Belfast City Council

Subject:	Publication of Planning Monitoring Framework 2018/19
Date:	15 October 2019
Reporting Officer:	Aidan Thatcher, Director of Planning and Building Control
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Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted?   Yes ☐   No ☒

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision ☐
After Council Decision ☐
Some time in the future ☐
Never ☐

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in?   Yes ☒   No ☐

1.0	**Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues**
1.1	To make Members aware that the inaugural Planning Monitoring Framework for Northern Ireland was published by the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) on 19 September 2019.
2.0	**Recommendations**
2.1	The Planning Committee is asked to note the Planning Monitoring Framework 2018/19.
3.0	**Main report**
	Background
3.1	In October 2016, the Department for Infrastructure commenced work on a new Planning Monitoring Framework for Northern Ireland in consultation with local government. The impetus for the Framework was to drive performance and continuous improvement of Planning Authorities across the region.

3.2	There has been a collaborative approach to the development of the Framework between the Department and 11 councils with Belfast City Council a keen advocate of it as a means to promote the planning performance agenda across Northern Ireland.
3.3	Development of the Framework was last formally reported to the Planning Committee in June 2017. At the time, the Council provided a number of detailed comments on the then draft version but it has since changed considerably, having been significantly reigned back in scope. Nevertheless, the final version provides a useful series of additional Key Performance Indicators to sit alongside the three statutory performance targets for average processing time for Major applications (30 weeks); Local applications (15 weeks) and bringing to conclusion at least 70% of enforcement cases within 39 weeks.
	Planning Monitoring Framework 2018/19
3.4	The Framework was formally published on 19 September 2019. The main component is a "dashboard" that shows the KPIs in graphic form. Dashboards are provided for each of the 11 councils and Department. A regional picture of performance is also provided.
3.5	Members will note the KPIs for Belfast City Council are:
	1) Major applications – **41.4 weeks** average processing time (30 week target)
	2) Major applications – **36.4 weeks** average processing time (including withdrawn)
	3) Local applications – **15.2 weeks** average processing time (15 week target)
	4) Local applications – **15.0 weeks** average processing time (including withdrawn)
	5) Enforcement cases – **86.8%** concluded within 39 weeks (70% target)
	6) % applications determined under delegated powers – **93.4%**
	7) Applications determined by Planning Committee – **118 applications**
	8) % of committee decisions against officer recommendation – **2.5%**
3.6	The Council was able to provide the following narrative to provide context to these KPIs (character limited):
	'During this reporting period, Belfast City Council launched their ten Operating Principles aimed at 'front-loading' the application process, and a new Application Checklist, which should benefit in ensuring applications have the right information on submission. The Planning Statistics publication shows BCC's performance against legislative indicators continues to improve.
	Indicators for local applications (excluding withdrawn applications) and enforcement have been met. New processes speeding up turnaround times are improving major application processing performance. 21 major permissions were granted, with two applications withdrawn. High delegation levels supports faster decision-making.'
3.7	Members are advised that the dashboard format can be improved by providing the volumes of work alongside the KPIs to provide important context to the relative workloads of each Planning Authority. Officers will request that the Framework for 2019/20 includes this.
3.8	A copy of the Framework ("dashboard") is provided at **Appendix 1.** The Framework can be viewed in full at the following link: https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-monitoring-framework-201819

	Performance and Improvement
3.9	Following the planning service's implementation of its 10 Operating Principles (copy at **Appendix 2**), launch of its Application Checklist and restructuring of its development management teams, there has been continuing improvement to performance, particularly in relation to Local applications with the year to August performance at 13.4 weeks, within the 15 week target.
3.10	At the Planning Committee Workshop in September, officers reported on the updated Planning Improvement Plan which will help drive improved performance and customer service, Improvement Plan for Major applications, and Performance Report for Q1 2019/20. Officers will continue to report performance and improvement to Members quarterly.
	Financial & Resource Implications
3.11	None identified.
	Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment
3.13	No adverse impacts identified at this time.
4.0	**Appendices – Documents Attached**
	Appendix 1 – Planning Monitoring Framework 2018/19 ("dashboard") Appendix 2 – BCC Planning's 10 Operating Principles