

Appendix 12

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| Item/Min Ref: | Title of Report: | Officer presenting: |
| 11 | Publication of the Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: Update - 2015/16 Combined Second and Third Quarterly Bulletins | Author: Head of Planning |

1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 To appraise Members that on 28 April 2016, the Department of the Environment published the Northern Ireland Planning Statistics - 2015/16 Combined Second & Third Quarterly Bulletins. These are the second and third quarter provisional figures to be released since the transfer of planning powers to Councils and cover the period of July 2015 - December 2015 (http://www.doeni.gov.uk/index/information/asb/statistics/planning_statistics.htm). A previous paper covering the first quarter was considered at the November 2015 Planning Committee (Appendix 12).
- 1.2 These first year figures will provide the base line year for the reporting of performance related data at Council level, with comparative trend data then building from that point onwards. The final quarter has yet to be published, January 2016 to end March 2016.
- 1.3 As Members will be aware, a new classification hierarchy for planning applications came into effect on 1st April 2014 in advance of planning functions to local government from 1st April 2015. The new development categories are Major and Local Development applications which are processed by Councils and Regionally Significant Development applications which are processed within the Department of Infrastructure.
- 1.4 There are three new legislative performance targets which the Council will be measured on covered in the Report, Local planning application decisions target is within an average of 15 weeks, Major Development decisions within an average of 30 weeks and processing 70% of enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks.

2 Background

- 2.1 The number of planning applications received in Northern Ireland in the period April 2015 until December 2015 was 9,128 applications. Of those, Derry City and Strabane District Council received 681 applications (third lowest in NI) until the end of the third quarter. 520 planning applications were issued, 498 of which were approved with a 98% approval rate for the Council area, the overall approval rate in NI sits presently at 94.2%.
- 2.2 The average processing time to decide Major planning applications is at 41.8 weeks extending from 33.9 weeks in the first quarter, across all Councils in NI. Derry City and Strabane District Council processed Major Development applications in 40.2 weeks by the end of the third quarter which is slightly below average which is as a consequence to the large volume of legacy cases which the Council has issued in the last 6 months.
- 2.3 The average processing time to decide Local Development applications was 19.2 weeks across all Councils. Derry City and Strabane District Council processed Local Development applications in 16 weeks in the first quarter, 17.2 weeks in the second quarter and 16.6 weeks in the third quarter. Average processing time to date is sitting at 16.2 weeks, just 1.2 weeks passed target. The final quarter will hopefully bring the figure into target. Overall it is the fourth highest performance across the 11 Councils and significantly above the 19 week average at the moment.
- 2.4 However, it is important to highlight, when Legacy planning applications are separated from the new Council applications, the Local processing target of 15 weeks is being easily met at 12.4 weeks, the legacy local applications are averaging processing times at 25.4 for our Council area.
- 2.5 The time taken to process 70% of enforcement cases to target conclusion across all councils sits at 29.2 weeks, by the end of the third quarter. Year to date 77.7 % of all complaints are concluded within the 39 week deadline. Derry City and Strabane District Council processed 76.9% of all complaints within the 39 week target which comfortably meets the 70 % target.

- 2.6 At a Northern Ireland level, the number of live applications greater than one year old at the end of June 2015 was 1,088. Derry City and Strabane District Council has a large proportion of legacy DOE cases and by end of December 2015, this remained high at 202 6-12 months old and 152 over 1 year old. 152. This equates to 25.7% of the live caseload.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 Derry City and Strabane District Council's performance has been strong and steady through the second and third quarters particularly in the Local planning application processing and in Enforcement. However, as a result of inheriting 525 DOE planning applications , issuing the backlog will have to continue as a focus in order to strive to improve on both Local and Major performance in the coming year. Our own Legacy management information indicates that at time of transfer the team inherited 525 planning applications on 01st April 2015, by end of March 2016, this had been reduced by 338 cases to a figure of 187. Of those 54 cases are Major and 133 are Local.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR and Other Implications

- 4.1 There are not considered to be financial, equality, legal, HR or other implications.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 That Members note the content of this report and the attached Appendix 12 and associated link at 1.1.