



Infrastructure
and Environment

Gouvernement d'Jèrri

PLANNING SERVICES FOCUS JUNE 2024

Gouvernement d'Jèrri

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INTRODUCTION

Planning is a highly emotive subject and Jersey is not unique in this regard. Dealing with applications is inherently complex, with legal, environmental, social and economic factors all at play. Decisions can significantly impact the Island and our community for decades to come, and it is therefore no surprise that there is a great deal of focus on getting the planning process right.

In Jersey, we have acknowledged that there is room for improvement, and the two recent independent reports from Jim MacKinnon have further focused our efforts on the key areas where we can, and already are, making a difference.

In this short report, I've highlighted where we will focus our efforts in the short, medium and longer term. We're committing to reducing waiting times, improving the customer experience, and working closely with the industry. Duty officers in our new Government Headquarters on The Parade will give customers more personal face-to-face guidance, our new RIDA system will ensure technology is working for us not against us, and in the longer term we'll look at the Island Plan production process.

In my short time as Minister, I've already seen first-hand how committed the Planning team are to driving forward change. I share that commitment and look forward to seeing the improvements outlined over the next few pages come to fruition.

**Deputy Steve Luce,
Minister for the Environment**

SHORT TERM FOCUS



Our short term focus areas have been prioritised with a commitment to delivery within the next three months.

Efficiency in Minor Applications: We're making it quicker and easier for Islanders to get minor planning approvals. We're ensuring that most small-scale projects, like home extensions or minor building modifications, are processed within 8 weeks. We're doing this by simplifying the paperwork and improving how we handle applications behind the scenes, meaning less waiting and a smoother process from start to finish.

Customer Service Charter: The Customer Service Charter outlines clear targets for promptly registering and validating planning applications, as well as for timely responses to customer enquiries. This includes commitments to returning phone calls within 2 days and ensuring applications are processed swiftly. This will improve the reliability and responsiveness of the planning department, enhancing the quality of service for all customers.

Industry Partnership Board: The Industry Partnership Board is being established to ensure ongoing dialogue with key industry professionals. Meeting each quarter, the board will provide a platform for regular interaction with stakeholders, foster a collaborative environment and enhance our understanding of industry needs.

Optimising Planning Committee Meetings: Planning Committee procedures are being refined to streamline the review of applications. This has included an additional meeting in April, along with improvements to our process that will enhance the efficiency and productivity of our routine meetings. Decision-making will be quicker, reducing wait times for applicants.

Regular Case Review Meetings: Internally, we are committing to weekly case review meetings focused on evaluating the status of ongoing applications, identifying any bottlenecks, and ensuring consistent progress. This approach aims to maintain high efficiency within the department, leading to quicker turnaround times for planning applications.

Enhanced Pre-Application Service: The pre-application service provides comprehensive support to planning, including both in-person consultations and detailed written guidance, designed to help applicants prepare thoroughly before making their formal submissions.

Planning Processing Agreements: These agreements serve as a project management tool for major and complex planning applications, detailing timelines, key milestones, and responsibilities. This initiative is making the planning process more predictable, providing applicants with a clear understanding of the procedures and timeframes involved.

Quarterly Statistics Reporting: Transparency is being boosted by publishing quarterly statistics. These reports will detail the number of pending applications and the outcomes of decisions. Regularly sharing this data will provide stakeholders and Islanders with valuable insights into the department's performance and progress.



MEDIUM TERM FOCUS

In the medium term, we are working across projects with completion due by the end of 2024.

Embedding Duty Officers in New Government Offices: With the new Government Headquarters set to open in the latter half of 2024, we plan to embed duty officers in these facilities. This move will provide customers with direct access to planning officers, facilitating face-to-face consultations and advice. Being housed in the Government Offices, these officers will be well-placed to offer guidance, making the planning process more accessible and user-friendly for our customers.

Streamlining Validation: A key objective is to reduce the time taken for validating applications. To help achieve this, we're implementing a Validation Checklist. This tool is designed to streamline application requirements, making it clearer what is needed for each application and improving internal processing times. By clarifying and simplifying the validation process, we aim to provide a more efficient service, reducing delays and enhancing the overall customer experience.

Guidance on Bridging Island Plan Interpretation: We recognise the need for clarity regarding the Bridging Island Plan and its role in decision-making. To address this, we will continue to publish detailed guidance on how key island plan policies are interpreted and applied to provide more certainty to the development industry and to help decision-makers. Guidance will seek to provide clearer insights for both applicants and stakeholders into how planning policies are practically applied in decision-making.

RIDA System Rollout: RIDA represents a digital transformation within the planning process, aimed at boosting operational efficiency. Its deployment will be accompanied by ongoing system monitoring and refinement to ensure that RIDA achieves its intended service enhancements, process streamlining, and an overall boost in departmental efficiency.

Permitted Development Rights Change: We're streamlining this process by implementing changes through direct ministerial order. This approach bypasses the need for lengthy consultations, allowing for quicker updates and adjustments. Additionally, we've allocated short term staff resources to support the initiative, ensuring that these changes are implemented efficiently and effectively.



LONG TERM FOCUS

Longer term, we are targeting areas that will establish lasting improvements and ensure future readiness, commencing in 2025 and extending into 2026.

Exploring Changes to the Planning System: We're committed to exploring changes to the current planning system. This involves assessing and refining our processes and policies to ensure they meet the evolving needs of our community and environment. By thoroughly and continuously examining existing procedures, we aim to identify areas for improvement and innovation, leading to a more effective and forward-thinking planning system.

Reviewing the Island Plan Production Process: A key long term objective is to review and potentially revise how the Island Plan is produced. This review will consider all aspects of the plan's development, with the goal of enhancing the effectiveness, relevance, and responsiveness of the Island Plan, ensuring it serves as a robust framework for sustainable development and planning decisions.

Promoting Higher Design Standards in New Developments: We intend to raise the bar for design quality in new developments, advocating for higher design standards, encouraging innovative and sustainable design solutions, and ensuring that new developments contribute positively to the Island's character and environment. By setting and maintaining high standards, we aim to foster a built environment that is not only functional but also aesthetically pleasing and environmentally responsible.

Sustaining the Influence of the Industry Partnership Board: Recognising the value of the Industry Partnership Board, we are committed to maintaining and enhancing its role. The board's work in facilitating dialogue between the planning department and industry stakeholders will ensure ongoing collaboration, sharing of best practices, and alignment of industry and planning objectives, all contributing to a more cohesive and effective planning process.

Changes to Permitted Developments: We're undertaking a comprehensive review of the existing permitted development guidelines to identify areas for simplification. Our objective is to refine what's permitted, aiming to streamline the process for applicants. By reassessing these parameters, we aim to facilitate easier and more efficient project commencements, without compromising on our planning standards.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES UPDATE

Over the past year, the planning team have undertaken a strategic push to enhance operations across various key areas. This has been a period of active development with multiple initiatives reaching completion, several progressing according to plan, and others with a longer term set of objectives attached.

Completed Initiatives:

We've hit several targets head-on, delivering on a range of improvements that have refined and revitalised our services. These successful completions are milestones that underscore the department's effectiveness and responsiveness:

Pre-Application Advice	Customer Service Charter	Planning Processing Agreements
Validation Checklist	Compliance Strategy	Industry Forums
Customer Reception	Concordat with Industry	

Ongoing Efforts:

As we build on our achievements, there are still areas under active development. Our team is committed to realising these initiatives, ensuring enhancements in service delivery and operational quality:

Improvement Plan	Celebrating Success	Training & Professional Development
Customer Experience	Industry Engagement	

Future Directions:

Looking ahead, we have longer term ambitions that will require sustained effort and strategic planning. Delivery of these objectives will lay the foundation for significant advancements in the coming years:

Early Intervention	Monitoring Performance	Improving the Application Process
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PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF MAJOR & MINOR APPLICATIONS



Context

The Planning Department's performance in processing both major and minor applications has shown significant improvement over the observed period from Q1 2022 to Q2 2024 (Q2 2024 figures accurate up to 31/05/24). These improvements reflect our concerted efforts to streamline operations and enhance efficiency, aligning with our broader commitment to reducing waiting times and improving the customer experience.

Major Applications Performance (13 Weeks Target)

For major applications, there has been a steady upward trend, with our most recent quarterly performance figures tracking at 75%, a substantial increase from our initial performance and trending towards the 85% performance target. This upward trend highlights our efforts and strategic improvements in handling complex major applications. While there is still progress to be made, the improvement over the observed period illustrates the positive impact of our ongoing efforts and the dedication of our team.

Minor Applications Performance (8 Weeks Target)

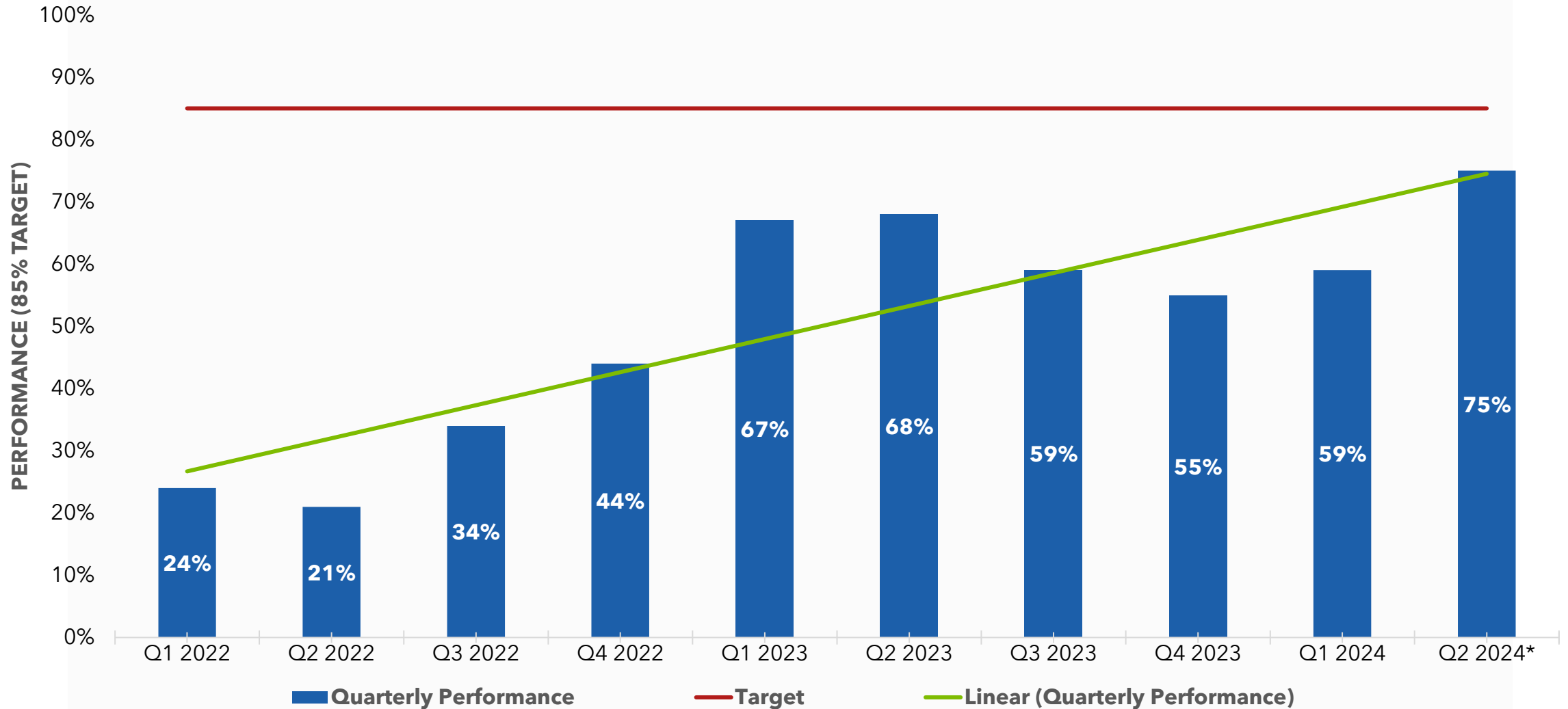
The performance of Minor Applications also shows consistent improvement over the period, with an average performance of 81% recorded across 2023. This steady performance signifies our success in optimising processes and is testament to our effective implementation of new strategies.

Conclusion

Overall, the Quarterly Performance Charts for both Major and Minor applications reflect a positive trend in the Planning Department's performance. While we acknowledge that there is still room for growth to consistently meet and exceed our 85% target, these results provide a solid foundation upon which we can continue to build, aiming for even greater efficiency and customer satisfaction in the future.



QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE (MAJOR APPLICATIONS)

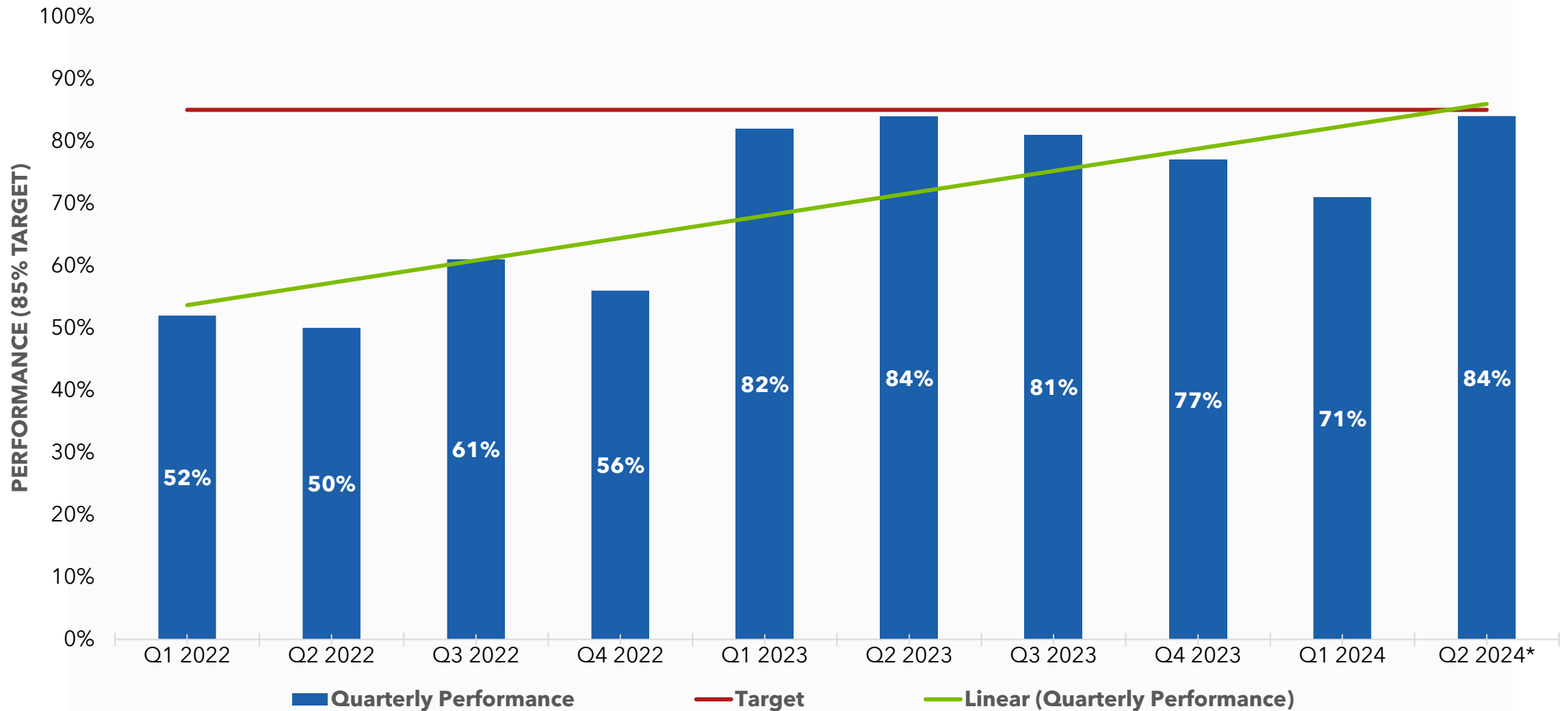


2022 Average = **30%** | 2023 Average = **62%** | 2024 Average = **65%**

* Figure accurate up to 31.05.24



QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE (MINOR APPLICATIONS)



2022 Average = **54%** | 2023 Average = **81%** | 2024 Average = **76%**

* Figure accurate up to 31.05.24



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