

PLANNING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

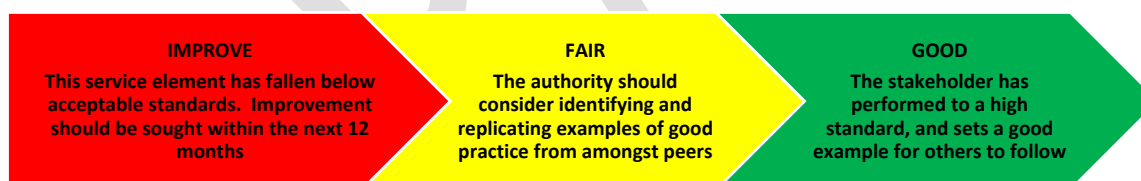


May 2017 – Version 1**Introduction**

- 1.1 The planning system in Northern Ireland has undergone a period of significant change. On 1st April 2015, the majority of planning functions were devolved from the Northern Ireland Government's former Department of the Environment (DOE) to 11 newly re-organised district councils. The previous arrangement of 26 district councils had been in place since the early 1970s.
- 1.2 Both actual and anecdotal evidence suggests that the new planning system and council reorganisation are now bedding-in. It is recognised that any performance management measures should have regard to the context of recent significant change, as well as the introduction of any significant further change and / or additional resource demands at this time.
- 1.3 The Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) commissioned Mark Hand (Head of Planning, Housing and Place-Shaping Innovation and Enterprise Directorate, Monmouthshire County Council) to prepare a report scoping out proposals for a planning performance management framework for Northern Ireland, including suggested indicators and definitions, timescales and other matters for consideration. This framework is based on the work carried out by Mark.
- 1.4 The framework has been formulated following discussions and a workshop with Dfi, heads of planning and relevant senior local government officers; as well as consideration of good practice in other regions (primarily Wales and Scotland); a customer survey asking planning agents / developers what is important to them in terms of an effective planning system; and feedback from heads of planning, enforcement officers and Dfi officials on the draft report issued in January 2017.
- 1.5 The objective of the exercise was to make recommendations for a framework to measure performance in a proportionate and meaningful way and to use the collected data to help drive service improvements. The desired outcome is a positive, efficient and effective planning system for Northern Ireland. Any performance management framework will evolve with time, as lessons are learnt or as circumstances, challenges or priorities change.
- 1.6 The outcomes of the framework will be of benefit to councils in helping them to identify best practice and to drive forward continuous improvement. It will also help central and local government to demonstrate planning's contribution to delivering the draft Programme for Government (PfG) outcome-based indicators. These include a strong, competitive, regionally balanced economy; protection of the environment; a healthier and more equal society; and a society where people are connected with opportunities through infrastructure. This requires central government to work with local government, private sector, voluntary and community sectors to maximise what can be achieved collectively.
- 1.7 While there are currently three statutory planning indicators, it is widely recognised that these do not cover all the work carried out by the local planning authorities (LPAs). This framework will help to address this by capturing data on other planning-related activities.
- 1.8 The framework incorporates the existing three statutory indicators, which will remain in addition to the new indicators.

Monitoring and reporting arrangements

- 2.1 The new performance reporting arrangements will come into effect from 1st April 2017. In the interest of driving forward continuous improvement across the Northern Ireland planning system, the Department will gather the data on a quarterly basis. Where possible, the data will be extracted from the planning portal or from official statistics; to minimise the burden on LPAs.
- 2.2 The quarterly reports will be issued to councils following the end of each quarter by DfI, pre-populated with centrally available data, as part of the current Official Statistics (OS) validation process. Councils will be asked to provide the input for any performance indicators they are responsible for updating and to confirm their agreement with the content of the reports. Once received, the Department will incorporate the information into the quarterly OS reports in the most appropriate format. At the end of each year the Department will use this information within an overall NI-wide planning report, which will include details of the Department's planning-related work and Planning Appeal Commission's (PAC) performance, and will publish the report on its website. Following the Department's release of quarterly pre-announced OS publications, councils may choose to publish their own quarterly reports.
- 2.3 Councils will be able to add narrative to explain performance and identify successes and areas for improvement / actions.
- 2.4 It is envisaged that this framework will evolve over time. The Department, in conjunction with local government, will review indicators and definitions and agree targets for the next year based on lessons learnt, trends, priorities and aspirations.
- 2.5 Where applicable, the framework categorises performance into one of three performance bands:



- 2.6 The indicators set out in the performance framework table are divided into six categories:
- Plan-making
 - Efficiency
 - Quality
 - Engagement
 - Enforcement
 - Outcomes (establishing systems and data gathering for the first year - will not be externally published)
- 2.7 Some of the indicators are currently not subject to specific targets. Where this is the case, the target is described as 'to be benchmarked'. These targets will be set in discussion with the LPAs and the Department.
- 2.8 A list of the indicators can be found at [Annex A](#).

SECTION 1 – PLAN MAKING:

Performance Indicator 1 (PI 1) - Has the council:

- a) Had its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) agreed by the Department?



- b) Published its Preferred Options Paper?



- c) Published its Plan Strategy?



- d) Published its Local Policies Plan?



Definitions

- i) 'Statement of Community Involvement' means the document as defined in the Planning (Statement of Community Involvement) Regulations (NI) 2015. Guidance can be found in Development Plan Practice Note 02.
- ii) 'Agreed' by the Department means that the council has either received a positive written response accepting the SCI from the Department or that no response has been received within 4 weeks of the council submitting the SCI to the Department.
- iii) 'Preferred Options Paper' means the document as defined in Part 3 of the Planning (Local Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 (the LDP Regulations). Guidance can be found in Development Plan Practice Note 04.
- iv) 'Published' means made publically available in accordance with the relevant section of the LDP Regulations (for example Regulation 11 in relation to the POP).
- v) Publication of the 'Plan Strategy' refers to making publically available the adopted Plan Strategy under Regulation 24.
- vi) Publication of the 'Local Policies Plan' refers to making publically available the adopted Local Policies Plan under Regulation 24.

Performance Indicator 2 (PI 2) - Has the council submitted its local development plan (LDP) Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)?



The AMR would detail the extent to which the objectives set out in the LDP are being achieved. This indicator would not be applicable until a full year following LDP adoption, which is some time off.

Definitions

- i) 'Submission' of the Annual Monitoring Report means the date on which a copy of / link to the council's AMR is sent in writing to the Department under Regulations 25 and 27.

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SECTION TWO – EFFICIENCY

Performance Indicator 3 (PI 3) - Average processing time taken to determine major applications.



This indicator is the existing statutory indicator.

Standard – Major applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 30 weeks.

Definitions

- i) A 'major' application is as defined in the [Planning \(Development Management\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#).

Performance Indicator 4 (PI 4) - Average time taken to determine major applications (excluding legacy and withdrawn applications).



This indicator is similar to the existing statutory indicator but excludes legacy applications and withdrawn applications.

Definitions

- i) A 'legacy' application is described as an application registered as valid on or before 31st March 2015.
- ii) Applications withdrawn by the applicant prior to the decision notice being issued will be excluded from the statistics.

Performance Indicator 5 (PI 5) – Average processing time taken to determine local applications.



This indicator is the existing statutory indicator.

Standard – Local applications processed from date valid to decision or withdrawal within an average of 15 weeks.

Definitions

- i) A 'local' application is as defined in the [Planning \(Development Management\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2015](#), and any other applications for approval or consent under the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (or any orders or regulations made under that Act). Applications to discharge conditions are excluded.

Performance Indicator 6 (PI 6) - Average time taken to determine local applications (excluding legacy and withdrawn applications).



This indicator is similar to the existing statutory indicator but amended to exclude legacy and withdrawn applications.

Performance Indicator – 7 (PI 7) - Average times taken to determine major legacy applications.

Given the age of these applications (only applications that have a date valid on or prior to 31st March 2015) a target is rather meaningless.

Performance Indicator – 8 (PI 8) - Average times taken to determine local legacy applications.

Given the age of these applications (only applications that have a date valid on or prior to 31st March 2015) a target is rather meaningless.

SECTION THREE - QUALITY

Performance Indicator – 9 (PI 9) - Percentage of applications determined under delegated powers.

Definitions

- i) The numerator is the number of applications determined under delegated powers during the reporting period. The denominator is the total number of applications determined during the reporting period.
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Performance Indicator – 10 (PI 10) - Percentage of applications approved.

Definitions

- i) The numerator is the number of applications approved during the reporting period. The denominator is the total number of applications determined during the reporting period.
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Performance Indicator – 11 (PI 11) - Percentage of committee decisions made against officer recommendation.

Definitions

- i) The numerator is the number of applications determined by the Planning Committee that were contrary to officer recommendation as published in the Committee minutes, during the reporting period. The denominator is the total number of applications determined by the Planning Committee during the reporting period.
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Performance Indicator – 12 (PI 12) - Percentage of appeals against refusals of planning permission that are dismissed.

Definitions

- i) The numerator is the number of appeal decisions that were dismissed (i.e. the council's decision was upheld) during the reporting period. The denominator is the total number of appeals determined by the Planning Appeals Commission during the reporting period. This indicator excludes appeals against non-determination and enforcement notices.
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Performance Indicator – 13 (PI 13) - Number of appeal costs awards.

Definitions

- i) This measures the number of instances where costs were either awarded fully or partially in the council's favour, or wholly or partially against the council. The indicator measures the number of instances, not the amount of money.
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SECTION FOUR – ENGAGEMENT

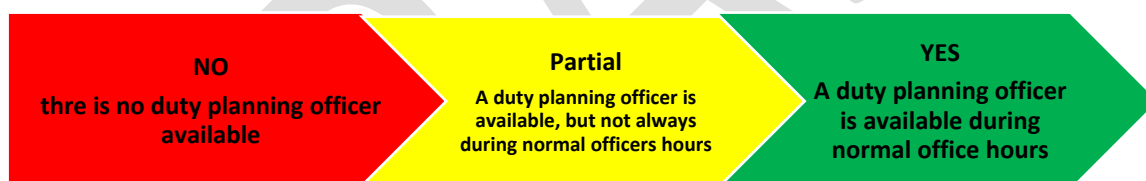
Performance Indicator – 14 (PI 14) - Does the council allow public speaking at planning committee meetings?



Definitions

- i) 'Public speaking at Planning Committee meetings' means any scheme formally adopted by the council and in operation that allows applicants, objectors and / or third party supporters to speak at Planning Committee meetings in relation to a specific application on the Committee agenda. The number of speakers, types of application on which speaking is permitted, length of time allowed for speakers etc. are all matters for the council to decide for itself to best meet its service needs.

Performance Indicator – 15 (PI 15) - Does the council have a planning officer on duty to provide general planning advice to customers?



Definitions

- i) The Duty Officer service must, as a minimum, be available Monday to Friday 9:00am to 4:30pm to count as a full Duty Officer service and to be recorded as a 'yes' in the performance returns. A lesser service should be recorded as 'partial', or no service as 'no'. The Duty Officer should be suitably qualified or experienced to provide day to day general planning guidance. The Lagan/NI Direct Service does not constitute a Duty Planning Officer.

SECTION FIVE – ENFORCEMENT

Performance Indicator – 16 (PI 16) - Proportion of enforcement cases progressed to the target conclusion within 39 weeks:



This is the existing statutory indicator.

Standard – 70% of all enforcement cases progressed to target conclusion within 39 weeks of receipt of complaint

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SECTION SIX – STRATEGIC PLANNING DIVISION

Performance Indicator – 17 (PI 17) - Contribute to sustainable economic growth by progressing all regionally significant applications to a Ministerial recommendation within 30 weeks of receipt of the application (or environmental statement, where applicable).



Definitions

- i) The processing target shall apply to RSD applications that:
 - o have been subject to pre-application discussions (PADs) with satisfactory provision of draft environmental information prior to submission, where applicable;
 - o are not the subject of a request for further environmental information. Such a request will extend the target by 30 weeks upon receipt of the information.
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SECTION SEVEN – OUTCOMES

Performance Indicator – 18 (PI 18) - Planning outcomes:

- i. number of affordable housing units granted consent;
- ii. proportion of affordable housing units granted consent that are located within defined settlement boundaries;
- iii. number of market housing units granted consent;
- iv. proportion of market housing units granted consent that are located within defined settlement boundaries;
- v. total number of housing units completed;
- vi. housing land availability indicators;
- vii. amount of office floor space granted (net increase in sqm);
- viii. amount of retail floor space granted (net increase in sqm);
- ix. amount of industrial floor space granted (net increase in sqm);
- x. number of megawatts of renewable energy approved.

While this information will be required by councils to populate their local development plans and for ongoing monitoring of those plans, it is considered important as an indicator of planning outcomes and therefore has been included in the framework. However, it is recognised that the planning portal does not capture all this information. Some of the above data may already be collated by some councils, but not all. In order to allow all councils time to collate this data, these outcome indicators will not be reported upon, or published, during 2017-18. The intention would be that councils will have this year to establish the monitoring systems necessary to capture this information, with a view to reporting properly from 1st April 2018.

This issue will be taken forward through further discussions with the proposed Performance Management Working Group, including agreed definitions for the indicators.

Annex A

MEASURE		Data available from
Section one - Making Plans		
PI - 1	Has the council:	
	a) Had its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) agreed by the Department?	Dfi
	b) Published its Preferred Options Paper?	Council
	c) Published its Plan Strategy?	Council
	d) Published its Local Policies Plan?	Council
PI - 2	Has the Council submitted its local development plan (LDP) annual monitoring report (AMR)?	Dfi
Section two - Efficiency		
PI - 3	Average time taken to determine major applications (current statutory indicator)	Dfi – Planning Portal
PI - 4	Average time taken to determine major applications (excluding legacy and withdrawn applications)	Dfi – Planning Portal
PI - 5	Average time taken to determine local applications (current statutory indicator)	Dfi – Planning Portal
PI - 6	Average time taken to determine local applications (excluding legacy and withdrawn applications)	Dfi – Planning Portal
PI - 7	Average time taken to determine major legacy applications	Dfi – Planning Portal
PI - 8	Average time taken to determine minor legacy applications	Dfi – Planning Portal
Section three - Quality		
PI - 9	Percentage of applications determined under delegated powers	Dfi – Planning Portal
PI - 10	Percentage of applications approved	Dfi – Planning Portal
PI - 11	Percentage of committee decisions made against officer recommendation	Council
PI - 12	Percentage of appeals against refusals of planning permission that are dismissed	PAC
PI - 13	Number of appeal costs awards	PAC
Section four - Engagement		
PI - 14	Does the council allow public speaking at planning committee meetings?	Council
PI - 15	Does the council have a planning officer on duty to provide general planning advice to customers?	Council
Section five - Enforcement		
PI - 16	Proportion of enforcement cases progressed to the target conclusion within 39 weeks	Dfi – Planning Portal
Section six – Strategic Planning Division		
PI - 17	Contribute to sustainable economic growth by progressing all regionally significant applications to a Ministerial recommendation within 30 weeks of receipt of the application (or environmental statement where applicable).	Dfi

2017-18 to be used as base year for data collection purposes:

Section seven – Outcomes (to be monitored from 1/4/18)		
PI - 18	Planning outcomes:	
	Number of affordable housing units granted consent	Council
	Proportion of affordable housing units granted consent that are located within defined settlement boundaries	Council
	Number of market housing units granted consent	Council

	Proportion of market housing units granted consent that are located within defined settlement boundaries	Council
	Total number of housing units completed	Council
	Housing land availability indicators	
	Amount of office floor space granted (net increase in sqm)	Council
	Amount of retail floor space granted (net increase in sqm)	Council
	Amount of industrial floor space granted (net increase in sqm)	Council
	Number of megawatts of renewable energy approved	Council

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