

Performance Update – August 2021

The [latest official monthly statistics](#) details our performance on Planning Appeals for the 12 month period to the end of July 2021 for cases in England.

The Planning Inspectorate delivers an appeals, examinations and applications service in England and Wales. We support a fair planning system through deciding planning, enforcement and specialist casework appeals; helping communities shape where they live by examining local plans; and help meet future infrastructure needs by reviewing national infrastructure applications.

Our performance statistics currently only cover our appeals casework. In summary:

- we made 18,123 appeal decisions in the last 12 months, an average of over 1500 per month
- the mean average time to make an appeal decision across all types of casework in the last 12 months was 27 weeks
- at the end of July 2021, we had 11,982 open cases. This is an increase of 173 (1.5%), from the previous month

How long appeals take

- a householder appeal proceeding by written representations in July 21 was taking 20 weeks to decide on (mean) average
- for s78 planning appeals, the (mean) average for written representations was 26 weeks. There were 623 decisions in July 21
- planning appeals progressing by hearing (virtual or physical) have a (mean) average decision time of 525 weeks comparable to performance over the past year. Numbers of hearings and decisions are returning to pre-pandemic levels. There were 67 hearing decisions in July 21
- the mean average time to make a decision, across all cases in the last 12 months (Aug 20 to Jul 21), was 27 weeks. The median time is 23 weeks
- the median time to decide a case decreased by 0.6 weeks between June and July 21, with the median being 21.4 weeks
- for Inquiries, the (mean) average for July 21 was 79 weeks, for Written Representations the (mean) average for July 21 was 20 weeks and for Hearings the (mean) average for July 21 was 44 weeks. There were 38 inquiry decisions in July 21
- the median time for planning appeals decided by inquiry under the Rosewell Process over the 12 months to July 21 is 35 weeks. This is quicker than other types of casework decided by inquiry
- for enforcement appeals, (mean) average decision times are 32 weeks for written representations, 64.1 for hearings and 90.6 for inquiries

We realise that some appellants have had to wait longer than usual for a decision. We are working hard to meet the demand on our services and will be holding a high number of hearings and inquiries over the coming months.

Local plan examinations

In July, five local plan examinations were concluded and two new plans were submitted for examination. As of 13 August we have 67 live examinations.

National Infrastructure examinations

See the register of applications on the [National Infrastructure Planning website](#) for a list of pre-application, live and decided applications. As of 17 August 2021, there is currently one application at the acceptance stage, 10 applications at the pre-examination stage, four are currently being examined, five have reached recommendation stage and 10 are at the decision stage.

Returning to face to face events this autumn

Following the government's announcement to relax coronavirus restrictions from 19 July we have been making arrangements for a return to in person events hosted by Local Planning Authorities.

We issued an [update on this on 15 July](#).

For hearings and inquiries taking place from 13 September we will be reverting to the pre-pandemic approach of them being arranged by local authorities. In-person events will be possible, but where participants (including the inspector) need to present their evidence or participate virtually this will need to be facilitated by the local authority.

Where in-person elements are planned, the local authority will need to be prepared for the event to be held fully virtually in case pandemic restrictions change.

See the [latest guidance on our current casework arrangements](#).

Towards a future model for events

The Inspectorate is also undertaking further work on a longer-term, sustained approach to hearings and inquiries, considering the best practice approach for running events whilst building on what we have learnt during the pandemic.

We are currently engaging and consulting with staff, stakeholders and customers about how we should work in the future. We expect both blended (which include in-person elements) and virtual events to be part of our future operating model.

One of the key questions we will need to decide on, following research and engagement, is what the balance should be between physical and virtual within and across different case types. The events being run by local authorities from 13 September will provide us with valuable evidence to help shape our thinking. We expect to be able to share more on the future operating model

for events in early 2022.

Casework transferring to new service in Wales from 1 October

From 1 October all casework in Wales (except UK national infrastructure projects) will transfer to the Planning and Environment Decisions Wales / Penderfyniadau Cynllunio ac Amgylchedd Cymru, part of Welsh Government.

Planning Inspectorate Wales' inspectors and support staff will transfer to Welsh Government to carry out these functions. Robust governance arrangements have been established to ensure that inspectors continue to determine appeals and other casework with the same objectivity and impartiality as before.

Further details on transition arrangements for existing cases and new processes for submitting appeals or other cases in Wales will be issued in coming weeks and shared on our website pages.

We will keep customers informed of developments and improvements to our services. Follow us for updates:

[Twitter](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[Planning Inspectorate blog](#)