



Subject:	Update and Six Month Review of Activity
Date:	17 th November 2015
Reporting Officer:	Phil Williams, Director of Planning and Place
Contact Officer:	

Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	It was previously agreed that Committee would be provided with an update on ongoing work within the service and an outline of future reviews that may be required moving forward.
1.2	This report provides an outline of the main areas of work and some of the changes within the service arising from the ongoing reviewing of activity during the first six months since transfer of the statutory planning functions from the DoE. The report also provides information in relation to the numbers of applications and how they have been dealt with by the service.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is requested to note the: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• update on work carried out by the service during the first six months;• the initial statistical and specific application information available; and• proposals for further reports and updates, including statistics to be presented to future meetings.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	During this period of transition planning has continued to deliver the core services to

customers and successfully carry out statutory responsibility to process and determine applications and initiate preparatory policy work. This work has been delivered in the context of major legislative change; staff transfer / integration; restructuring within Council and changing processes.

3.2 The six months post transfer were always recognised as being likely to be the most challenging in respect of maintaining service continuity and responding to the new legislative requirements. The continuing work to successfully integrate the new function within Council has focussed on changes to improve our operations, processes and the delivery of the statutory responsibility.

Organisational Change

3.3 A number of changes have been introduced to respond to the requirements of the new legislation and to make our decision making processes more accessible whilst the Development Management functions have been restructured to provide greater flexibility to respond proportionately to the development pressures across the city.

3.4 The main aspect of this ongoing change process have been:

- Establishment of the new processes and introduction of a new approach to the presentation and consideration of planning applications by Committee.
- Agreement and implementation of the Scheme of Delegation.
- Introduction of a process for the review of the Legacy applications that were inherited by the Council.
- Protocols and processes developed to facilitate representations at Committee.
- Restructuring of the Development Management to establish a City Centre, Harbour and Major Applications Team alongside a Citywide and Local Applications Teams with a dedicated Enforcement resource.

Guidance and Documents

3.5 There have been a number of formal and informal documents produced to support the our work and enhance the effectiveness of our processes including:

- Guidance for applicants on the operation of the Pre-Application Community Consultation processes;
- Advice in relation to the consideration of proposals for Purpose Built Student Accommodation; and
- A draft Statement of Community Involvement that sets out our approach to

engagement across all our functions.

Planning Applications

3.6 There have been a number of changes introduced as part of the transfer of the planning function which have changed how Councils manage and determine applications under the new legislation and processes. As part of the response to this new context over the last six months we have seen the introduction of new processes for Committee consideration of applications and changes in the structure of the Development Management Teams.

3.7 As noted above the Council inherited a substantial legacy of planning applications(780), including those from the parts of Lisburn, Castlereagh and North Down, with the transfer of planning functions in April 2015. The presence of these legacy applications will in the short term influence both our capacity to deal with current applications and our performance statistics in relation to the Key Performance Indicators. The implementation of the process for the review of these legacy applications is the first stage of the strategy to address this legacy and shift the focus to the management and consideration of new applications or proposals.

3.8 As noted above during this period of transition planning has continued to deliver the core services to customers and process both new and legacy planning applications. The tables below provide the Committee with some statistics to outline the extent and nature of the work that Planning has been engaged in during the first six months.

Applications Determined

3.9 We have issued **542** decisions which related to 18 Major and 524 local applications. Of the 542 there were 514 approved and 28 refused. The 542 were related to the following types of applications:

Application Type	Total	Approved	Refused
Full	442	428	14
Outline	6	4	2
Advertisement	72	61	11
Demolition In Conservation Area	12	12	
Listed Building Consent	9	9	
Reserved Matters	1	1	

3.10 It should be noted that these figures are based on those used for DoE monitoring

purposes and do not include 54 other applications that we were required to determine including: Certificates of Lawful Development (41), Non Material Changes (6) and Discharge of Conditions (7).

3.11 Among the 89 applications considered by the Committee in the first 6 months have been a number of Major applications including **Titanic Exhibition Centre**, the **Boutique Hotel** in the Harland and Wolf Headquarters Building and a proposal for an extended **Lidl Store** in west Belfast. It should be noted that the work in this period up to 30 September 2015 ensured the further Major applications for Windsor House (**Grand Hotel**), **Allstate** and **Belvoir Hospital** were all able to be brought before the Committee in October 2015.

3.12 These six applications alone represent a significant investment in the city with £30m proposed for the Belfast Grand Hotel alone. In addition the proposed AllState capital investment of over £30m will deliver 200 short term construction opportunities whilst safeguarding 1,500 existing operational positions and providing for 200 new posts. In addition to this investment the approved proposals are creating significant employment opportunities and will contribute to the continued regeneration of the parts of Belfast in which they are located.

3.13 Alongside this work to support the continued growth and regeneration of the city we are through changes in the Development Management seeking to ensure that the processing times for local and householder applications are reduced. The median processing times for the 200 Local applications validated from the first of April and on which we have issued decisions is less than the statutory target of 15 weeks.

Applications Received

3.14 We have received **744** applications in the six months from April to September. Of these 27 were Major and 717 were Local applications. The 744 were related to the following types of applications:

Application Type	Total	
Full	576	24 Major
Outline	12	3 Major
Advertisement	85	
Demolition In Conservation Area	33	
Listed Building Consent	34	
Reserved Matters	4	

3.15 It should again be noted that these figures are based on those used for DoE monitoring purposes and do not include the range of other applications that we were required to determine including: Certificates of Lawful Development, Non Material Changes and Discharge of Conditions.

Pre-Application Work

3.16 The Committee may also wish to note that there are new pre-application processes that have to be managed alongside the existing pre submission discussions and engagement. In addition to existing Pre Applications Discussions (PAD) processes the 2011 Act placed a statutory duty upon applicants to consult the community in advance of submitting major applications (PAN) from July 2015.

3.17 There have been 55 PADs received between April and September covering a range of potential applications. There were also 5 PANs which were the subject of Pre-Application Community Consultation (PAN) processes resulting in two major applications being submitted (see Appendix 1).

Enforcement Work

3.18 The Committee may wish to note that at the end of September there were 423 lives cases and between April and September 2015 the Council opened 208 new Enforcement cases (see below) and resolved 149 cases between. These covered a range of issues including unauthorised changes of use, unauthorised listed building works, unauthorised sheds, unauthorised advertisements, breach of condition and unauthorised works to protected trees to name but a few.

Case Type	No.
Breach of Planning Condition	16
Change of Use	22
Demolition in an Area of Townscape Character	5
Operational Development	114
Trees in Conservation Area	4
Tree Protection Order	4
Unauthorised advertisements	39
Works to Listed Building	4
	208

The Committee may also wish to note that work is continuing on the new Enforcement

3.19	Strategy which will be brought to a meeting this quarter for consideration by Members.
4.0	Future Updates and Reviews
4.1	As part of the ongoing performance and service management the intention is to provide Committee with regular quarterly reports in respect of the most up to date available statistics and progress in relation to the key milestones in respect of the business plan, local development plan, policy and other initiatives.
4.2	These proposed updates will provide early indications of the position in respect of key statutory performance indicators / standards, set out in the Local Government Order 2015, and keep Members informed of business plan related performance alongside an outline of the cumulative benefit arising from the work of the Committee.
4.3	Within the next quarter the resolution of the resourcing for the local development plan and broader policy work should provide the opportunity to set out the draft timetable for the plan and the key milestones to be agreed with the DoE. This activity will be set alongside the timelines for current commitments to policy related work such as the Statement of Community Involvement, Purpose Built & Managed Student Accommodation, Developer Contributions, Linen Quarter etc.
5.0	Equality and Good Relations Implications
5.1	None
6.0	Resource Implications
6.1	None
7.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
7.1	Appendix 1 – PANs received between April and September 2015

Appendix 1: PANs received between April and September 2015

1	LA04/2015/0459/ PAN Application Received following PAN	Lands within site bounded by 24-30 College Street to the north 41-49 Queen Street (formerly known as athletic stores) to the east and 29 Wellington Place to the South Belfast BT6 6EB	Student accommodation including a mix of cluster beds with shared facilities & studios; ground floor uses including support facilities associated with the student accommodation and bar; restaurant and cafe
2	LA04/2015/0471/ PAN Application Received following PAN	78-86 Dublin Road Belfast BT2 7BY	Demolition of existing building and provision of student accommodation including a mix of cluster beds with shared facilities and studios; and ground floor uses including support facilities associated with student accommodation and retail unit
3	LA04/2015/0982/ PAN	Land approximately 300m north of Dargan Road (North of Belfast City Council Waste Management Facility) adjacent to Belfast Lough Belfast (within wider Belfast City Council lands known as North Foreshore/Giant's park)	Construction of film studios complex, associated yards, car parking & access. Film studios to comprise four separate buildings as follows; Production (37,450 sq ft) Stage 01 & stage 02 (66,000 sq ft) Stage 03 (45,000 sq ft) Workshop 01, 02 & 03 (46,170 sq ft)
4	LA04/2015/1061/ PAN	Extensions and alterations to existing office building to provide an additional c.5388m ² of office floorspace	Centre House 69-85 Chichester Street
5	LA04/2015/1064/ PAN	Proposed demolition of existing building and erection of 10 storey building providing c.995m ² of retail floor space at ground and first floors and c.7021m ² of office floor space on upper floors	Londonderry House 19-27 Chichester Street