

Publication of Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Second Quarter 2018/19 Statistical Bulletin	23rd January 2019
Planning Committee	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
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
Cost: (If applicable)	N/A

1.0 Background

The Northern Ireland Planning Statistics is an official statistics publication issued by Analysis, Statistics & Research Team within Department for Infrastructure. The Second Quarter 2018/19 Statistical Bulletin was published on 20th December 2018 providing provisional planning statistics for this period. It also provides a summary of Council progress across the three statutory targets for major development applications, local development applications and enforcement cases as laid out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

2.0 Details

2.1 **Website link** <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-july-2018-september-2018> provides the link to the published bulletin.

Development Management Planning Applications

2.2 Table 1 below provides a summary of performance in relation to the statutory target for major development applications and local development applications for Q2 and provides a comparison of performance against all 11 Councils.

Table 1: Planning Applications – Q2 of 2018/19

2018/19	Major		Local		Total		Live	
Q2	Rec'd	Dec'd	Rec'd	Dec'd	Rec'd	Dec'd	Total	Over 12mths
Planning Applications	5	5	285	286	290	291	776	150
Rank	2 nd	2 nd	4 th	4 th	4 th	4 th	2 nd	6 th (% of live applications)
Average Processing Times	116.3wks (target 30wks)		22.6wks (target 15wks)					
Rank	10 th		11 th					
Approval Rate	100%		92.3%		92.4%		9 th Rank	

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: 2018/19 Second Quarterly Statistical Bulletin

- 2.3** As is clear from Table 1 above and Table 2 below, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is in the top half of the 11 Councils when comparing the number of applications received and determined over this six month period. Although this Council has the second highest number of live applications, it is sixth in terms of the percentage of live applications in the system over 12 months, an improvement of 2 ranks compared to Q1.
- 2.4** Furthermore, performance in terms of processing times of both major and local applications has improved from Quarter 1 but remains the second slowest out of the 11 Councils for processing major applications and the slowest for local applications. However, this must be balanced against the fact that this Council received and determined the second highest number of major applications in Q2. It also received the second highest number of commercial applications in Q2 and the second highest number of Government and Civic type applications.
- 2.5** The main reasons for the lengthy time to process applications continues to relate to the continual negotiations on applications to achieve high quality design or seek reports on flooding, ammonia, and protected species. This is because 42% of the Borough is covered in an environmental designation, including 5 Conservation Areas and 4 AONBs, either wholly or partially. Quality in terms of design and impact on the environment is therefore of high importance in this area.
- 2.6** Nevertheless, performance against statutory targets remains an area for improvement and although one of the slowest Councils, progress has been made in relation to the average time to process both local and major applications when compared to Q1. Of significance is the increase in the percentage of local applications now being processed within the 15 week target, improving from 33.7% of applications processed within the 15 weeks in Q1 to 36.5% in Q2 with an improved YTD of 35.1%. With the ongoing recruitment of additional staff it is anticipated that this should result in further improvements in performance against statutory targets in Q4 when staff will have been recruited and in post.

Table 2: Planning Applications – Year to Date 2018/19

2018/19	Major		Local		Total		Live	
YTD	Rec'd	Dec'd	Rec'd	Dec'd	Rec'd	Dec'd	Total	Over 12mths
Planning Applications	9	5	582	577	591	582	776	150
Rank	3 rd	7 th	5 th	5 th	5 th	5 th	2 nd	6 th (% of live applications)
Average Processing Times	158.6wks (target 30wks)		23.2wks (target 15wks)					
Rank	10 th		11 th					
Approval Rate	100%		93.2%		93.3%		9 th Rank	

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: 2018/19 Second Quarterly Statistical Bulletin

Enforcement

- 2.7 Table 3 and Table 4 below shows statistics in relation to enforcement in Q2 and YTD. The high number of enforcement cases opened continued yet to date we continue to close more cases than we opened keeping the overall live caseload at a manageable level. Of note is that of the cases closed in Q2, 23.3% were as a result of no breach of planning control being identified. Of further note, is that this Council has the 5th highest number of cases live which includes those cases where an enforcement notice has issued and court action is ongoing or where a planning application has been submitted and action is held awaiting the outcome of the planning application process.

Table 3: Enforcement – Q2 2018/19

2018/19	Open	Conclude	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
Q2			70% within 39wks		Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	78	84	75%	304	4	-
Rank	7 th	3 rd	9 th	5 th	2 nd	-

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: 2018/19 Second Quarterly Statistical Bulletin

Table 4: Enforcement – YTD 2018/19

2018/19	Open	Conclude	Conclusion Times	Live	Court Action	
YTD			70% within 39wks		Prosecutions	Convictions
Cases	149	184	81%	304	7	2
Rank	6 th	4 th	7 th	5 th	4 th	1 st

Source: Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: 2018/19 Second Quarterly Statistical Bulletin

Conclusion

- 2.8 In conclusion, performance within the Planning Department remains steady. However, the processing times and number of over 12 month applications requires focus over this business year in an attempt to increase the number of applications processed within the statutory targets and reduce the number in the system over 12months. With the agreed recruitment of additional staff, this improvement should be visible in Q4 performance statistics.

3.0 Recommendation

- 3.1 **IT IS RECOMMENDED** that the Planning Committee note the update on the Northern Ireland Planning Statistics 2018/19 Second Quarterly Statistical Bulletin.