

Title of Report: Item 8: Final Annual NI Planning Statistics 2019/20 – Development Management Performance Update	Officer Presenting: Head of Planning Author: Maura Fox
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1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update and advise Members that on 2 July 2020, the Department for Infrastructure Northern Ireland Planning Statistics - Annual Statistical Bulletin was published and can be accessed at the link below and provide an update on Planning statistics/targets:
www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-activity-statistics

2 Background

- 2.1 As Members will be aware, 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 development categories are Major and Local Development applications which are processed by Councils and Regionally Significant Development applications which are processed within the Department for Infrastructure.
- 2.2 There are three current legislative performance targets which the Council will be measured on covered in the Report, Local planning application decisions target of processing 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.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The number of planning applications received in Northern Ireland in this year, period April 2019 to March 2020 was 12,207, the lowest overall figure in the last number of years since 2013/2014. Of these, Derry City and Strabane District Council received 840, which is only 17 less than last year. The approval rate in NI was 93.2%. DCSDC had an average approval rate of 97.6% which compares to 97.2% the previous year.
- 3.2 The average processing time to decide Major planning applications across NI in this year is 52.8 weeks. Derry City and Strabane District Council issued 11 Major applications in this period which compares to 18 the previous year. DCSDC Major processing target was 96.0 weeks compared to 154.2 weeks the previous year which was a significant improvement.
It is noted that DCSDC received the third highest number of new major applications in this year, 15 compared to 6 the previous year.
- 3.3 The average processing time to decide Local applications across all Councils in this year was 14 weeks, below the 15 week DFI target. Derry City and Strabane District Council has performed well in the first quarters, 13.3 weeks in Quarter 1 and 13.8 weeks in Quarter 2, leaving a Year to Date performance of 14.0 weeks, well within Local target. This compares to 14.1 weeks in the previous year, so slight improvement.
- 3.4 At a Northern Ireland level, the number of live applications greater than a year old at the end of March 2019 was 6,312 or 20%. Derry City and Strabane District Council still has a substantial proportion of one year plus applications which was 118 or 26.2%. This compares to March 2019 which was 96 or 19.1%.
- 3.5 Across NI, in terms of enforcement cases, 81% of cases were concluded within 39 weeks. Derry City & Strabane District Council processed 78.1% of all cases within the 39 week target and therefore meeting the 70% plus target. Quarter 3 was particularly noteworthy with other quarters ranging from 75 to 78. This compares to a conclusion time the previous year of 53.6% which has been a significant improvement.
- 3.6 In summary this has been a good year for the Council, meeting two of the three main DFI Stat targets. The Major application target remains a challenge like all Councils, however this year did see a significant improvement, one historic case can easily eschew other good performances due to the low overall numbers. Other area of improvement was the Enforcement target which is noteworthy. A particular challenge remains, however in managing the one year plus caseload and will continue to be a focus for improvement with aspects which are within the control of the Council.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR and Other Implications

4.1 There are no significant financial, equality, legal, HR or other implications.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report and associated link at 1.1.

Background Papers

None