

Highways Agency Performance Specification 2013-14 – Technical Note

Field	Notes
Short Title	Planning Application Responses within 21 Day Target.
Performance Specification	Output 2 – PS 2.8
Requirement / Output Details	The network operator should continue to build on progress made to date to improve the transparency of its performance, both in terms of the quality of engagement with the development community and the speed at which processes concerning planning applications are completed. To continue to drive improvement and provide transparency, 99% of formal planning applications should be responded to within 21 days.
Technical Definition	<p>Percentage of formal responses from the Highways Agency to Local Planning Authority issued planning application consultations within 21 days of their receipt by the Highways Agency.</p> <p>The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010 (the 'DMPO') specifies that the Secretary of State for Transport must be consulted on all planning applications that either would have a material change to the traffic entering or leaving the Strategic Road Network (Article 16 of DMPO), or alters an access or is within 67m of the centreline of the SRN (Article 26 of the DMPO). The formal statutory deadline for a DMPO Article 26 case (i.e. direct access to the Strategic Road Network) is in fact 28 days. However, the Agency has agreed the same working deadline as the statutory deadline for an Article 16 case; i.e. 21 days.</p>
Rationale	It is a measure of meeting a statutory deadline, and a key indicator of our performance in responding promptly to planning application consultations.
Formula	<p>The percentage of planning application responses within 21 days, collated both monthly, and (financial) year to date. $([\text{Responses due made within 21 days in Period}]/[\text{Responses Due total in Period}]) \times 100\%$</p> <p>E.g. - If a Planning Application was received on the 1st January 2013 it will be due a response by the 22nd January 2013. This measure identifies the percentage of applications that achieve this 21 day target, within the time period stipulated (usually monthly or annual figure).</p>
Start Date	Annual figures are available going back to March 2010.
Performance	The performance should be above the 99% target outlined in the DfT's Strategic Road Network Performance Specification 2013-15.

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Behavioural Impact	This target has been in place for about three years and has helped to drive an improvement in performance in NDD Regional Asset Development Teams. There is a risk that Teams could be driven to issue holding directions in the 21 day timeframe that would count as a reply, to give more time to assess applications – but such directions have to be justified within a statutory framework (generally around lack of information from the applicant); and the proportions of holding directions responses are low (7.4% in 12/13) and around half what they were in 10/11). There is also a risk that applications will not be properly considered in terms of their impact on the SRN given the looming deadlines, but there are processes in place to ensure Team Leader sign off when planning consultancy advice is not being followed.
Comparability	Some comparability is possible with other statutory consultees to the planning process e.g. Environment Agency, although they measure themselves against longer deadlines where they are agreed locally with the planning authority for individual applications, and they do not reply to all consultations.
Collection Frequency	Monthly.
Clearance Process	Monthly through NDD Regional Director lead for Planning, and then through all NDD Directors and Board Director, before release outside Agency for monthly report. For Annual Report, similar, but also through NetServ planning policy team.
Time Lag	One month.
Data Source	Development Control Database (accessed via HAMIS general tab).
Type of Data	Management data – stemming from manually inputted date of receipt of planning application consultation, and manually inputted date of reply, which is compared to an automatically generated target date 21 days from the manually entered date of receipt.
Robustness and Data Limitations	Relies on correct dates being manually entered, but use of the database is well established as is the 21 day target. What few failures there are to meet the 21 day target are sometimes administrative and a reply has actually been sent within time e.g date entered in wrong field, or date of reply not entered promptly and not captured in end of month draw down of data. We are looking to be able to differentiate between the differing types of fails going forward in 2013/14.

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Collecting Organisation	Highways Agency (NDD).
Return Format	Percentage.
Geographical Coverage	England.
How Indicator Can be Broken Down	Monthly breakdown via NDD Regional boundaries is also done.