



Title of Report:	Third Quarterly Report on Planning Performance
Committee Report Submitted To:	Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	28 April 2021
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council has agreed policies and procedures and decision making is consistent with them
Lead Officer	Head of Planning

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	Nil
Included in Current Year Estimates	
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	N/A	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:

1.0 Background

1.1 Schedule 4 of The Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 sets out the statutory performance targets for the Planning Department for major development applications, local development applications and enforcement cases.

1.2 The statutory targets are:

- Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 30 weeks
- Local applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 15 weeks
- 70% of all enforcement cases progressed to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint.

1.3 The Northern Ireland Planning Statistics is an official statistics publication issued by Analysis, Statistics & Research Team within Department for Infrastructure. It provides the official statistics for each Council on each of the statutory targets and is published quarterly and on an annual basis. The Third Quarter 2020/21 Statistical Bulletin was published on 25 March 2021 providing planning statistics for this period. It also provides a summary of Council progress across the three statutory targets.

2.0 Details

Website link 1

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-october-december-2020> provides the link to the published bulletin.

Development Management Planning Applications

2.1 Table 1 below provides a summary of performance in relation to the statutory targets for major development applications and local development applications for the third quarter of 2020-21 business year and provides a comparison of performance against all 11 Councils.

2.2 Of note is that we issued the 3rd highest number of major planning applications out of the 11 Councils in Q3 and have the 4th highest number of live applications. There has been a reduction of only 13 in the number of decisions issued when compared to the same period last year. In terms of decisions issued in Q3, we issued the 5th highest number of decisions out of 11 Councils in this quarter.

2.3 In terms of average processing times in Q3, we were the 3rd highest (i.e. longest time) for both major and local applications.

Table 1: Planning Applications

2020/21	Major		Local		Total		Live	
Q3	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Total	Over 12mths
Planning Applications	1	5	338	295	339	300	931	216 (23.2%)
Rank (highest)	10 th	3 rd	5 th	5 th	5 th	5 th	4 th	4 th (%)
Average Processing Times	54.8 weeks		19.8 weeks					
Rank (highest)	3 rd		3 rd					
Approval Rate	100%		94.9%		95%		10 th Rank	

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Third Quarter 2020/21 Statistical Bulletin

- 2.4 Table 2 below provides the YTD position at end of Q3. Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council sits mid-ranking in terms of applications received, live cases and percentage of live cases over 12 months old. Performance has also improved in relation to the average processing time for local applications. Major planning application processing times were impacted by the postponement of Planning Committee meetings in March, April and May and no Committee meeting in July, impeding the progression to decision of the major applications.
- 2.5 Focus on the over 12 month applications in the system is required to continue to reduce the number of older applications in the system. Concentration on these applications will take place in Q4 which will have a negative impact on processing times during that period.

Table 2: YTD Planning Applications Statistics

2020/21	Major		Local		Total		Live	
YTD	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Total	Over 12mths
Planning Applications	6	10	865	619	871	629	931	216 (23.2%)
Rank (highest)	7 th	3 rd	5 th	6 th	5 th	5 th	4 th	4 th (%)
Average Processing Times	79.2 weeks		20 weeks					
Rank (highest)	2 nd		3 rd					
Approval Rate	100%		95.6%		96.2%		5 th Rank	

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Third Quarter 2020/21 Statistical Bulletin

Enforcement

- 2.6 Table 3 below shows statistics in relation to enforcement for Q3 of the 2020/21 business year and Table 4 shows the position year to date at end of Q3. Of note is that the Enforcement Team continues to meet the statutory target to conclude 70% of cases within 39 weeks. To note, the enforcement team closed the 6th highest number of cases with over 41% as a result of no breach of planning control being identified. Furthermore, the Enforcement team had the highest number of prosecutions in Q3 out of the 11 Councils. The Enforcement Team have the 6th highest number of live enforcement cases with the 8th highest percentage of cases over 2 years in the system.

Table 3: Enforcement

2020/21	Open	Conclude	Conclusion Times	Court Action	
Q3			70% within 39wks	Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	52	60	75%	5	1
Rank (highest)	9 th	7 th	6 th	1 st	4 th

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Third Quarter 2020/21 Statistical Bulletin

Table 4: YTD Enforcement Statistics

2020/21	Open	Conclude	Conclusion Times	Court Action	
YTD			70% within 39wks	Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	175	166	72.3%	9	1
Rank (highest)	7 th	6 th	6 th	1 st	4 th

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Third Quarter 2020/21 Statistical Bulletin

Other Activity by Planning Department

- 2.7 Tables 5 and 6 below indicate the level of other activity carried out by the Planning Department over Q3 and year to date at end of Q2 of 2020/21 business year.

Table 5: Other Activity

Q3 2020/21	Received	Rank
Discharge of Conditions	28	3 rd
Certificate of Lawful Development	10	9 th
Pre Application Discussions	9	5 th
Non Material Change	11	6 th
TPOs	0	7 th
Pre Application Notice	2	6 th
Total	60	-

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Third Quarter 2020/21 Statistical Bulletin

- 2.8 In addition to the formal applications received, YTD at end of Q3 the Planning Department received 109 other types of applications relating to planning applications.

Table 6: YTD Other Activity

YTD 2019/20	Received	Rank (highest)
Discharge of Conditions	67	3 rd
Certificate of Lawful Development	34	7 th
Pre Application Discussions	32	4 th
Non Material Change	25	8 th
TPOs	4	7 th
Pre Application Notice	5	9 th
Total	109	

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Third Quarter 2020/21 Statistical Bulletin

Income

- 2.9 Table 5 below provides a breakdown of the income generated by the Planning Department in Q3 of 2020/21. Income (including Property Certificates but excluding DfC Covid Fund) is 72% of that predicted for this period.

Table 5: Income

Q3 2020/21	Received
Planning Applications	£742,796.26
Property Certificates	£50,054
DfC Covid Fund	£146,445
Total	£939,295.26

Source: Unvalidated Statistics – Internal Reports

Conclusion

- 2.10 In conclusion, performance within the Planning Department continues to steadily improve when compared to other Councils. However areas of concern remain with the number of applications in the system over 12months and the length of time taken to process local applications. With the recruitment of additional staff ongoing, focus in Q4 will be on reducing the number of older applications and enforcement cases in the system which will have a negative impact on average processing times.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the Planning Committee note the Planning Departments Quarterly Report.