

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Quarterly Report on Planning Performance</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>Planning Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>28 October 2020</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>For Information</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)</b>	
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

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

<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 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 2020/21 Statistical Bulletin was published on 24 September 2020 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-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 first quarter of 2020-21 business year and provides a comparison of performance against all 11 Councils.

**Table 1: Planning Applications**

2020/21	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	2	1	212	152	214	153	755	176 (23.3%)
Rank	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> (%)
Average Processing Times	70.8 weeks		18.8 weeks					
Rank	4 <sup>th</sup>		7 <sup>th</sup>					
Approval Rate	100%		97.3%		97.3%		5 <sup>th</sup> Rank	

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

- 2.2** In the Q1, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council was one of only two Councils that decreased processing times for local applications when compared to the same period last year, improving in rank from 10<sup>th</sup> fastest to 7<sup>th</sup> fastest out of the 11 Councils. In terms of major applications, average processing times also decreased improving in rank from 6<sup>th</sup> fastest in Q1 of 2019/20 to 4<sup>th</sup> fastest in Q1 of 2020/21. Of note is that this improvement took place during the tight restrictions imposed by the Northern Ireland Executive as a result of Covid-19 when staff were working from home with limited Council resources and site visits were not taking place. Furthermore, in terms of live applications, this Planning Department moved from having the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number of live applications at end of Q1 2019/20 to the 5<sup>th</sup> highest live applications with the 5<sup>th</sup> highest percentage of live applications over 12 months in the system.
- 2.3** The percentage of live applications that are over 12months in the system remains an area of concern. With the Fixed Term Contract posts coming to an end over the next couple of months, consideration must be given to retaining these posts on a permanent appointment. Otherwise there is a high risk that the case loads of staff will further increase once more resulting in a negative impact on performance.

Enforcement

- 2.4** Table 2 below shows statistics in relation to enforcement for Q1 of the 2020/21 business year. Of note is that the Enforcement Team closed the 4<sup>th</sup> highest number of cases with over 31% as a result of no breach of planning control being identified. Furthermore, the Enforcement team concluded the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number of cases out of the 11 Councils during the tight restrictions imposed by the Northern Ireland Executive as a result of Covid-19 when staff were working from home with limited Council resources and site visits were not taking place and still managed to meet the statutory target for concluding 70% of cases within 39 weeks. The Enforcement Team have the 5<sup>th</sup> highest number of live enforcement cases with the 4<sup>th</sup> highest percentage of cases over 2 years in the system.

**Table 2: Enforcement**

2020/21	Open	Conclude	Conclusion Times	Court Action	
Q1			70% within 39wks	Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	61	40	70%	0	0
Rank	5 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	-	-

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

Other Activity by Planning Department

- 2.5** Tables 3 and 4 below indicate the level of other activity carried out by the Planning Department over Q1 of 2020/21 business year.

**Table 3: Other Activity**

Q1 2019/20	Received	Rank
Discharge of Conditions	17	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Certificate of Lawful Development	3	11 <sup>th</sup>
Pre Application Discussions	11	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Non Material Change	9	9 <sup>th</sup>
TPOs	0	-
Pre Application Notice	2	2 <sup>nd</sup>
FOI/EIR	37	-
General Correspondence	167	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>-</b>

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

- 2.6 In addition to the formal applications received, the Planning Department received 42 other types of applications relating to planning applications, 37 FOI/EIR requests and 167 general correspondence.

#### Income

- 2.7 Table 5 below provides a breakdown of the income generated by the Planning Department in Q1 of 2020/21. Income is 58% of that predicted for this period.

**Table 5: Income**

Q1 2020/21	Received
Planning Applications	£210,132.44
Property Certificates	£14,884
DfC Covid Fund	£89,418
<b>Total</b>	<b>£314,434.44</b>

Source: Unvalidated Statistics – Internal Reports

#### Conclusion

- 2.8 In conclusion, performance within the Planning Department continues to steadily improve towards meeting the statutory targets even during the tight restrictions imposed by the Northern Ireland Executive due to Covid-19 pandemic. 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. Caseloads of Planning Officers continue to be monitored and consideration must be given to extending the 4 FTCs coming to an end over the next couple of months.

### 3.0 Recommendation

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