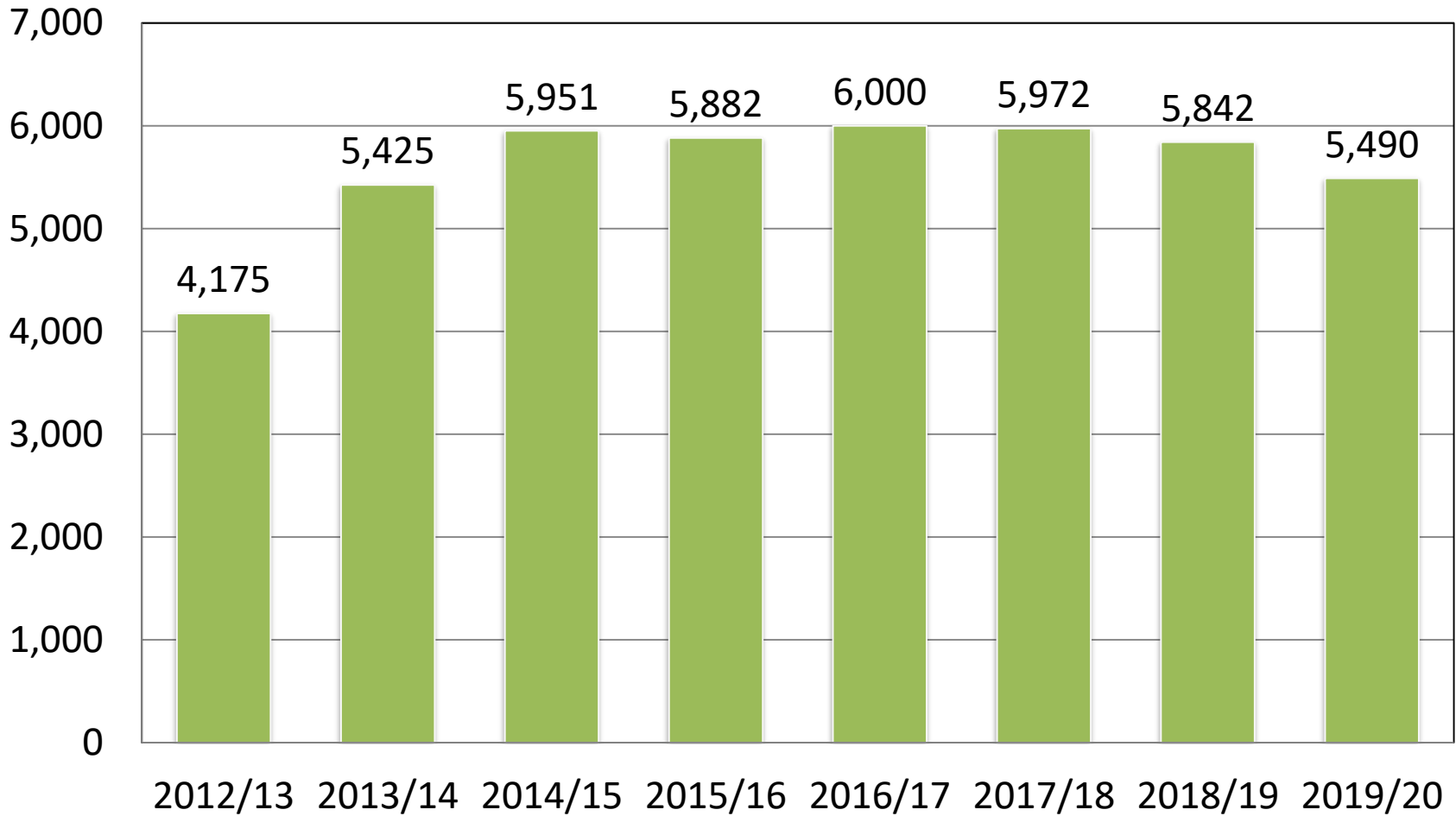


# Overall Workload

- The SDNPA is one of the largest Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in England:
  - Covers one of the largest geographic areas
  - Within the top 25 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 Manchester or Sheffield City Councils



# Overall Workload – All Cases



# Section 101 Contracts

- SDNPA itself deals with all planning matters (planning applications, enforcement and appeals) within the following District Council areas where they lie within the National Park:
  - Adur
  - Arun
  - Brighton and Hove
  - Mid Sussex
  - Wealden
  - Worthing
- Elsewhere 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 gross cost of £2.28m for 2019/20) the percentage of the total planning application workload dealt with between us and the host authorities is as follows:

Chichester = 30.5%

East Hants = 20.4%

Ourselves = 19%

Lewes (also deal with Eastbourne cases) = 14.7%

Winchester = 12.1%

Horsham = 3.3%

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

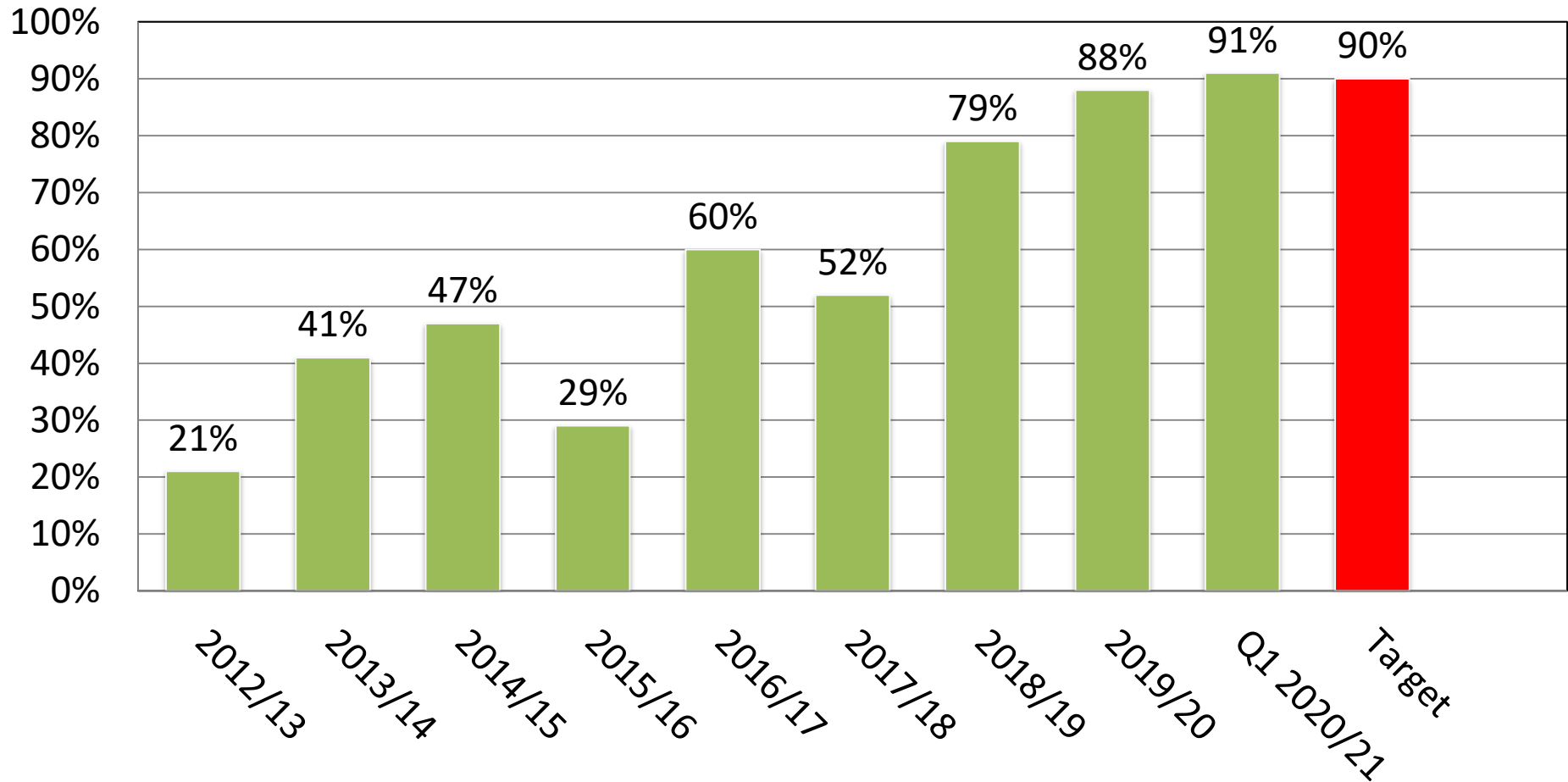


# Validation Performance

- 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
- There has been wide variation in host authority performance on this metric in the past – however as of January 2019 it is broadly consistent save for some variations in performance from Lewes DC.



# Validation Performance (within 5 working days)





# Different types of planning applications

- **Major** = 10+ dwellings, over a 1,000 sq m of floorspace, site area exceeds half a hectare, minerals applications, waste applications.
- **Others** - 1-9 dwellings; up to 999 sq m of office, industrial, retail floorspace; householders; change of use, listed building consent.
- Taken together they are known as 'PS2' applications
- A consistent benchmark for performance management and consultation requirements across England.

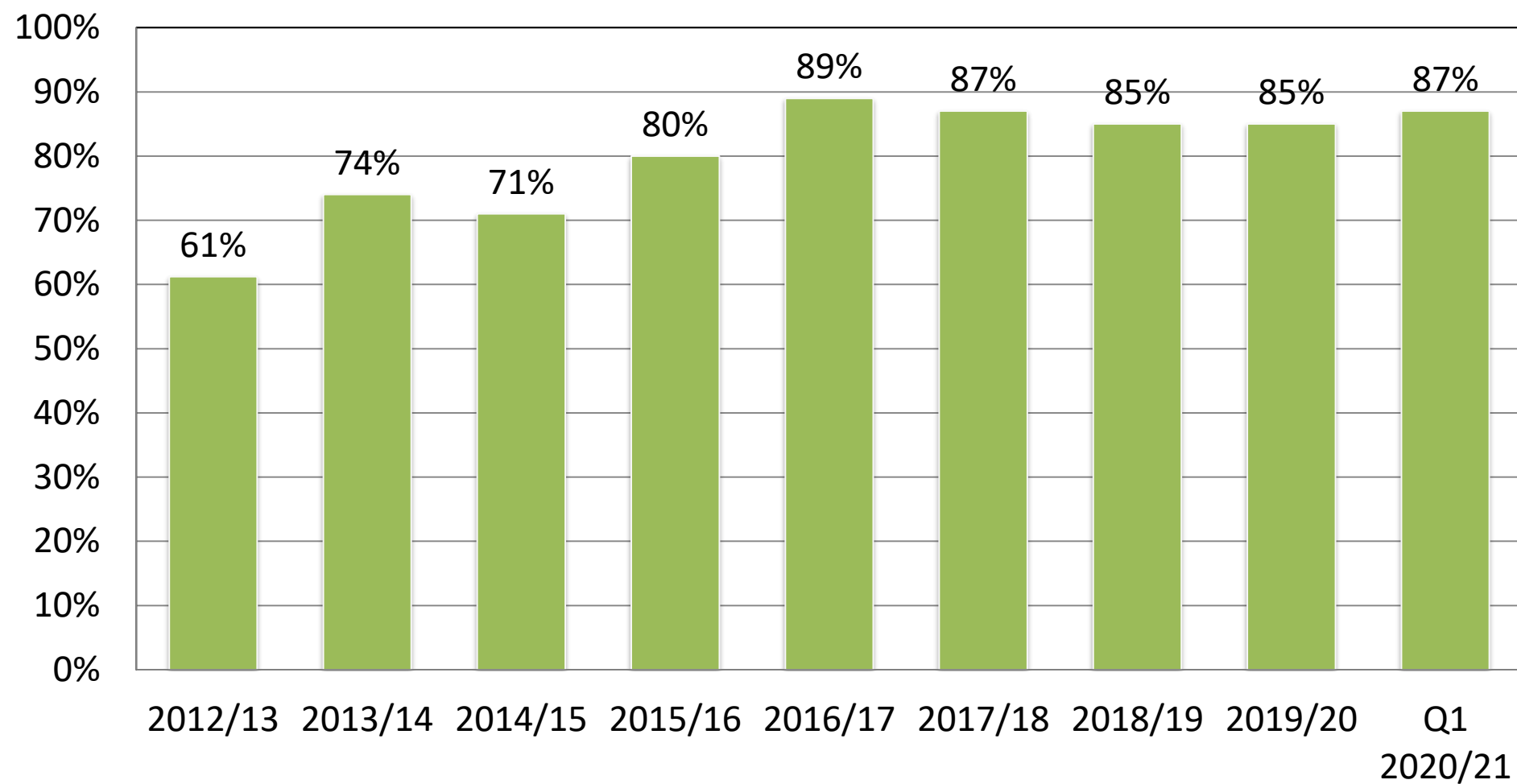


# Government Requirements – Speed of Decision Making

- That at least 60% of **major** applications are determined within time. There is a 13 week target determination period (16 weeks if EIA development)
- That at least 70% of '**others**' are determined within time. There is a 8 week target determination period.
- If these targets are not met it could result in the Authority being put into special measures and having planning powers removed. The Authority is comfortably in excess of these targets.
- There is also a quality criterion. No more than 10% of our total planning decisions can be overturned at appeal in a 2 year period – approximately 1.8% of our total decisions have been overturned by the Planning Inspectorate in 2019/20. For the 2 year period the Government specify (October 2017 to September 2019) it was 1.3%.



# Speed of Decision Making – PS2 applications in time



# Speed of Decision Making

## 2018/19 and 2019/20 - **MAJORS**

	2018/19		2019/20	
	Total Number of applications	%age in time	Total Number of applications	%age in time
<b>SDNPA OVERALL</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>85%</b>
Chichester	8	100%	5	100%
East Hants	5	100%	7	86%
Horsham	4	100%	0	N/a
Lewes	2	50%	1	100%
SDNPA	30	67%	33	82%
Winchester	0	N/a	1	100%

# Speed of Decision Making

## 2018/19 and 2019/20 - OTHERS

	2018/19		2019/20	
	Total Number of applications	%age in time	Total Number of applications	%age in time
<b>SDNPA OVERALL</b>	<b>2,454</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>2,117</b>	<b>85%</b>
Chichester	750	90%	637	87%
East Hants	525	89%	439	92%
Horsham	108	81%	94	93%
Lewes	422	77%	378	69%
SDNPA	307	79%	266	84%
Winchester	342	85%	303	89%



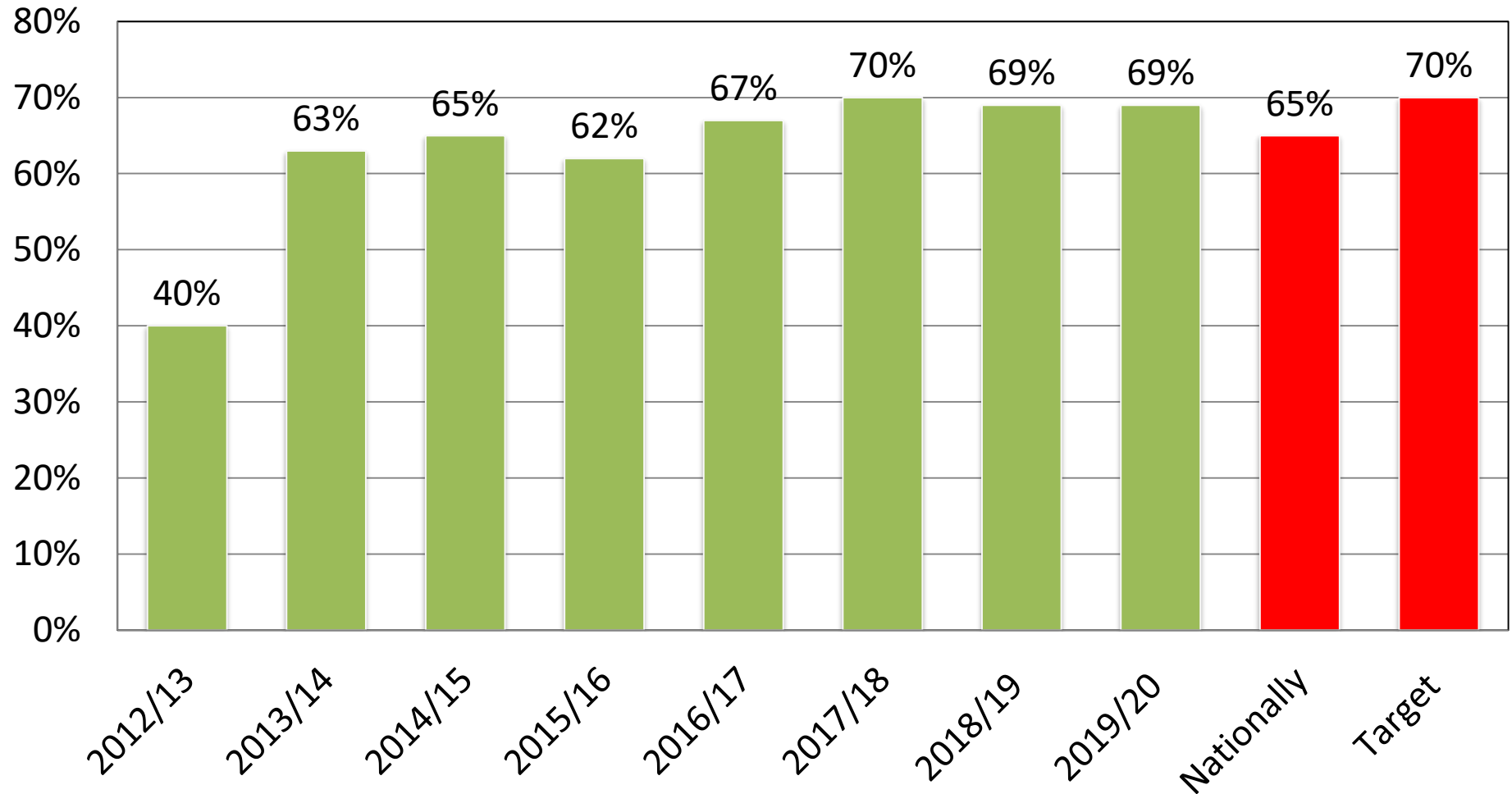
# Minerals and Waste

	Total number of applications determined in 2019/20	Percentage in time
Majors	8	100%

- Government require at least 60% of these decisions to be made on 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 in a 2 year period. 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, especially National Park Authorities, given the low numbers of applications involved.



# Appeal Performance - Dismissed



# Appeal Performance

	Total number of appeal decisions received	Number dismissed	Percentage dismissed
2019/20	123	85	69%
2018/19	106	73	69%
2017/18	80	56	70%

- A summary of all appeal decisions is reported to Planning Committee quarterly



# Appeal Performance by Host Authority over 3 years

	Number of appeal decisions between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2020	Percentage dismissed
Chichester	116	65%
East Hants	58	78%
Horsham	7	57%
Lewes	33	73%
SDNPA	70	67%
Winchester	31	71%

# 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
- 650 new enforcement cases were received in the financial year whilst 740 cases were closed
- In 2018/19 693 new enforcement cases were received, whilst 750 cases were closed
- 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





# Impacts of Covid-19

- During lockdown and the Government's stay at home instruction SDNPA and our host authorities did not generally carry out site visits, save enforcement matters of significant irreversible harm
- Socially distanced site visits are now taking place
- Validation, speed of decision making and appeal performance was maintained throughout
- However there was a 24% reduction in the number of applications received and validated between 1 April to 30 June 2020 (Q1) compared to the same period last year. This has financial implications, only part of which is offset by lower payments to the host authorities
- For the period between 1 April to 30 June 2020 compared to the same period last year:
  - Whilst speed of decision making was good there was a 25% reduction in the number of decisions issued
  - For Enforcement there was a 22% reduction in the number of cases closed



# Ensuring Quality – Regular Performance Management

- Critical role of link officers
- 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



# Ensuring Quality – Customer Satisfaction Survey

There is a link to a short customer satisfaction survey on every decision notice (issued by both us and the hosts) since 1 October 2018.

- 221 responses received to date
- The two most common positive responses were that we communicated well (63%) and that we provided helpful advice or information (54%).
- The two most common negative responses were that we should communicate more frequently (21%) and improve our website information (21%).
- The fact that communication was most frequently mentioned as both a positive and a negative highlights its crucial importance to planning
- 75% of respondents were happy with the overall service we provided, 11% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and 14% were dissatisfied.



# Ensuring Quality – Other Initiatives

- Agents forum every 6 months and the first community group forum was to have been held in April 2020
- The planning team has secured 4 Royal Town Planning Institute Awards in the last 3 years. This includes, in late 2019, a RTPI South East Regional Award for the Local Plan for Excellence in Planning for the Natural Environment
- Successful, and high profile, SDNP Design Awards held in November 2019 – including an award chosen by public vote and a speech from the RTPI President.



# Current Performance Focus

1. Dealing with Covid 19 impacts and implications, including planning for the recovery
2. Production of Supplementary Planning Documents to provide guidance on implementation of Local Plan policies
3. Speeding up dealing with enforcement cases
4. Addressing variation in performance which, although less than in any previous year, has room for improvement around speed of decision making
5. Helping Lewes DC address the shortage of experienced planners (this has previously led to quality issues)





# Main Challenges

- Impacts of Covid-19
- Vacancies and continued difficulty recruiting qualified and experienced planners
- Maintaining and improving service quality given continued pressure on public sector budgets



# Thank You

