

Title of Report:	Annual Report on Planning Performance		
Committee Report Submitted To:	Corporate Policy and Resources Committee		
Date of Meeting:	23 September 2025		
For Decision or For Information	For Information		
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	No		
Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)			
Strategic Theme	Cohesive Leadership		
Outcome	Council has agreed policies and procedures and decision making is consistent with them		
Lead Officer	Head of Planning		
Estimated Timescale for Completion			
Date to be Completed	N/A		
Budgetary Considerations			
Cost of Proposal	Nil		
Included in Current Year Estimates			
Capital/Revenue			
Code			
Staffing Costs			
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 an annual report on Planning performance against the Planning Department Business Plan 2024/25.

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 2024-25 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 DfI Northern Ireland Planning Statistics 2024/25 Annual Statistical Bulletin was published on 26 June 2025 providing planning statistics for this period.

3.0 Details

Website link 1 <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-april-2024-march-2025> 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 2024-25 business year and provides a comparison of performance against all 11 Councils and against Business Plan KPIs.

Table 1: Planning Applications

2024/25	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	6	259	214 (11 w/d)	262	224 (15 w/d)	909	267 (29.4%)
Rank	5 th	5 th	4 th	6 th	4 th	5 th	4 th	5 th (%)
Average Processing Times	74.3 weeks		26.2 weeks					
Rank	7 th		9 th					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 40 weeks - Ongoing		Local Category – 28 weeks - Met		Over 12 month and over 24 month applications – reduce by 10% - Ongoing			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2024/25 Statistical Bulletin and Planning Department Business Plan 2024-25

Department Business Plan 2024-25

2024/25	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	6	5 (1w/d)	233	244 (20w/d)	239	249 (21w/d)	899	256 (28.5%)
Rank	2 nd	3 rd	5 th	5 th	5 th	5 th	3 rd	5 th (%)
Average Processing Times	43.6 weeks		23.8 weeks					
Rank	5 th		9 th					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 40 weeks - Ongoing		Local Category – 26 weeks -Met		Over 12 month and over 24 month applications – reduce by 10% - Ongoing			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Second Quarter 2024/25 Statistical Bulletin and Planning Department Business Plan 2024-25

Department Business Plan 2024-25

2024/25	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	5	2	221	315 (30w/d)	226	317 (30w/d)	805	257 (31.9%)
Rank	5 th	8 th	5 th	2 nd	5 th	2 nd	4 th	6 th (%)
Average Processing Times	14.7 weeks		22.6 weeks					
Rank	2 nd		8 th					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 40 weeks - Ongoing		Local Category – 23 weeks -Met		Over 12 month and over 24 month applications – reduce by 10% - Ongoing			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Third Quarter 2024/25 Statistical Bulletin and Planning Department Business Plan 2024-25

2024/25	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	3	4 (0w/d)	228	292 (10w/d)	231	306 (10w/d)	740	272 (34.8%)
Rank	3 rd	3 rd	4 th	2 nd	5 th	2 nd	5 th	3 rd (%)
Average Processing Times	18.6 weeks		18.1 weeks					
Rank	2 nd		6 th					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 40 weeks - Ongoing		Local Category – 19 weeks -Met		Over 12 month reduce by 10% - not met			
					Over 24 month applications – reduce by 10% - met			

2024/25	Major		Local		Total		Live	
End of Year	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Rec'd	Dec'd/ W/D	Total	Over 12mths
Planning Applications	17	17 (1w/d)	940	1,069 (76w/d)	957	1,086 (77 w/d)	740	272 (34.8%)
Rank	3 rd	4 th	5 th	2 nd	5 th	3 rd	5 th	3 rd (%)
Average Processing Times	25.2 weeks		23.0 weeks					
Rank	4 th		9 th					
Business Plan Target	Major Category – 40 weeks - Met		Local Category – Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 targets met		Over 12 month reduce by 10% - not met			
					Over 24 month applications – reduce by 10% - met			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: DfI 2024/25 Annual Statistical Bulletin and Planning Department Business Plan 2024-25

- 3.2** In the Q4, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council issued 4 major planning applications (approval of 80 units for social and affordable housing; extra 10 years operation to a wind farm; variation of condition for retail store relating to WWTW capacity; and, variation of condition for caravan park relating to foul sewer connection). resulting in an average processing time of 18.6 weeks meeting the statutory target and business plan target for this period and 2nd fastest out of all 11 Councils. Over the year, 17 major applications were decided/withdrawn in an average processing time of 25.2 weeks achieving the Business Plan target of 40 weeks and also the statutory target of 30 weeks.
- 3.3** In Q4, we received 3 major planning applications (1 extension to quarry, 2no. battery energy storage systems). This brings to a total of 17 major applications received in

the 2024/25 business year, 4 more than the previous business year and 3rd highest out of all 11 Councils.

- 3.4** In Q4, 228 local applications were received and 940 received over the business year, 38 less than the previous business year. Over Q4, 292 local category applications were decided including 10 local applications withdrawn, 2nd highest out of all 11 Councils. Although not meeting the statutory target, the Business Plan target of 19 weeks was met continuing the improvement in processing times over the business year.
- 3.5** There was a total of 272 applications in the system over 12 months at end of the business year, 1 more than at the beginning of this business year. The focus on reducing the number of over 24 month applications was successful achieving a reduction of 14% meeting the Business Plan target of 10% reduction by end of year.
- 3.6** Focus will continue into the next business year on continually improving performance and reducing the number of older applications in the system.

Enforcement

- 3.7** Table 2 below shows statistics in relation to enforcement for Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 and end of year for the 2024/25 business year. Progress continues to improve performance meeting the KPIs set out in the Business Plan. The statutory target for bringing to conclusion enforcement cases of 70% within 39 weeks has not been met over this period. However, the Business Plan target of 55% for Q1, 60% for Q2, 65% for Q3 and 70% for Q4 have been achieved and through improved performance just missed meeting the statutory target by end of the business year by 1%.
- 3.8** Of the cases closed in Q4, 19.2% were remedied/resolved, 19.2% had planning permission granted; 15.1% were closed as not expedient; 8.2% were immune from enforcement; and 39.7% had no breach identified. A total of 3 enforcement notices were issued during Q4 and 2 breach of condition notices.

Table 2: Enforcement

2024/25	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
Q1						Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	54	76	77	55.7%	438	1	1
Rank	8 th	5 th	6 th	8 th	4 th	2 nd	-
Business Plan Target				Conclude 55% within 39 weeks			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2024/25 Statistical Bulletin

2024/25	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
Q2						Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	61	45	56	69.6%	454	8	0
Rank	4 th	5 th	5 th	8 th	3 rd	1 st	-
Business Plan Target				Conclude 60% within 39 weeks			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Second Quarter 2024/25 Statistical Bulletin

2024/25	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
Q3						Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	47	49	50	77.4%	450	2	0
Rank	7 th	7 th	7 th	5 th	3 rd	1 st	-
Business Plan Target				Conclude 65% within 39 weeks			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Third Quarter 2024/25 Statistical Bulletin

2024/25	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
Q4						Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	44	74	73	76.7%	420	0	1
Rank	9 th	4 th	4 th	6 th	4 th	-	-
Business Plan Target				Conclude 70% within 39 weeks			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: 2024/25 Annual Statistical Bulletin

2024/25	Open	Closed	Concluded	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
End of Year						Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	204	244	261	69.0%	420	12	2
Rank	7 th	7 th	6 th	7 th	4 th	1 st	1 st
Business Plan Target				Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 Business Plan targets met			

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: 2024/25 Annual Statistical Bulletin

Implement a new Pre-Application Discussion process – Timescale Q2 – Met

- 3.9 The new Pre-Application Discussions procedures were agreed at Planning Committee on 22 May 2024 and implemented on 01 September 2024. This Business Plan KPI target has been met.

Implement a new Validation Checklist process – Timescale Q2 – Met

- 3.10 The new Validation Checklist process was agreed at Planning Committee meeting held on 22 May 2024 and implemented on 01 September 2024. This Business Plan KPI target has been met.

Implement Standing Advice from NI Water – Timescale Q3 agree – Met and Q4 to implement – not met

- 3.11 NI Water Standing Advice was agreed at a meeting held on 21 November 2024. The Standing Orders were agreed with NIW at a meeting held on 21 November 2024 and implemented in this Council on the 01 April 2025 missing the target by 1 day. The delay in implementation was due to awaiting NI Water updating their website with the necessary information.

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

- 3.12 The over 12 month action plan has been developed and this KPI target has been met.

Reduce the number of over 12month applications in the system by 10% - Timescale Q4 – not met

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

- 3.13 At end of Q4 this target was not met in relation to the number of over 12 month applications as focus in the last quarter was on reducing the number of over 24 month applications in the system. This focus on these older applications resulted in the business plan target for over 24 month applications being met and exceeded achieving a 14% reduction over the business year.

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

Completion of research to inform LDP preparation in line with published timetable – Timescale Q3 – partially met

- 3.14 Although the tender exercise for the independent research was unsuccessful, a direct award contract has been agreed to be awarded to Ulster University - Timescale Q3 – target met for award of contract. The completion of the research is scheduled for September 2025. This is in accordance with the proposed new Local Development Plan 2038 Timetable.

Tree Preservation Order interactive map viewer operational and accessible by the public – Timescale Q3 – Met

- 3.15** The TPO interactive map has been developed and further supporting information is in the process of being linked – target has been 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 – Not Met

- 3.16** The review of the Planning Fraud Risk Self Assessment Checklist was completed on 16/10/24; target was missed by 16 days.

Review outstanding Audit/Ombudsman recommendations and allocate timeframe for implementation – Timescale Q3 - Met

- 3.17** The review of outstanding Audit/Ombudsman recommendations has been completed on 18 September 2024 and timeframe for implementation allocated.

Recommendations from outstanding Audit/Ombudsman recommendations implemented – Timescale Q4 – partially Met

- 3.18** An update on the outstanding actions was presented to Planning Committee at the meeting held on 26 February 2025. Two actions remain ongoing – review of LDP process which rests with DfI for changes to legislation and large percentage of overturns – review of previous decisions to be provided by legal advisers after the summer recess.

Number of cases where Ombudsman determines maladministration is less than 0.4% of all decisions made – Timescale Q4 - Met

- 3.19** There were no cases during this period where the Ombudsman determined maladministration – target met.

Long term vacant posts filled – Timescale Q2 – partially met

- 3.20** Pre-employment procedures complete for Planning Assistant grades in Q3; all other posts filled – target partially met.

Reserve list held for future vacancies for next 12 months – target met

- 3.21** A reserve list is in place for all Planning Principal, Senior, Officer and Assistant grades following successful recruitment campaigns.

Other items of interest

- 3.22** Over the business year there were over 900 residential units approved across the Borough, almost double the average yearly build rate across the Borough of 2020-

2024. Of these over 200 were for affordable housing (social housing, intermediate to rent, intermediate to buy).

3.23 The Planning Department also received:

- 260 general correspondence
- 57 EIR/FOI requests
- 31 complaints
- 11 cases referred to NIPSO

3.24 Over the business year there were 22 appeals on planning applications and Certificates of Lawful development determined by the Planning Appeals Commission of which 64% were dismissed, supporting the council decision on those applications. of those that were allowed, these related to self-catering accommodation/short-term lets, commencement of development, balcony, infill dwellings, domestic garage, access to a quarry.

3.25 There were also 11 enforcement appeal decisions of which 82% were upheld or varied in support of the Council. Of the 2 cases where the enforcement notice was quashed, these were on the ground (a) appeal that planning permission be granted by the Planning Appeals Commission.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 IT IS RECOMMENDED that the Planning Committee note the Planning Departments Annual Report on performance.