



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Planning Applications over 12 months, including First Quarterly Report on Planning Performance</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>Corporate Policy and Resources Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>28 November 2023</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>For Information</b>
<b>To be discussed In Committee YES/NO</b>	<b>No</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council has agreed policies and procedures and decision making is consistent with them
Lead Officer	Head of Planning

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

<b>Legal Considerations</b>	
Input of Legal Services Required	<b>NO</b>
Legal Opinion Obtained	<b>NO</b>

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	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 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with an overview of the planning applications in the system over 12 months.
- 1.2 To provide Members with First Quarterly Report on Planning Performance 2023/24 (Appendix 1)

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 At the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 24 October 2023, the Director of Corporate Services agreed to bring a short report back to the Committee with the details on the number of applications that are taking longer than 12 months to be processed and specifying how many of these are for single dwellings, the reasons behind the longer processing time and the steps that the Planning Department is taking to address it.
- 2.2 At the end October 2023, there were some 300 planning applications in the system over 12 months. The type of applications and reasons for the prolonged processing times varies with each application and over the time of processing the application. Table 1 below provides a breakdown on the application classification and types and reasons for delay in determining application at this time.

**Table 1: breakdown of the category and development type of applications in the system over 12 months**

Team	Consultee - No prior PDE carried out	Agent	Planning Committee	Other – including high case loads, staffing shortages, objections/representations and awaiting PAC	TOTAL at 31.10.23	No. Issued 1.11.23-16.11.23
Causeway Coleraine	28	20	2	17	67	9
Bann The Glens Ballymoney	15	23	3	10	51	5
Limavady Benbradagh	16	20	0	18	54	0
Minors	8	21	0	29	58	7
Single Rural Dwellings	6	7	20 (to go on contentious list / on list)	15 (+ 6 to issue)	54	2
Major	3	3	1	2	10	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>24</b>

*\*PDE – Pre-Development Enquiry*

*\*\*PAC Eg – where Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and Environmental Impact Statement is required*

**2.3** Staff have been recruited to fill the two vacant Planning Officer posts that were vacant for upwards of one year to difficulty in recruiting Agency staff. This resulted in increased caseloads, delays to processing of applications as a result and reduction in number of decisions issued. This has been resolved at the beginning of Q2 of this business year and following staff training, increase in decisions issuing should be evident.

**2.4** Staff are also developing an over 12-month action plan with focus on bringing the assessment of these applications to a conclusion. Staff time needs to be balanced against the need to focus on processing new applications that are submitted with all of the relevant information included and are acceptable against the additional time taken to monitor and progress those applications where the relevant information necessary to assess the application has not been submitted or where continuous amendments are required to address identified issues.

### **3.0 Recommendation(s)**

**It is recommended** that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee recommends to Council the noting of this overview paper.



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>First Quarterly Report on Planning Performance</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>Planning Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>25 October 2023</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>For Information</b>
<b>To be discussed In Committee YES/NO</b>	<b>No</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership
Outcome	Council has agreed policies and procedures and decision making is consistent with them
Lead Officer	Head of Planning

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

<b>Legal Considerations</b>	
Input of Legal Services Required	<b>NO</b>
Legal Opinion Obtained	<b>NO</b>

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	N/A	Date:
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	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. The Planning Department Business Plan 2023-24 sets out the key performance indicators to progress towards improving Planning performance against these targets,

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.

1.4 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 2023/24 Statistical Bulletin was published on 12 October 2023 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-2023> 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 2023-24 business year and provides a comparison of performance against all 11 Councils and against Business Plan KPIs.

**Table 1: Planning Applications**

2023/24	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
<b>Planning Applications</b>	1	2	237	215	234	217	947	276 (29.1%)
<b>Rank</b>	8 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> (%)
<b>Average Processing Times</b>	207.2 weeks		28.6 weeks					
<b>Rank</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>		8 <sup>th</sup>					
<b>Business Plan Target</b>	Major Category – 40 weeks - Not met		Local Category – 30 weeks - Met		Over 12 month applications – reduce by 10% - Not Met			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2023/24 Statistical Bulletin and Planning Department Business Plan 2023-24

- 2.2** In the Q1, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council issued one major planning application for 2no. broiler units within the 30 week statutory target (18.8 weeks) and had 1 legacy major application for pig farm withdrawn (396 weeks), resulting in an average processing time of 207.2 weeks, not meeting the statutory target or Business Plan target during this period.
- 2.3** Over the same period 215 local category applications were decided or withdrawn. This was a decrease in numbers when compared to the same period last year due to the 2no. vacant Planning Officer posts. Although not meeting the statutory target, the Business Plan target of 30 weeks was met with 58 applications in the system over 12 months concluded.
- 2.4** Although a total of 59 applications in the system over 12 months were concluded, the number of applications within this time category rose by 10 applications, thereby not meeting the Business Plan target. This is largely due to the high caseloads of staff due to the 2no. vacant posts and the number of applications delayed due to awaiting statutory consultation responses.

### Enforcement

- 2.5** Table 2 below shows statistics in relation to enforcement for Q1 of the 2023/24 business year. The statutory target for bring to a conclusion enforcement cases is not reported on at this time due to inability to extract the accurate information from the system; work is ongoing to resolve this issue. Progress has been made in terms of increasing the number of cases concluded to moving closer to a position where cases closed exceed cases opened in order to reduce live cases to a manageable level. At this time at end of q1, the Business Plan target to reduce live cases has not been met.

- 2.6 Of the cases closed, 27% were remedied/resolved, 15.4% had planning permission granted; 28.8% were closed as not expedient; and 28.8% had no breach identified.

**Table 2: Enforcement**

2023/24	Open	Closed	Live cases	Court Action	
Q1				Prosecutions	Convictions
<b>Cases</b>	63	52	474	0	0
<b>Rank</b>	7 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	-	-
<b>Business Plan Target</b>	<b>Reduce live cases by 10% - not met</b>				

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2023/24 Statistical Bulletin

Stable Staff Resource and Reduction in Staff Caseloads – Business Plan KPI - Not Met

- 2.7 Work continues to decrease case loads of staff to a manageable level. This has proved difficult in Q1 due to 2 vacant Planning Officer posts. Case loads in both Enforcement Team and Development Management Teams remain excessively high and with the recruitment of Agency staff to cover vacant positions these case loads will continue to be monitored.

Reduction in vacant posts – Business Plan KPI – on target to be met

- 2.8 Work is ongoing to recruit agency staff to fill vacant posts. This is processing with aim of filling posts in Q2 in line with KPI target.

Training Plan - Business Plan KPI – Met

- 2.9 In additional to mandatory training for all staff, in Q1 the following training was attended by staff:

- Planning for Minerals,
- Planning Development Air Quality Impacts;
- Wind Farms,
- Rural Expressions of 20 minute neighbourhoods
- Enforcement Statement taking
- RTPI NI Annual Planning Conference

Draft Plan Strategy – Business Plan KPI - on target to be met

- 2.10 Workshops with Party Groups arranged for Q2. Other KPIs in relation to the draft Plan Strategy will follow the completion of these workshops with Members.

Number of cases where Ombudsman determines maladministration is less than 0.4% of all decisions made - Business Plan KPI – on target to be met

**2.11** There have been no cases in the Q1 period of cases where the NIPSO has determined maladministration on planning decisions made. There have been no decisions by NIPSO during this period.

### **3.0 Recommendation**

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