

Planning Work in Progress (WiP)

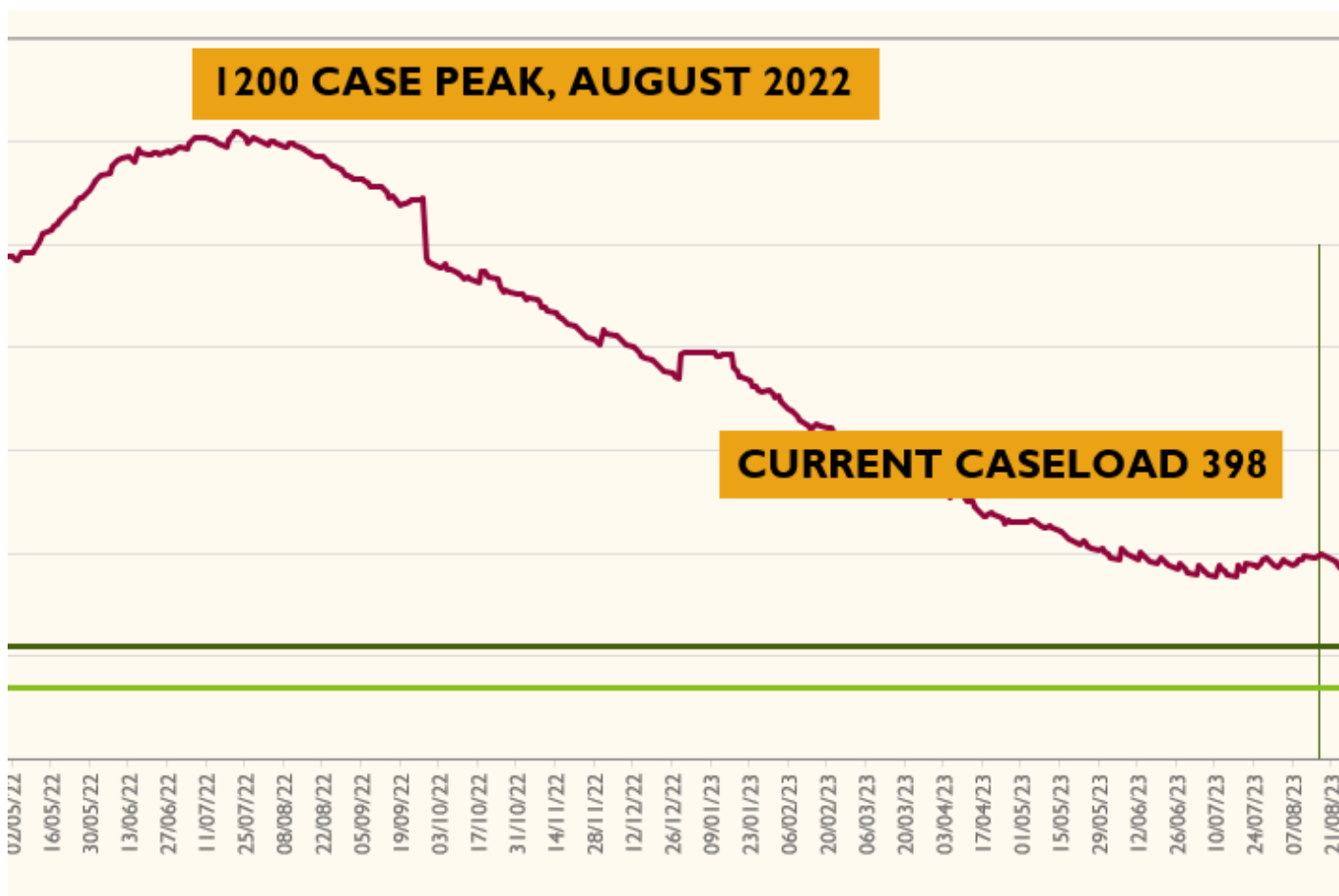


Figure 1: Graph illustrating progress in planning application determinations for the period May 2022 to present.

Notes:

- The graph illustrates the current application level and progress
- 398 cases on hand at the time of writing 16/08/23, down from a peak of 1,200 cases peak in August 2022
- At the time of our previous report to Scrutiny Committee last month, the caseload was 367, it is now 398, a rise of 31 cases in the last month. Whilst the caseload has risen slightly, the number of cases on hand is still lower than any time since June 2020
- Staffing issues are the main driver behind the slight rise in cases – over the past four weeks we have been down four officers on our core team with other colleagues taking annual leave. A job offer was made to a candidate but they chose to go elsewhere – an offer has been made to a different candidate who will start in early September. A previously unfilled vacancy has been readvertised. Two Officers have returned from a period of absence.
- In the past 30 days we have received 167 new applications and determined 155. By comparison, over the previous 4 week period, we determined 205
- Despite this the majority of new cases are allocated to a case officer within one or two weeks of validation. We do not have a “backlog” of applications – we do have a temporary “holding pen” for new applications but the number of cases held in this state has remained steady. We have also made good progress on late and persistently late applications.

- Officers continue to make robust use of the Validation Checklist to turn away applications that are lacking in essential information. We also quickly target poor quality applications that have been submitted with little or no regard for their “approvability” and fall significantly short of policy expectations. Members can assist in this by supporting Officers when they refuse to accept or approve applications that are clearly substandard.

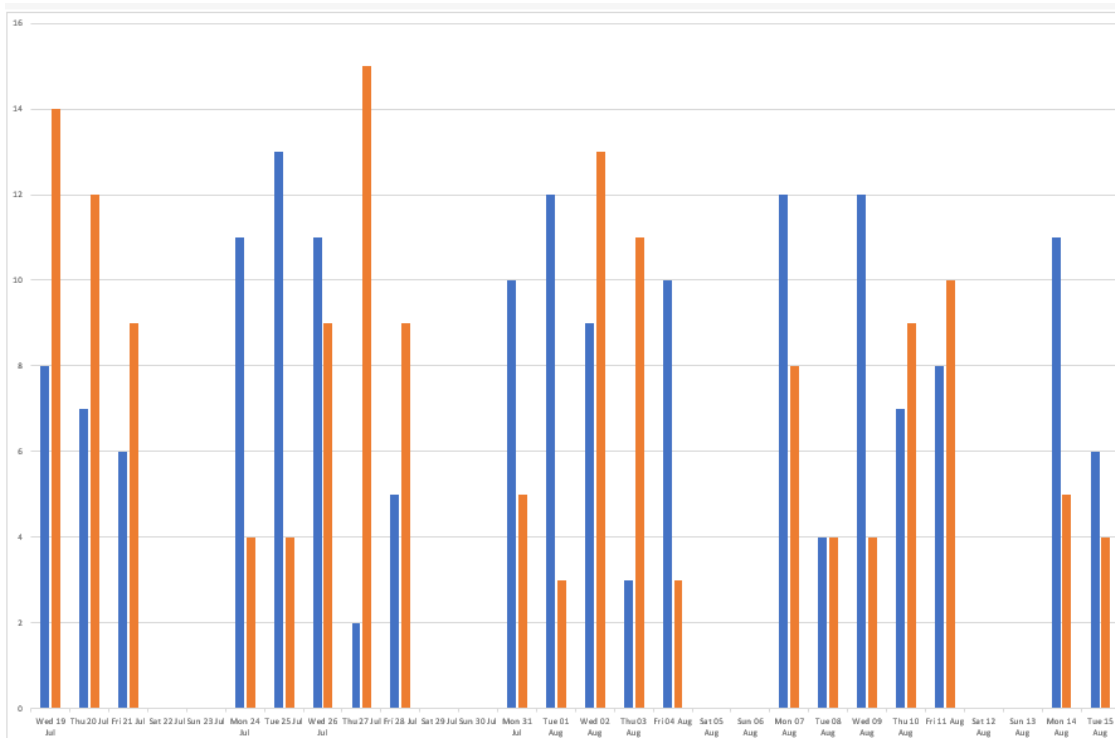


Figure 2: Planning Applications Validated and Determined – Past 30 Days

- The bar chart above shows Applications Received (Blue) and Applications Determined (Orange) each day for the last 30 days. It shows that the number of applications received has comparatively high, exceeding 10 applications on 9 days of the last 30

Late Applications

- The primary driver of “late” applications is not Officer performance but is the quality of the application submission, not just in terms of supporting information (the Validation Checklist will significantly assist with this and is already doing so) but in terms of how far the application falls short of acceptable policy standards. Applications that are submitted without due regard for whether or not they are capable of being approved represent a significant drain on Council resources. Such applications also result in delays for all the other applicants and agents who act responsibly
- In February we reported that 62% of our total caseload on hand had missed the Government’s targets by at least one day. In April this was 36%, in the last report this was 22%, at the time of writing it is 18%. Officers continue to seek ways of driving this key indicator down
- In the last few months we have also focused our efforts on “persistently late applications” – our definition of these is applications that are more than 90 days past the Government’s target, often with no clear strategy from the applicant and their representatives as to how problems with the proposal can be resolved. At the beginning of June there were 67 such cases, in the last report there were 33, at the time of writing this figure is 25. An Officer has been allocated the specific task of bringing the majority of these remaining cases to a close as quickly as possible and despite the challenges of these often complex cases, has been successful in doing so.