

Title of Report:	Fourth Quarterly Report on Planning Performance
Committee Report Submitted To:	Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	22 September 2026
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	No

Linkage to Council Plan (2026-31)	
Strategic Theme	Governance, Quality & Continuous Improvement
Outcome	Council maintains its performance as the most efficient of NI's local authorities
Lead Officer	Head of Planning

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	26/27 budget
Included in Current Year Estimates	N/A
Capital/Revenue	both
Code	5301
Staffing Costs	included

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	NO

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 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 Fourth Quarter 2025/26 Statistical Bulletin was published on 26 August 2026 providing provisional planning statistics for this period.

3.0 Details

Website link 1 <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-april-2025-march-2026> 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 all quarters of the 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 th	6 th	5 th	4 th	5 th	4 th	5 th	7 th (%)
Average Processing Times	77.1 weeks		23 weeks					
Rank	8 th		8 th					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 30 weeks - Ongoing		Local Category – 25 weeks - Met		Over 12 month applications – reduce by 10% - Ongoing			

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 th	6 th	4 th	4 th	5 th	4 th	5 th	6 th (%)
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 th	3 rd	6 th	4 th	6 th	4 th	5 th	6 th (%)
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	
Q4	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Total	Over 12mths
Planning Applications	5	3	225	214 (11 w/d)	230	217 (11 w/d)	742	241
Rank	5 th	3 rd	5 th	5 th	5 th	5 th	5 th	5 th (%)
Average Processing Times	17. 2 weeks		15.0 weeks					
Rank	1st		4th					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 30 weeks – Met		Local Category – 15 weeks – Met		Over 12 month applications – reduce by 10% - Met			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Fourth Quarter 2025/26 Statistical Bulletin (finalised 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	14	10	931	859	945	869	742	241
Rank	6 th	3 rd	5 th	4 th	5 th	4 th	5 th	5 th (%)
Average Processing Times	26.1 weeks		18.2 weeks					
Rank	2 nd		6 th					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 30 weeks - Ongoing (year end target)- Met		Local Category – Q1, Q2 & Q4 targets Met. Q3 target Not Met.		Over 12 month and over 24 month applications – reduce by 10% - Ongoing (year end target)- Met			

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

- 3.2** In Q4, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council issued 3 major planning applications: new visitor centre at Dunluce Castle, Dunluce Road, Bushmills (116 weeks); variation of condition application regarding glazing in approved housing scheme at Hazeldene Drive and Mulberry Gardens, Coleraine (18 weeks) and; variation of condition application regarding flood risk assessment for approved extension to Coleraine Grammar School, Castlerock Road, Coleraine (14 weeks). These resulted in an average processing time of 17.2 weeks, meeting the statutory target and Business Plan target during this period. In addition, we received 5 major planning applications during Q4. These were: a housing scheme at Market Street and Parkview, Ballymoney; an extension to the whiskey maturation facility at Haw Road, Bushmills including the accompanying application for hazardous substances consent; an extension to a holiday park at Dunluce Road, Portrush and; a variation of condition application regarding sewage disposal arrangements for approved extension to a holiday park at Agherton Road, Portstewart.
- 3.3** Over the same period, 225 local applications were received, a decrease of 3 applications compared to the same period last year. Over Q4, 214 local category applications were decided, including 11 local applications withdrawn, a decrease in decisions issued of 68 applications when compared to the same period last year. 51.1% of local applications were decided within the 15 week statutory target, an increase by 9.3% when compared to the same period last year. In addition, the processing time of 15.0 weeks is 4.6 weeks below the average processing time of the 11 Councils. The average processing times were 3.1 weeks faster when compared to the same period last year.

- 3.4** At the end of Q4, there was a total of 241 applications in the system over 12 months, a decrease of 11.4% when compared to the beginning of this business year, exceeding the Business Plan target of 10% reduction by end of Q4. This equates to 32.5% of the total number of live applications and is the 6th lowest percentage of live applications out of the 11 Councils.
- 3.5** The number of over 24-month applications has increased by 7 applications from 1st April 2025. However, progress continues to reduce the overall number of older applications in the system and a strategy is in place to reduce the number of over 24 month applications.
- 3.6** Year to date, Council received the 2nd highest number of agricultural applications and the 4th highest number of residential applications. Year to date, Council had an approval rate of 95.7% (Northern Ireland average 94.6%).
- 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 all quarters of the 2025/26 business year. The percentage of older cases over 2 years old has increased slightly by 0.3% over the 2025/ 26 business year (49.3% end March 2026). The statutory target for bringing to conclusion enforcement cases of 70% within 39 weeks has been met over Q4. In addition, the Business Plan target of 70% has been achieved.
- 3.9** Of the cases closed in Q4, 31% were remedied/resolved, 23% had planning permission granted; 6.5% were closed as not expedient; 34.5% were closed as no breach identified and; 5% were immune from enforcement action.

Table 2: Enforcement

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

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

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

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

2025/26	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
Q3						Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	49	44	36	77.8%	451	1	0
Rank	8 th	9 th	9 th	5 th	4 th	-	-
Business Plan Target				Conclude 70% within 39 weeks			

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

2025/26	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
Q4						Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	60	61	49	77.6%	446	1	0
Rank	7 th	6 th	8 th	7 th	4 th	-	-
Business Plan Target				Conclude 70% within 39 weeks			

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

2025/26	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
YTD						Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	258	230	227	71.4%	448	4	0
Rank	6 th	6 th	7 th	7 th	4 th		
Business Plan Target				Conclude within 39 weeks: Q1 60%; Q2 65%; Q3 70% and Q4 70%			

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

- 3.10** In Q4, there were 4 enforcement notices issued, 3 enforcement appeals heard and 9 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 Q4 the number of over 12 month plus applications is 241 meeting the target of reducing the number of over 12 month applications in the system to 245 by end of Q4. The number of over 24-month applications have increased from 88 to 95, this Business Plan KPI has not been met. The Business Plan KPI target of reducing the number of over 12 month applications by 10% has been met.

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

- 3.15** At the end of Q4 the median processing time for major applications (year to date) was 26.1 weeks. This Business Plan KPI target is met.

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

- 3.16** For Q4 the average processing time for local applications was 15.0 weeks. This Business Plan KPI target for Q4 is met.

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

- 3.17** At the end of Q4 the processing time for enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks was 77.6%. 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 21st 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 28th 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 commenced in Q1 and completed in Q4. This Business Plan KPI target is 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 met.

Recommendations from outstanding Audit/Ombudsman recommendations implemented – Timescale Q4

- 3.25** There were two cases of maladministration identified by NIPSO in Q4. NIPSO recommendations have been implemented. This Business Plan KPI target is met.

4.0 Recommendation

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