



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Third 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 April 2026</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>Estimated Timescale for Completion</b>			
Date to be Completed	N/A		
<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 The purpose of this report is to provide a quarterly update on Planning performance against the Planning Department Business Plan 2025/26.

## 2.0 Background

2.1 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 2025-26 sets out the key performance indicators to progress towards improving Planning performance against these targets.

2.2 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.

2.3 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 2025/26 Statistical Bulletin was published on 01 April 2026 providing provisional planning statistics for this period.

## 3.0 Details

Website link 1 [Northern Ireland planning statistics October - December 2025 | Department for Infrastructure](#) provides the link to the published bulletin.

### ***Business Plan Objective 1: Improve performance in relation to the processing of planning applications and enforcement cases***

3.1 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 2025-26 business year and provides a comparison of performance against all 11 Councils and against Business Plan KPIs.

**Table 1: Planning Applications**

2025/26	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	2	238	251 (24 w/d)	241	253 (24 w/d)	725	260 (35.9%)
Rank	4 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> (%)
Average Processing Times	77.1 weeks		23 weeks					
Rank	8 <sup>th</sup>		8 <sup>th</sup>					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 30 weeks - Not met		Local Category – 25 weeks - Met		Over 12 month applications – reduce by 10% - Not Met			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2025/26 Statistical Bulletin (provisional figures) and Planning Department Business Plan 2025-26

2025/26	Major		Local		Total		Live	
Q2	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	233	204 (10 w/d)	235	205 (10 w/d)	753	244 (32.4%)
Rank	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> (%)
Average Processing Times	27.2 weeks		19 weeks					
Rank	3rd		6th					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 30 weeks – Met		Local Category – 21 weeks - Met		Over 12 month applications – reduce by 10% - Met			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Second Quarter 2025/26 Statistical Bulletin (provisional figures) and Planning Department Business Plan 2025-26

2025/26	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	4	4	235	224 (23 w/d)	239	228 (23 w/d)	742	230 (31%)
Rank	6 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> (%)
Average Processing Times	22.9 weeks		17.6 weeks					
Rank	1st		5th					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 30 weeks – Met		Local Category – 17 weeks – Not Met		Over 12 month applications – reduce by 10% - Met			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Third Quarter 2025/26 Statistical Bulletin (provisional figures) and Planning Department Business Plan 2025-26

2025/26	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	9	7	706	645 (57 w/d)	715	652 (57 w/d)	742	230 (31%)
Rank	7 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> (%)
Average Processing Times	27.2 weeks		20.7 weeks					
Rank	3 <sup>rd</sup>		6 <sup>th</sup>					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 30 weeks - Ongoing (year end target)		Local Category – Q1 and Q2 targets Met. Q3 target Not Met.		Over 12 month and over 24 month applications – reduce by 10% - Ongoing (year end target)			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Third Quarter 2025/26 Statistical Bulletin (provisional figures) and Planning Department Business Plan 2025-26

- 3.2** In the Q3, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council issued 4 major planning applications: modifications to Portstewart Golf Club (21 weeks); solar farm at Ballyrashane Road, Coleraine (116 weeks); 11 holiday cottages at Causeway Road, Bushmills (25 weeks) and; redevelopment of the Showgrounds, Ballycastle Road, Coleraine (14 weeks). These resulted in an average processing time of 22.9 weeks, meeting the statutory target and Business Plan target during this period. In addition, we received 4 major planning applications during Q3. These were: 45 holiday units at Ballybogey

Road, Portrush; variation of condition for timing of construction works for a housing scheme at Bushmills Road, Coleraine; variation of condition for the type of glazing to be used in a housing scheme at Burn Road, Coleraine and; variation of condition regarding a drainage assessment for work at Coleraine Grammar School, Castlerock Road, Coleraine.

- 3.3** Over the same period 235 local applications were received, an increase of 14 applications compared to the same period last year. Over Q3, 224 local category applications were decided, with 23 local applications withdrawn, a decrease in decisions issued of 61 applications when compared to the same period last year. 45.5% of local applications were decided within the 15 week statutory target, an increase by 14.2% when compared to the same period last year. In addition, the processing time of 17.6 weeks is 2.2 weeks below the average processing time of the 11 Councils. The average processing times were 5 weeks faster when compared to the same period last year.
- 3.4** At the end of Q3, there was a total of 230 applications in the system over 12 months, a decrease of 15% when compared to the beginning of this business year, exceeding the Business Plan target of 10% reduction by end of Q4. This equates to 31% of the total number of live applications and is the 6<sup>th</sup> lowest percentage of live applications out of the 11 Councils.
- 3.5** The number of over 24-month applications has decreased by 6 applications from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. Progress continues to reduce the number of these older applications in the system.
- 3.6** In Q3 Council received the 4<sup>th</sup> highest number of residential applications. Council also has the highest approval rate of 96.9% of applications approved than any other Council area (Northern Ireland average 93.2%).
- 3.7** Overall, the statistics evidence the improvement in performance in the processing of planning applications, with processing times improving and older applications reducing.

### Enforcement

- 3.8** Table 2 below shows statistics in relation to enforcement for Q3 of the 2025/26 business year. Work has been ongoing to reduce the number of older cases in the system (over 2 years) and these have reduced by 1.3% since the start of the 2025/ 26 business year. The statutory target for bringing to conclusion enforcement cases of 70% within 39 weeks has been met over Q3. In addition, the Business Plan target of 70% has been achieved.
- 3.9** Of the cases closed, 11% were remedied/resolved, 30% had planning permission granted; 23% were closed as not expedient; 27% were closed as no breach identified and; 4% were immune from enforcement action.

**Table 2: Enforcement**

2025/26	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
<b>Q1</b>						<b>Prosecutions</b>	<b>Convictions</b>
<b>Cases</b>	94	75	74	60.8%	439	2	0
<b>Rank</b>	3rd	2nd	3 <sup>rd</sup>	9th	3rd	-	-
<b>Business Plan Target</b>				Conclude 60% within 39 weeks			

2025/26	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
<b>Q2</b>						<b>Prosecutions</b>	<b>Convictions</b>
<b>Cases</b>	56	48	56	75%	447	0	0
<b>Rank</b>	5th	6th	5 <sup>th</sup>	5th	4th	-	-
<b>Business Plan Target</b>				Conclude 65% within 39 weeks			

2025/26	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
<b>Q3</b>						<b>Prosecutions</b>	<b>Convictions</b>
<b>Cases</b>	49	44	36	77.8%	451	2	0
<b>Rank</b>	8th	9th	9 <sup>th</sup>	5th	4th	-	-
<b>Business Plan Target</b>				Conclude 70% within 39 weeks			

2025/26	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
<b>YTD</b>						<b>Prosecutions</b>	<b>Convictions</b>
<b>Cases</b>	198	167	165	69.1	451	4	0
<b>Rank</b>	5th	6th	6 <sup>th</sup>	6th	4th	-	-
<b>Business Plan Target</b>				Conclude within 39 weeks: Q1 60%; Q2 65%; Q3 70% and Q4 70%			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Third Quarter 2025/26 Statistical Bulletin (provisional statistics)

- 3.10** In Q3, there were 2 enforcement notices issued, 1 enforcement appeal heard and 20 court appearances.

Implement Statutory Planning Application Checklist – Timescale Q3

- 3.11** The new statutory Planning Application Checklist was agreed at Planning Committee on 28 May 2025 with implementation date of 09 June 2025. This Business Plan KPI target is met.

Implement Standing Advice from NI Water – Timescale Q1

- 3.12** NI Water Standing Advice has been implemented in this Council Area since 01 May 2025. This Business Plan KPI target is met.

Develop an action plan to manage and reduce the number of over 12 month applications in the system – Timescale Q2

- 3.13** The over 12 month action plan has been developed and implemented. This Business Plan KPI target is met.

Reduce the number of over 12month and over 24month applications in the system by 10% - Timescale Q4

- 3.14** At end of Q3 the number of over 12 month plus applications is 230 meeting the target of reducing the number of over 12 month applications in the system to 244 by end of Q4. The number of over 24-month applications have reduced from 88 to 82. This Business Plan KPI target is in progress to be met by Q4.

Average processing times for major applications of 30 weeks for the business year – Timescale Q4

- 3.15** At the end of Q3 the median processing time for major applications was 27.2 weeks. This Business Plan KPI target is met.

Average processing times for local category of applications 17 weeks – Timescale Q3

- 3.16** At the end of Q3 the average processing time for local applications was 17.6 weeks. This Business Plan KPI target is not met by a small margin.

Processing times for case conclusion for enforcement cases – 70% in 39 weeks – Timescale Q3

- 3.17** At the end of Q3 the processing time for enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks was 77.8%. This Business Plan KPI target was met.

***Business Plan Objective 2: preparation of Council's draft Plan Strategy***

Receipt of independent research to establish the most up-to-date housing requirement for the Borough – Timescale Q4

- 3.18 The Final report has been received. Ulster University presented the report to members at a Full Council Deputation Workshop on 3rd February 2026. Business Plan KPI is met.

Award contract for Retail and Leisure Capacity Study – Timescale Q1

- 3.19 The contract was signed with Nexus Planning on 12 June 2025. This Business Plan KPI target is met.

Receive Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study – Timescale Q3

- 3.20 The Final report has been received. Nexus Planning presented the findings at the 28th January 2026 Planning Committee. Nexus will also present at a Full Council Deputation Workshop on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026. Business Plan KPI target is met.

Consider impact on planning policies of Retail and Commercial Leisure Capacity Study – Timescale Q4

- 3.21 This work has commenced following agreement, by members at the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026 Planning Committee, to use the Study to inform decision-making on planning applications and the preparation of the Local Development Plan. This Business Plan KPI target is in progress, to be met by Q1 of 2026/27.

Housing Monitor interactive map viewer operational and accessible by the public – Timescale Q3

- 3.22 The Housing Monitor interactive map is now live. This Business Plan KPI target is met

***Business Plan Objective 3: to manage finance, staff, information and other resources effectively and efficiently within corporate governance framework***

Review Planning Fraud Risk Self Assessment Checklist – Timescale Q2

- 3.23 The review of the Planning Fraud Risk Self Assessment Checklist was complete commenced in Q1. This Business Plan KPI target is likely to be met.

Ensure Authorisation to recruit form completed and sent for agreement to SMT

- 3.24 No authorisation to recruit required at this time. This Business Plan KPI target is ongoing and has been met for Q1.

Recommendations from outstanding Audit/Ombudsman recommendations implemented – Timescale Q4

**3.25** There have been no cases of maladministration determined in Q3 and therefore no further audit recommendations to implement. This Business Plan KPI target is ongoing and is met for Q3.

**4.0 Recommendation**

**4.1 IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee note the Planning Department's Third Quarterly Report.