

Title of Report:	Quarterly Report on Planning Performance
Committee Report Submitted To:	Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	26 October 2022
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Protecting and Enhancing our Environments and Assets
Outcome	Pro-active decision making which protects the natural features, characteristics and integrity of the Borough
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 First Quarter 2022/23 Statistical Bulletin was published on 29 September 2022 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-april-june-2022> 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 first quarter of 2022-23 business year and provides a comparison of performance against all 11 Councils.

Table 1: Planning Applications

2022/23	Major		Local		Total		Live	
Q1	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Total	Over 12mths
Planning Applications	3	6	286	344	289	350	860	263 (30.6%)
Rank	5 th	1 st	5 th	4 th	5 th	4 th	5 th	3 rd (%)
Average Processing Times	25.5 weeks		17.9 weeks					
Rank	2 nd		6 th					
Approval Rate	100%		96.0%		96.1%		5 th	

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2022/23 Statistical Bulletin

- 2.2** In the Q1, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council issued the highest number of major planning applications out of the 11 councils, 100% of which were approved. These decisions included the granting of planning permission for the redevelopment of Coleraine Grammar School and the expansion of Armstrong Medical. The average processing times for major applications surpassed the statutory target by 4.5 weeks and an astonishing 25.8 weeks faster than the NI average. This Council was one of only two Councils to meet the statutory target for the processing of major planning applications.
- 2.3** Performance continued to improve in the processing of local category of planning applications during Q1 when compared to the same period in the previous business year. Although not meeting the statutory target, the Business Plan target was met and in an improved ranking of 6th fastest out of the 11 councils. Again, the approval rate of 96% was above the NI average of 95.1%. The overall approval rate for decisions on planning applications was 96.1%, 1.0% above the Northern Ireland average.
- 2.4** In terms of live applications, this Planning Department has the 5th highest live applications with the 3rd highest percentage of live applications over 12 months in the system. Focus is required over the next year to reduce the over 12 month applications in the system. This is likely to have a negative impact on the average processing times for local applications.
- 2.5** Over the reporting period, Council received the highest number of commercial and agricultural types of applications out of the 11 Councils and the 4th highest number of residential applications. For residential applications, the approval rate was 96.8%, 1.7% above the NI average.

Enforcement

- 2.6** Table 2 below shows statistics in relation to enforcement for Q1 of the 2022/23 business year. The statutory target for processing enforcement cases to conclusion has been met over this period, sitting 3.8% above the NI average. Although the number of cases opened remains high, the number of cases concluded is lower than needed to reduce the live caseloads. This is in part due to vacancies within the Enforcement Team during this period with the Planning Assistant post filled in May and the Senior Planning Officer remaining vacant at the end of Q1.

Table 2: Enforcement

2022/23	Open	Conclude	Conclusion Times	Court Action	
Q1			70% within 39wks	Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	91	58	74.1%	1	0
Rank	5 th	8 th	6 th	2 nd	-

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2022/23 Statistical Bulletin

Percentage of Local applications determined under delegated powers

- 2.6** Table 3 below details the total number of Local applications determined under delegated powers. Determined is taken as the date the decision issued and excludes withdrawn applications. DfI Development Management Practice Note 15 Councils Schemes of Delegation recommends that councils should aim to have 90-95% of applications dealt with under the scheme of delegation. To date 93.9% of applications determined were delegated under the scheme of delegation.

Table 3: Percentage of Local applications determined under delegated powers

Applications Determined				
2022/23	Total Determined	Delegated Determined	Planning Committee Determined	% Delegated Determined
April	106	101	5	95.3%
May	96	90	6	93.75%
June	128	119	9	93%
Total	330	310	20	93.9%

Source: Unvalidated Statistics

Number of applications taken to Planning Committee and percentage of Committee decisions made against officer recommendation

- 2.7** Table 4 provides details on the number of decisions that were determined by the Planning Committee at each monthly meeting and the percentage of decisions made against officer recommendation, including Major, Council and Local applications. This is taken from the date of the decision notice issued. Of note is that all applications overturned were referred applications and of concern is the total overturn rate of decisions by Planning Committee at 40%. The overturn decisions related to a mixture of types of applications.

Table 4 Decisions at Planning Committee against Officer Recommendation

2022/23	Total Planning Committee Determined	Officer Recommendation Overturned	Total No. of Referrals Overturned by Planning Committee
April	5	2	2
May	6	3	3
June	9	3	3
Total	20	8	8

Source: Unvalidated Statistics

Percentage of appeals against refusals of planning permission that are dismissed

- 2.8** Table 5 below details the number of appeal decisions issued in Q1 of 2022/23 business year. Please note that these figures relating to planning appeal decisions are unvalidated statistics extracted from internal management reports. Two appeal decisions have been received in Q1 of this year; both appeals were dismissed by the PAC in favour of Council's decision. One appeal related to the erection of an

external metal staircase and landing to the rear of a dwelling and the other for a CLUD in relation to the completion of a dwelling and access.

Table 5: Planning Appeal Commission Decisions

2022/23	Appeals Allowed	Appeals Dismissed	Total Appeal Decisions
April	0	0	0
May	0	1	1
June	0	1	1
Total	0	2	2

Source: Internal Management Reports

Other Activity by Planning Department

2.9 Tables 6 below indicate the level of other activity carried out by the Planning Department over Q1 of 2021/22 business year.

Table 6: Other Activity

Q1 2022/23	Received	Rank
Discharge of Conditions	20	6 th
Certificate of Lawful Development	13	8 th
Pre Application Discussions	13	3 rd
Non Material Change	9	7 th
TPOs	3	6 th
Pre Application Notice	0	-
Total	58	-

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2022/23 Statistical Bulletin

2.10 In addition to the formal applications received, the Planning Department received 58 other types of applications relating to planning applications.

Conclusion

2.11 In conclusion, performance within the Planning Department continues to steadily improve with significant progress made in the processing of major planning applications to meet the statutory target. Planning is meeting 2 of the 3 statutory targets and performance towards meeting the local statutory target continues to be made. In comparison to other Councils, Planning is now sitting mid-rank in terms of performance for local applications and 2nd fastest for major applications. Recruitment of staff to fill vacant posts continues which will assist in reducing workloads and improving average processing times for both planning applications and enforcement cases. Focus on progressing the older applications in the system will be taken forward over the next 6 months and this may negatively impact on the average processing times of local applications.

3.0 Recommendation

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