

Report on	Planning Performance
Date of Meeting	10th Jan 2022
Reporting Officer	Dr Chris Boomer, Service Director
Contact Officer	Dr Chris Boomer, Service Director

Is this report restricted for confidential business?		Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon		No	x
	Information relates to financial or business affairs of a person (including the council)		

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform members of planning performance and progress against national statistics and in comparison to other Councils
2.0	Background –
2.1	Regional statistics published by the Department of Infrastructure on a quarterly and annual basis provide a useful comparison across Councils. However, these are usually 3-4 months in arrears. The last available figures are up to 30 th September 2021, representing the first half of the business year.
3.0	Main Report – Implications for Mid Ulster Council
	Current Position on applications
3.1	The regional planning statistics show that 1 st April to September 30 th show that the total number of applications received were 770 applications were submitted and 753 decisions made of which 99.3% were approved. This makes Mid Ulster the third busiest planning department and the most successful in negotiating positive outcomes for applicants.
3.2	Over the period, we received only 4 major applications, although we issued 10 major approvals, which was the highest in Northern Ireland. Average processing times were 98.2 weeks, reflecting the complexity of the applications.
3.3	All other applications are classified as local. Processing times average 14.8 weeks, just inside our targets. Only three other authorities achieved better, all of which received less applications. However, unverified figures for November

	<p>suggest that as we clear our backlog of applications received over lockdown, average performance times will decline.</p>
3.4	<p>Mid Uster received highest and nearly 50% of Northern Ireland industrial development and the highest number of commercial, civic and industrial applications outside Belfast.</p>
3.4	<p>Some 99 enforcement cases were opened in the first half of the business year and 67 of which investigations have been concluded with 83.3% within the target period of 39 weeks.</p>
	<p>Progress of Local Development Plan</p>
3.5	<p>At the end of May, the Draft Local Development Plan Strategy was submitted to DfI, in line with this year's business Plan objective. Despite two letters and assurance that by the Department that they would contact us, we are still awaiting word on whether the plan is to be passed to the Planning Appeals Commission for public examination.</p>
	<p>Planning Portal</p>
3.6	<p>The installation of our new portal and application management system is being progressed although it appears on the Consultants side that some slippage has occurred and a go live date of 1st April is being touted. This said, until the system has been fully tested, I am not yet assured of this, and I am awaiting a revised project plan from the consultants.</p>
	<p>Other Considerations</p>
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p>
	<p>Financial: We have been working in budget.</p>
	<p>Human: Social distancing and remote working on the basis of office rotas is still in operation and is likely to be for some time yet.</p>
	<p>Risk Management: There is a significant risks targets will not be met this year. However, I am confident that with Covid abating, appropriate recruitment and implementation of the new computer system, we will see significant service improvements in 2022/23. .</p>
4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p>

	None for the Council
	Rural Needs Implications: None for the Council. N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That the Planning Committee notes the Service Directors report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Regional statistics published by the Department of Infrastructure are available on the DfI website.