

**CONTRACT REVIEW
PERFORMANCE PACK
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

Service Performance Summary

Development Management have sustained a continuous and comparable high level of service in relation to the processing of planning applications, while being almost the busiest local planning authorities in London. The service operates within a policy framework set by the council, by national planning guidance and in accordance with the agreed Local Plan. This pack covers only the performance of the service as it relates to the processing of planning applications and planning enforcement, as separate discussions are underway regarding the future delivery of support to the development of planning policy.

The redesigned planning enforcement service, including the 'proactive enforcement' team, has been nationally recognised and the overall service has also been shortlisted on several other occasions.

The service has generated substantially greater income for the council than forecast. It has also invested in its staff and overall capacity. This is due to the success of commercialisation; including fast track, pre-application, and planning performance agreements, as well as wider consultancy activity. The income generated contributes to the achievement of Capita's obligations under the income guarantee and has significantly offset the deficit elsewhere.

In 2018, the government authorised a national 20% increase to planning fees, which has been used to invest in ongoing service adaptation and innovation.

Generally 'customer service' is close to meeting expected targets as a result of the additional funding, and further support for residents has been provided.

Key Figures 2018 - 2021

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Management Fee (as per Financial Model 2013)	2,536,292	2,582,075	2,631,904
Indexation	171,150	230,611	283,336
Change Request	113,783	116,059	118,357
Total	2,821,225	2,928,745	3,033,596
Special Projects	194,500	124,052	1,059,909*
Income (target)	(1,844,003)	(1,885,341)	(1,912,781)
Income (actuals)	(3,731,056)**	(4,037,575)**	(3,618,409)**

* SPIR's in 2020/21 are inclusive of Brent Cross Planning. In 2018/19 & 2019/20 the full Brent Cross Remit was inclusive of the delivery team, the full impact is not shown above as the overall delivery would distort the picture.

** excludes 20% uplift, which must be re-invested in the service under government regulations

Service Journey (Including Achievements) 2018 – March 2021

The planning team has continued to benchmark well against comparable authorities. The service is continuously one of the best performing Local Planning Authorities in London as measured by MHCLG relating to the processing of planning applications.

The Planning Enforcement function has maintained its leading position as the most active team in the country, when measured by the number of enforcement notices served, helping to resolve breaches of planning control and maintain the attractiveness of the Borough for residents, businesses and visitors. The team has also received significant council support to invest in its unique pro-active approach to enforcement projects and in particular the joint project with Public Protection to identify and enforce against unlawful HMOs providing substandard accommodation.

The service has continued to support the council's growth ambitions through the processing of planning applications; it is noteworthy that 17,621 new homes have been granted planning permission since 2018.

The service has supported the council to reform the structure of Planning Committees to improve decision making and prepare ahead for the ward boundary changes being implemented from 2022.

Service Journey (Including Achievements) Continued 2018 – March 2021

More than £1m has been invested in the service and helped to offset unforeseen costs since October 2018 – associated with the 20% uplift in planning fees. This has enabled the service to increase pro-active enforcement capacity to protect the Borough against unlawful development, appoint a resident liaison officer, and fund various different types of project work; including policy and urban design activities within the remit of strategic planning.

The service has continued to provide a wide range of additional non-statutory services to support development in the Borough, in accordance with the policy framework set by the council and national planning regulations, and speed up the process of obtaining permissions via further investments in the Fast-Track service and the Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) offering.

These service achievements have been recognised by peers. The team was the winner of the 2018 “Local Planning Authority of the Year” Planning Award and Planning Officer Society Cup. The team were also shortlisted for the LGC awards 2018 and 2019, the Planning Awards 2020 and the RTPi award for “Local Planning Authority of 2021”.

Service Journey - Commercial Innovation

Re. has maintained a growth ambition to service external clients, focusing on local authorities in the south. This has provided existing and new staff with opportunities to work for Barnet, but also gain experience with other planning authorities on resilience work (additional support to address peaks in demand) and is an attractive recruitment offer.

External Resilience contracts delivered to date account for circa. 50 contracts in total, with an annual average of between 12-20 contracts.

The Re. 'business growth' team provides these commercial services, which currently comprises 13 FTE staff, with the expectation of further growth (this excludes Policy and Building Control staff commercial activities).

Staff within the Re. growth team gain valuable experience of other local authority policies, practices and culture. This helps staff to more rapidly advance their careers, builds service reputation and has been very positive for staff retention.

External Contract showcase:

Over last 2 years a Re Principal Planner led on Brighton Marina Redevelopment PPA (Planning Performance Agreement) and the Appeal. This showcased the ability to support an LPA on a complex high-profile scheme. It has built trust and a positive reputation that helped secure a further DM Resilience contract.

Performance to Date – KPIs Annual Outturn

KPI Number	KPI Description	2018/2019		2019/2020		2020/2021	
		Target	Result	Target	Result	Target	Result
KPI001 (A&A)	Compliance with planning application statutory timescales (for major, minor, other applications)	75%	84.4%	80%	91.8%	80%	92.7%
AB KPI1	Planning Application Basket of Indicators	New for 2019/20	N/A	6	5	6	6
EB KPI1	Planning Enforcement Basket of Indicators	New for 2019/20	N/A	6	5	6	0 (Covid impact)

The main Planning Applications KPI 001 has consistently exceeded performance targets over the last three years and is indicative of the high-quality service delivered to residents of the Borough.

The COVID-19 pandemic and national lockdowns from March 2020 (2019/2020 through to 2020/2021) has had a direct impact on the performance of Planning Enforcement KPI EB KPI1 due to restrictions around site visit activities. In recognition of this, KPI relief was given by Barnet Council. With the easing of lockdown measures by Spring 2021 and resumption of wider enforcement activities, a recovery plan was put into place to address case backlogs and use the resources of the proactive team to restore service KPI performance.

* KPI is measured annually with quarterly reports on progress

How is Customer Satisfaction SKPI05 Measured?

During the period of 2018/19 and 2019/20, customers who visited the Planning Reception were asked to complete a hard copy version of the online survey. The results were manually merged with other customer feedback completed online via the same survey. These survey results were reviewed at the end of each reporting period.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Planning Reception was closed. Customers who emailed the Planning Enquiry generic mailbox were invited to complete an online version of the survey using a specific link for Planning responses.

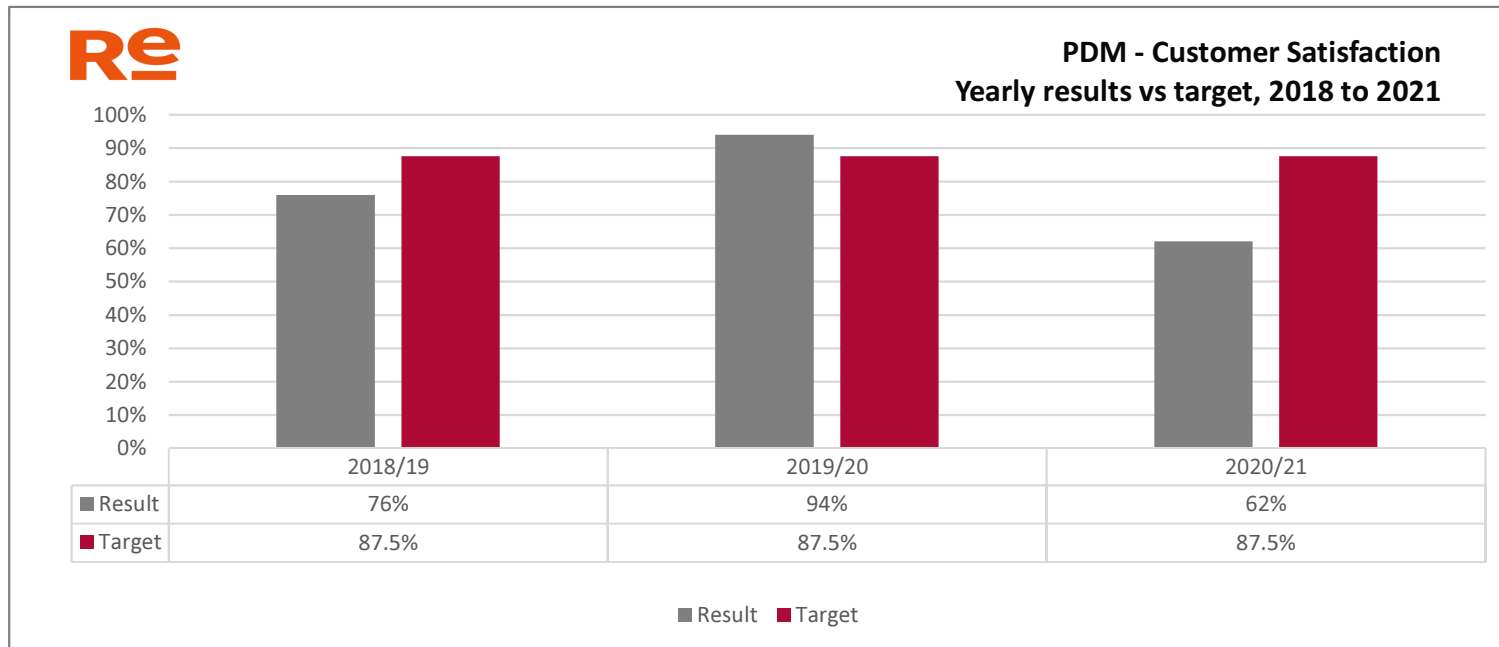
Scores are based on the % of customers that score Re either 4 (Good) or 5 (Very Good) on the survey questions.

In 2018/19, the service missed the target by 10 percentile points. Following the move to Colindale with an improved reception area, the result for 2019/20 was a healthy 94% of customers rating the service either as good or very good. The impact of Covid-19 and the closure of the reception impacted the result for 2020/21, which was 62%. This is attributed to not being able to compare like-for-like and a former face-to-face service being switched to a mailbox approach.

An additional measure has been taken to improve customer service, being additional investment in a resident liaison officer who ensures that residents corresponding or raising concerns with regards to applications, appeals and enforcement activities are appropriately engaged and kept suitably updated.

Re Overall Customer Satisfaction Results

Customer Satisfaction - % of customers scoring the service a 4 or 5 (on a scale of 1 to 5)



This customer satisfaction measure is based on the customer's front office experience and not the actual planning application process itself. Hence the scores do not reflect the consistently high KPI performance for planning application processing timescales. Data here is based on feedback forms completed by customers visiting the Planning Reception front office (closed since March 2020 due to COVID) and from customers who have placed Planning enquiry related calls into Re customer hub. The impact of COVID-19 and closure of the Planning Reception front office is a significant factor in the lower scores seen in 2020/21. There will be future plans to look to enhance the customer experience via the Re customer hub which will help to improve the scores seen in 2020/21.

Other Customer Satisfaction Measures

Planning Agents Bi-Annual Workshops

The Planning Service also host a Bi-annual Planning Agent's Forum to obtain feedback, raise awareness of the service and strengthen relationships.

The most recent (Wednesday 18th November 2020) attracted an unprecedented level of attendees. In total, 89 people joined the event.

Participants represented a diverse range of developer agents from local architects and planning agents, to consultancies such as Savills, Colliers, Avison Young and Lichfield.

The next forum is due to be held in Autumn 2021.

Feedback

"I thought the forum this morning was really well produced from all participants. Just in terms of my own experience of the service since March, it has been positive and has remained responsive, mainly dealing with Josh on a few things. It is also refreshing that agents and applicants are publicly acknowledged as important service users in Barnet: that is not always the case around London (!), so thank you from me and on behalf of applicants". [Savills]

"Thank you for the invitation. It was a very useful event. [You Architecture Ltd.]

I found the Agent Forum really informative this morning and all the speakers were excellent". [Michael Burroughs Associates Limited]

I just wanted to drop you a line and say thanks for the invitation it was great to listen to and very informative". [I G U A N A]