

Update on performance for the Planning Inspectorate

In our [previous performance update](#), we explained the reasons for the time taken to deal with some appeals. These included a rise in the demand for our services and a corresponding lack of supply of inspectors.

The key priority in improving performance has therefore been a recruitment drive to employ more decision makers.

An initial recruitment exercise was undertaken in November 2018 which focused on bringing new inspectors into the organisation. This also included recruiting against a new model of decision making by employing appeals planning officers (APOs) to examine cases and make recommendations on less complex work. Based on this recommendation, some of our more senior and experienced inspectors then make the formal decisions. This recruitment process has seen more than 80 new inspectors and APOs joining the Planning Inspectorate. However, we still need more inspectors and have recently completed another targeted recruitment exercise to recruit more senior inspectors. Our aim is to complete this exercise with the new inspectors in post by the autumn.

The recruitment of permanent staff has also been supplemented by using more non-salaried inspectors. We are now busy focusing our resource in all casework areas with the aim of increasing performance to meet our targets.

We are beginning to see some clear signs of recovery. At the start of the appeal process, new planning appeals are now being assigned to an inspector with a median timescale of under 4 weeks. This has fallen from a high of 13 weeks due to more inspectors being available following the recruitment process.

Over the next few months we are likely to see a variance in performance as some of our older casework (including telephone kiosk appeals) passes through the system and is determined. Outside of these cases, we are currently seeing cases being determined in median timescales of around 22 weeks.

We remain confident that overall end to end performance, for determining planning appeals via written representations, should meet a target of 18 weeks before December 2019. This makes up around 90% of our 578 casework and around half of all our total overall casework. For all other casework we are expecting to recover by an uplift in performance of around 30% (compared to November 2018), after April 2020.