

**Agenda Item 19**  
**Report PR20/21-09**

Report to	<b>Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b>
Date	<b>16 July 2020</b>
By	<b>Major Planning Projects and Performance Manager</b>
Title of Report (Note)	<b>Annual Review of Planning Performance: Financial Year 2019/20</b>

**Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1. Receive and note the Annual Review of Planning Performance**
- 2. Consider whether it wishes to make any recommendations to Officers relating to performance arising from the report**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Planning is an important statutory function of the Authority and helps further the National Park's statutory purposes and duty. The SDNPA is one of the largest planning authorities in the country, both geographically and in terms of the number of applications and other related matters dealt with. Consequently, the Authority's Planning Directorate, together with our five host authorities, interacts with many thousands of people a year and this contact may be an individual's only contact with the Authority.
- 1.2 Whilst a summary of all appeal decisions is reported to Planning Committee on a quarterly basis it is Policy and Resources Committee that has wider oversight of the Authority's planning performance. This report sets out, in a presentation at **Appendix I**, an overview of planning performance in the financial year 2019/20. Information is provided on:
  - i) Overall Workload
  - ii) The Section 101 contracts we have with five host authorities for the provision of planning services
  - iii) Validation performance
  - iv) Speed of decision making on planning applications
  - v) Appeal performance
  - vi) Planning enforcement
  - vii) Impacts on planning performance seen from Covid-19
  - viii) Quality assurance
  - ix) Our current performance focus
  - x) Challenges

**2. Issues raised by members in advance of the meeting**

- 2.1 A version of this report was circulated to 2019/20 P&R Committee Members in advance of the Committee. Answers to questions and comments raised have been incorporated into the final report

### 3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Planning performance, as an Authority and within that of the five host authorities, is subject to regular performance management with performance being consistently monitored, evaluated and reported on a wide variety of metrics. Planning performance is also discussed with the host authorities at a senior officer level, as well as at regular meetings the Authority Chair and Chief Executive have with their counterparts at the host authorities.
- 3.2 Overall planning performance continues to be good and all government targets have been met. Speed of decision making and appeal performance is good whilst validation performance is now sound and substantially improved on previous years.
- 3.3 As identified in the attached presentation there is room for improvement including addressing variations in host authority performance, principally with Lewes District Council who have had issues with validation and speed of decision making at points in the year. This should also be set against the advantages the hosted authority arrangements bring, including providing planning services closer to the communities served, established and effective partnership working and allowing the Authority to concentrate on the more significant applications. Furthermore, some variation in performance has been a factor since the Authority was created and actually these variations are less than in any previous year.
- 3.4 Moving forward dealing with the impacts and implications of Covid-19 will be necessary and the Planning team is ready to carry out any associated work.

### 4. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No further decisions required. Another update on planning performance will be presented to Policy and Resources Committee in 12 months.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Not directly – the delivery of planning services are resourced from the Authority's core budget and income brought in from Planning.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Performance management is established practice for ensuring value for money.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	None, but note there is social value to the partnership arrangements
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	As this is a monitoring report there are no direct equality considerations arising out of this report. The Planning system is delivered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Data Protection implications?	None arising directly. The Planning function is undertaken in accordance with all appropriate data protection requirements.

Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy:	None directly arising.
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## 5. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

- 5.1 There are risks to the Authority and the National Park if the Planning system is not operating efficiently or effectively. However, there are limited risks arising from this report itself.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Variation in authority performance overall may be subject to adverse media comment	Medium	Low	Officers monitor performance regularly and addressing performance variations is discussed, with actions agreed, at senior officer level. An annual update on planning performance to Members is an important part of performance monitoring and local government openness.

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Appendices I. Presentation – Annual Review of Planning Performance – Financial Year 2019/20

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive; Director of Planning; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services

External Consultees None