

Report of	Meeting	Date
Head of Planning and Enforcement	Planning Committee	Tuesday, 10 September 2024

## Designation Action Plan

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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### Purpose Of The Report

1. The purpose of this report is to make Planning Committee aware of the current status of the Performance Improvement Action Plan (Appendix A) and the latest trends in decision making for Major planning applications (Appendix B).

### Recommendations

2. That Members note the progress made with the Performance Improvement Action Plan and the latest trends in Major decision making.

### Reasons For Recommendations

3. Keeping Members updated of progress on these matters is a requirement of the Performance Improvement Action Plan.

### Other Options Considered And Rejected

4. No other options were considered as the Action Plan is a requirement of the designation, and necessary for de-designation.

### Corporate Priorities

5. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

<b>Housing where residents can live well</b>	A green and sustainable borough
<b>An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas</b>	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

## **Background To The Report**

6. As Members are aware, the Secretary of State announced on 19 December 2023 the decision to designate Chorley for poor performance in decision making on Major planning applications.

## **How we become de-designated**

7. The Secretary of State will decide once each year whether any designations should be lifted, at around the same time as deciding whether any new designations are to be made. We understand that on exception, de-designations may be made at other times, and presume that these would be linked to the quarterly release of data.
8. In assessing whether a designation should be lifted, consideration is given to:
  - (a) the potential capability of the designated local planning authority to deal effectively with applications for major or non-major development, as appropriate, in the future; and
  - (b) the effectiveness of the designated local planning authority in dealing with the relevant category of applications during the period of its designation.
9. Soon after a designation is made the local planning authority is expected to prepare an action plan addressing areas of weakness that it identifies as having contributed to its under-performance. In doing so the authority should draw upon sector support, particularly any support that is available through programmes funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), (previously Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities).
10. An action plan has, therefore, been drafted, see Appendix A, which identifies areas of weakness which have contributed to the Council's designation and associated actions for improving these areas. The Action Plan has been approved by full Council earlier this year and sent to MHCLG.
11. The figures assessed by the government lag behind current performance. As can be seen from the figures highlighted in Appendix B, the number of appeals lost on Major planning applications in the rolling two year periods between April 2020 and March 2023 dropped. Further, the current figure for the rolling two year period to March 2024 is estimated to be 7.7% (not yet published). It is clear that performance is improving since the period of designation, returning to previous levels below 10%. It is, therefore, hoped that the designation will be removed during the government's next review of figures (likely to be in Autumn 2024) and with the implementation of the Council's Action Plan. It is not possible to make any projections further into the future as we cannot predict the number of applications the Council will determine nor the outcome of those applications.
12. It is also worth noting that the Council is awaiting the outcome of an appeal decision for a proposed new prison at HMP Wymott in Ulnes Walton. MHCLG has confirmed, via the Planning Advisory Service, that the final outcome of the appeal will not impact on the Council's performance figures should the appeal be allowed.

## **Climate Change And Air Quality**

13. The work noted in this report has no impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

## **Equality And Diversity**

14. There are no equality implications or considerations to be documented.

## **RISK**

15. The risk of not implementing an action plan is that the Council will remain in designation for a longer period.

## **Comments Of The Statutory Finance Officer**

16. This is a progress update report for noting by the Planning Committee; there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **Comments Of The Monitoring Officer**

17. This is a progress update report as noted above. At this stage there are no direct legal implications for the Council other than to note the decision-making trends which have been undertaken.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Performance Improvement Action Plan

Appendix B – Criteria for Designation

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