Title of Report:	**First Quarterly Report on Planning Performance**
Committee Report Submitted To:	**Planning Committee**
Date of Meeting:	**25 November 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 2026/27.

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 First Quarter 2026/27 Statistical Bulletin was published on 22 October 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-june-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 2026-27 business year and provides a comparison of performance against all 11 Councils and against Business Plan KPIs.

Table 1: Planning Applications

2026/27	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	4	4	223	189 (14 w/d)	227	193 (14 w/d)	761	231
Rank	3	4	4	7	4	7	5	5
Average Processing Times	28.1 weeks		20.8 weeks					
Rank	6th		9th					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 30 weeks - Ongoing		Local Category – 23 weeks - Met		Over 12 month applications – reduce by 10% - Ongoing			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2026/27 Statistical Bulletin (provisional figures) and Planning Department Business Plan 2026-27

2026/27	Major		Local		Total		Live	
Year to Date	**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	223	189 (14 w/d)	227	193 (14 w/d)	761	231
Rank	3	4	4	7	4	7	5	5
Average Processing Times	28.1 weeks		20.8 weeks					
Rank	6th		9th					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 30 weeks - Ongoing		Local Category – 23 weeks - Met		Over 12 month applications – reduce by 10% - Ongoing			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2026/27 Statistical Bulletin (provisional figures) and Planning Department Business Plan 2026-27

3.2 In Q1, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council issued 4 major planning applications: amendment to Cam Burn Windfarm from 6 to 4 turbines at Craigmore Road, Coleraine (181 weeks); a solar farm at Ballyleagry Road, Limavady (48 weeks) and; two variation of condition applications for an approved extension to a holiday park at Agherton Road, Portstewart referring to sewage disposal and the roads private street determination (10 and 9 weeks respectively). These resulted in an average processing time of 28.1 weeks, meeting the statutory target and Business Plan target during this period. In addition, we received 4 major planning applications during Q1. These were: a camp site farm diversification scheme at Straid Road, Ballycastle; a housing scheme comprising 162 dwellings at Atlantic Road, Coleraine, a 110/33kv cluster substation at Ringsend Road, Limavady and; a variation of condition application regarding the roads private streets

determination for approved extension to a holiday park at Agherton Road, Portstewart.

3.3 Over the same period, 223 local applications were received, a decrease of 15 applications compared to the same period last year. Over Q1, 189 local category applications were decided and 14 local applications withdrawn, a decrease in decisions issued of 38 applications when compared to the same period last year. 33.5% of local applications were decided within the 15 week statutory target, a decrease by 5.9% when compared to the same period last year. In addition, the processing time of 20.8 weeks is 0.8 weeks above the average processing time of the 11 Councils. The average processing times were 2.2 weeks faster when compared to the same period last year.

3.4 At the end of Q1, there was a total of 231 applications in the system over 12 months, a decrease of 4.1% when compared to the beginning of this business year, working towards the Business Plan target of 10% reduction by end of Q4. This equates to 30.4% of the total number of live applications and is the 5th 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 1st April 2026. 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 over the business year.

3.6 In Q1, Council received the 1st highest number of agricultural applications and the 2nd highest number of change of use applications. In Q1, Council had an approval rate of 93.3% (Northern Ireland average 94.3%).

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 Q1 of the 2026/27 business year. The percentage of older cases over 2 years old has decreased slightly by 0.5% over Q1 (48.8% end June 2026). The statutory target for bringing to conclusion enforcement cases of 70% within 39 weeks has not been met over Q1. In addition, the Business Plan target of 61% has not been achieved. This was due to closing a larger number of older investigations.

3.9 Of the cases closed in Q1, 24% were remedied/resolved, 24% had planning permission granted; 13% were closed as not expedient; 31% were closed as no breach identified and; 7% were immune from enforcement action.

Table 2: Enforcement

2026/27	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
Q1						**Prosecutions**	**Convictions**
Cases	56	45	45	55.6%	459		0
Rank	**9th**	**7th**	**7th**	**11th**	**4th**	**-**	**-**
Business Plan Target				**Conclude 61% within 39 weeks**			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2026/27 Statistical Bulletin (provisional figures) and Planning Department Business Plan 2026-27

2026/27	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
YTD						**Prosecutions**	**Convictions**
Cases	56	45	45	55.6%	459		
Rank	**9th**	**7th**	**7th**	**11th**	**4th**		
Business Plan Target				**Conclude within 39 weeks: Q1 61%; Q2 66%; Q3 70% and Q4 70%**			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2026/27 Statistical Bulletin (provisional figures) and Planning Department Business Plan 2026-27

3.10 In Q1, there were 19 enforcement notices issued, 2 enforcement appeals heard and 9 court appearances.

Implement Protocol on the Efficient Processing of Planning Applications– Timescale Q1

3.11 The Protocol was implemented on 1st June 2026.

Develop an action plan to manage and reduce the number of over 24 month applications in the system – Timescale Q1 & Q4

3.12 The over 24 month action plan has been developed and implemented. This Business Plan KPI target is met for Q1. The targets for reducing the number of over 24 month and over 12 month applications (both by 10%) applies to Q4.

3.13 At end of Q1 the number of over 12 month plus applications is 231 a reduction of 10 applications since the start of the business year. Working towards the business plan target of reducing the number of over 12 month applications in the system to 217 by end of Q4. The number of over 24-month applications have decreased from 98 to 92 working towards the Q4 target of 88.

Monthly report from Principal Planning Officers to Senior Planning Officers meeting analysing the performance in processing both local and major category of planning applications

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

3.14 At the end of Q1 the median processing time for major applications (year to date) was 28.1 weeks. This Business Plan KPI target is met.

Average processing times for local category of applications- Q1 23 weeks; Q2 19 weeks; Q3 17 weeks and; Q4 15 weeks– Timescale Q4

3.15 For Q1 the average processing time for local applications was 20.8 weeks. This Business Plan KPI target for Q1 is met.

Monthly report to Planning Senior Officers meeting analysing the performance in processing enforcement cases.

Processing times for case conclusion for enforcement cases- Q1 61% concluded within 39 weeks; Q2 66% concluded within 39 weeks; Q3 70% concluded within 39 weeks and; Q4 70% concluded within 39 weeks. Timescale Q4

3.16 For Q1 the processing time for enforcement cases concluded within 39 weeks was 55.6%. This Business Plan KPI target was not met.

Business Plan Objective 2: Preparation of Council's draft Plan Strategy

Update robust evidence base to inform the LDP– Timescale Q4

3.17 Work on updating the evidence base to inform the LDP preparation remains ongoing throughout this business year.

Agree any new/ revised policies with Members – Timescale Q4

3.18 Any new or revised policies arising from the evidence base update will be presented to members via the LDP Steering Group Meetings for discussion and then formal agreement will be sought through the Planning Committee.

Update the SA/SEA Scoping Report and Consult NIEA Timescale Q4

3.19 This is an iterative, ongoing process in line with the Draft Plan Strategy preparation. Given the intervening period since the first draft Plan Strategy was presented at 1st November 2022 Full Council (at which it was deferred for further consideration) and that Shared Environmental Services, who undertook the SA/SEA on behalf of the Council, no longer offer this consultancy work, alternative arrangements are being considered.

Keep LDP Timetable under regular review– Timescale Q4

3.20 The current LDP Timetable sets out an indicative Draft Plan Strategy (dPS) publication date of autumn/winter 2026, however this is under review and any updated timetable will be presented to members for agreement prior to consulting the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) and submission to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) for their agreement. The updated timetable will then be formally published, as required.

NIPSO "Strengthening Our Roots" Recommendations- Action recommendations specifically relating to the Council's planning function- Timescale Q4

3.21 This is an ongoing, multi-year project. The current 2026/27 work programme includes the continuation of the review of existing Tree Preservation Orders in the Borough.

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

Monitor and implement Ombudsman (NIPSO) recommendations – Timescale Q4

3.22 There were no NIPSO recommendations in Q1. This Business Plan KPI target is online to be met.

Ensure Authorisation to Recruit form completed and sent for agreement to SLT Timescale

3.23 No authorisation to recruit required at this time. This Business Plan KPI target is met.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the Planning Committee note the Planning Department's First Quarterly Report.