



Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

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Dr Phyllis Starkey MP
Chair
Committee on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
House of Commons
London
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Dear Dr. Starkey, 11/11 PS

PLANNING PERFORMANCE

I am writing to you as part of my Department's regular commitment to report on the planning casework performance for all First Secretary of State cases. As you know, since March 2004 our target has been that 80% of called in planning applications and recovered planning appeals should be decided within 16 weeks of the close of the Inquiry.

For the first half of this year, our performance has been affected by the General Election, which prevented us from deciding a number of cases in the first quarter. This was compounded by a disproportionate rise in cases in the second quarter. Many of these cases were complex and took longer than 16 weeks to determine. This has resulted in a slight fall in performance against the PSA6 Target. Between April and September, 74% of decisions were issued within 16 weeks of the close of the Inquiry. These complex cases account for much of the delay. If 3 of these cases were excluded, performance would rise to 88%. We are therefore looking very closely at the way large complex cases are handled.

However, on a more positive note, I am pleased to be able to inform you about our performance on statutory timetabled cases. As you are aware, we are now committed through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to setting and meeting a timetable for the majority of First Secretary of State cases where the Inquiry closed after 1 April 2005. (Exceptions include cases decided jointly with another Minister, such as Ports cases.) Since April 2005, we have decided 54 such cases and have met our statutory timetable in all instances.

I am keen that we continue to ensure that our performance on all cases remains at a high level.

Yvette Cooper
YVETTE COOPER

(Approved by the Minister and signed in her absence)