

**NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY**  
**PLANNING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT – 2015-2016**

**PREFACE**

I am pleased to introduce the second Annual Performance Report for Newport City Council's Development Services. It has been a very busy year, with the highest housing completions in Newport for over 25 years, and the planners playing a fundamental role in this success by encouraging investment in sustainable locations and working proactively with developers to stimulate growth.

Friars Walk successfully opened in November 2015 and we are in the final year of the £17million Vibrant and Viable Places regeneration programme. The business sector is also improving, as demonstrated by the development of business units at the Celtic Business Park, Glan Llyn, which are the first business units to be speculatively built in Newport since before the recession. Such activity demonstrates confidence in Newport, and the provision of employment land to create jobs to go with the record housing numbers is very much welcomed.

Newport continues to make significant positive strides following the economic downturn, and the planning service has been vital in facilitating this growth.

John Richards, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Investment

**CONTEXT**

***This section sets out the planning context within which the local planning authority operates***

Standing at the gateway between England and Wales, Newport covers a geographical area of almost 74 square miles and has a population of approximately 145,700. It is a multi-cultural city with its own unique atmosphere, where traditional industries sit alongside new high-tech and finance companies. The large labour market pool is one of Newport's major strengths and its physical and digital connectivity make it an attractive place to locate a business.

Following a decline in heavy industry in the late 20th Century, the economic makeup of Newport changed. However, rather than dwell on economic decline, the existence of empty industrial sites presented a huge opportunity for sustainable locations for new housing, employment and community facilities; an opportunity that Newport has seized.

***Planning background, including previous adopted or abandoned development plans***

By 2026, Newport will have created an additional 10,350 new homes predominantly on brownfield sites. In order to support sustainable growth, the city will also create an additional 7,400 jobs. These are the key overall aims of the Newport Local Development Plan 2011-2026, which allocates sufficient land to ensure these ambitious but realistic objectives are achieved.

The Newport Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in January 2015. Sustainability is at the heart of the Plan and Newport is very keen to support development, but it is crucial it is the right development in the right location. The policies within the Plan will help to ensure this is achieved.

The foundations for many of the regeneration projects that are now coming to fruition in the city were set out in the Newport Unitary Development Plan 1996 -2011. The redevelopment of the Llanwern Steelworks site is evidence of this. The Unitary Development Plan allocated the site as part of the Eastern Expansion Area, and the LDP continues to promote this site as a key element in delivering the city's growth strategy.

***Place and fit within the community strategy and/or wider strategic and operational activity or the authority***

The Newport Community Strategy covers a ten year period from 2010-2020. It contains the visions and objectives for improving the city and is very much a living document, which has and will continue to be shaped through consultation with citizens and groups across Newport. The Community Strategy sets out a number of priority outcomes which the planning department and the LDP are ideally placed to help deliver. The Community Strategy Priority outcomes focus on four main themes:

- To be a prosperous and thriving city
- To have a better quality of life
- To have vibrant and safe communities
- To deliver better public services

**Prosperous and thriving city** – The LDP seeks to enhance Newport's role as a major economic hub in the region by providing new sites for housing and employment use. The LDP targets an increase of 7,400 new jobs by 2026, which is a 9% increase on 2011 levels. The Plan ensures that adequate employment land is available to support job growth. In addition, the Plan is very much supportive of city centre investment and regeneration which will significantly contribute to the long term prosperity of Newport.

**Better quality of life** – The LDP will help to create a better quality of life for people in a number of ways. Many of the factors that contribute to health and well-being have some basis in the planning system which can contribute to a better quality of life. These include locating development near safe, accessible and sustainable travel routes; being mindful of air quality issues; designing out crime; and enhancing access to green spaces and the wider natural environment.

**Vibrant and safe communities** – The LDP will aim to create developments where people feel safe and secure. Mixed housing will help to enhance social cohesion and promote interaction between different groups and ages of people, which is important to developing safer communities. The LDP will also promote good design which will help to deliver safer communities.

**Better public services** – The planning service will do its part in helping to improve the delivery of public services. Officers liaise closely with other departments to understand their needs when delivering development. The LDP supports the development of additional community facilities in sustainable locations and where possible, protects existing facilities.

In addition to the Community Strategy, Newport Council has its own Corporate Plan which sets out the plans the Council wants to achieve over the next three years. The Newport Corporate Plan has five objectives which focus on creating a:

- Caring City
- Fairer City
- Learning and Working City
- Greener and Healthier City
- Safer City

**Caring City** – Careful planning and design will enable communities to form where people want to live and belong and where people trust and respect each other.

**Fairer City** – The LDP will help meet the city’s housing need by providing additional affordable housing. It will reduce social exclusion by promoting accessibility to key services and inequalities will be reduced through significant regeneration projects.

**Learning and Working City** – The LDP allocates large areas of land for employment purposes that will create significant numbers of jobs. Housing delivery will generate widespread jobs in the construction market. Land for schools is also allocated in the LDP.

**Greener and Healthier City** – The LDP focuses development on previously developed land which helps in the protection of the countryside and other green spaces. The protection of green spaces will contribute to the visual character of an area, helping to provide recreational areas, including routes for walking and cycling.

**Safer City** – The LDP will help to create safe and secure developments through its design based policies.

The LDP also works in conjunction with other Council plans and strategies, many of which share common goals and objectives. Some of the key strategies include:

- Local Transport Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Single Integrated Plan

### ***Existing and previous major influences on land use***

The industrial revolution of the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century and 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw Newport prosper. The city grew substantially, firstly with the development of the canal network and then with the railways, enabling vast quantities of coal to be exported along with iron and steel products. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, steelmaking was a mainstay of the economy along with the port.

Following a decline in heavy industry in the latter years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the economic makeup of Newport changed. The existence of large empty former industrial sites, such as the former Llanwern Steelworks and former Novelis Aluminium factory offered strong sustainable locations for new communities to be developed. Regeneration of industrial sites is a key focus of the LDP with 82% of housing in the LDP being allocated on brownfield sites.

### ***Historic/Landscape setting of the area, including AONBs, conservation areas etc.***

During the Victorian reign, Newport became the principal town of the region. Many of the fine Victorian buildings constructed in that period remain to this date, giving Newport a character which many other towns and cities have lost. In other areas, the built environment goes back to Roman and Medieval times with important remains surviving both above and below present ground level. Recognising and preserving the historic landscape is an important part of the LDP, with 15 designated Conservation Areas located within the authority.

In terms of the natural environment, Newport has an important natural heritage rich in diversity and recognised at the international, national and local level, including the River Usk, the Gwent Levels, rolling hills, woodlands and hedgerows.

The River Usk has been important to Newport's growth throughout history and remains key in today's society, particularly with respect to environmental factors. The River is a Special Area of Conservation along with the Severn Estuary, which is also a Special Protection Area and a Ramsar site. A network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is also present in Newport, the Gwent Levels probably the most famous of these.

### ***Urban rural mix and major settlements***

Although Newport is often considered urban, the urban form within the city boundary is relatively compact, with 70% of the city classified as rural. The majority of the urban settlement is confined to the main city area with a handful of villages surrounding this. The Council recognises the importance of protecting the countryside both for its own sake and because it provides a vital landscape setting for the urban area and transport corridors.

### ***Population change and influence on LDP/forthcoming revisions***

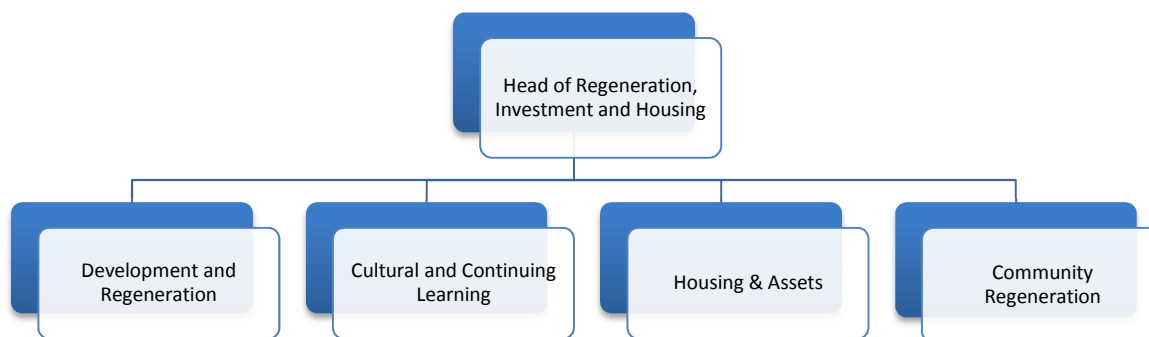
The Welsh Government 2011 Census projections predict a population increase of 15,588 in Newport between 2011 and 2026. This is in accordance with evidence submitted to support the LDP. However, the LDP housing projections are more ambitious than the Welsh Government (WG) 2011 Census projections. The WG 2011 Census household projections are based upon a continuation of conditions that were experienced during the recession, and fail to reflect the WG's objectives in respect of increasing the supply of housing. Newport has based its LDP housing projections with an assumption of economic growth rather than recession. Therefore, at LDP examination, the Planning Inspector and Welsh Government Plans Branch confirmed that the Newport housing requirement of 10,350 dwellings over the Plan period remains the most robust basis for planning for future housing demand in Newport.

## PLANNING SERVICE

### *Setting within wider organisation*

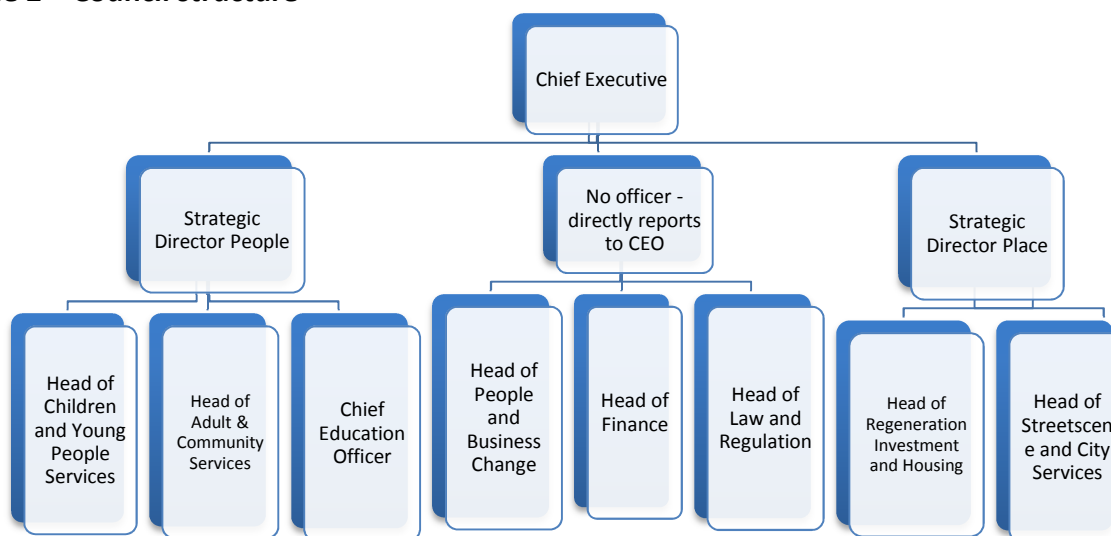
The statutory planning function in Newport sits within the Development and Regeneration section. The Development and Regeneration section is one of four business units within the Regeneration, Investment and Housing service; namely Development and Regeneration, Cultural and Continuing Learning, Housing and Assets, and Community Regeneration. The Development and Regeneration Manager reports to the Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing. This structure is shown in table 1 below.

**Table 1 – Position of Development and Regeneration Manager within the Regeneration, Investment and Housing Service**

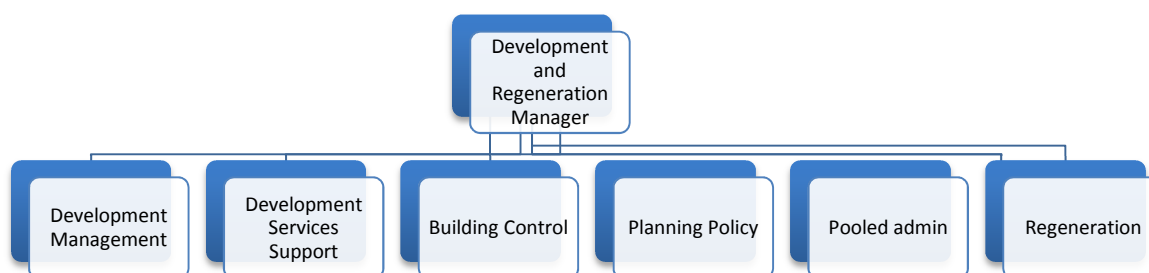


There are two Strategic Directors that report to the Chief Executive; Strategic Director for People and Strategic Director for Place. The Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing is one of 8 Heads of Services across the Council and one of two that report to the Strategic Director for Place. This structure is shown in table 2 below.

**Table 2 – Council structure**

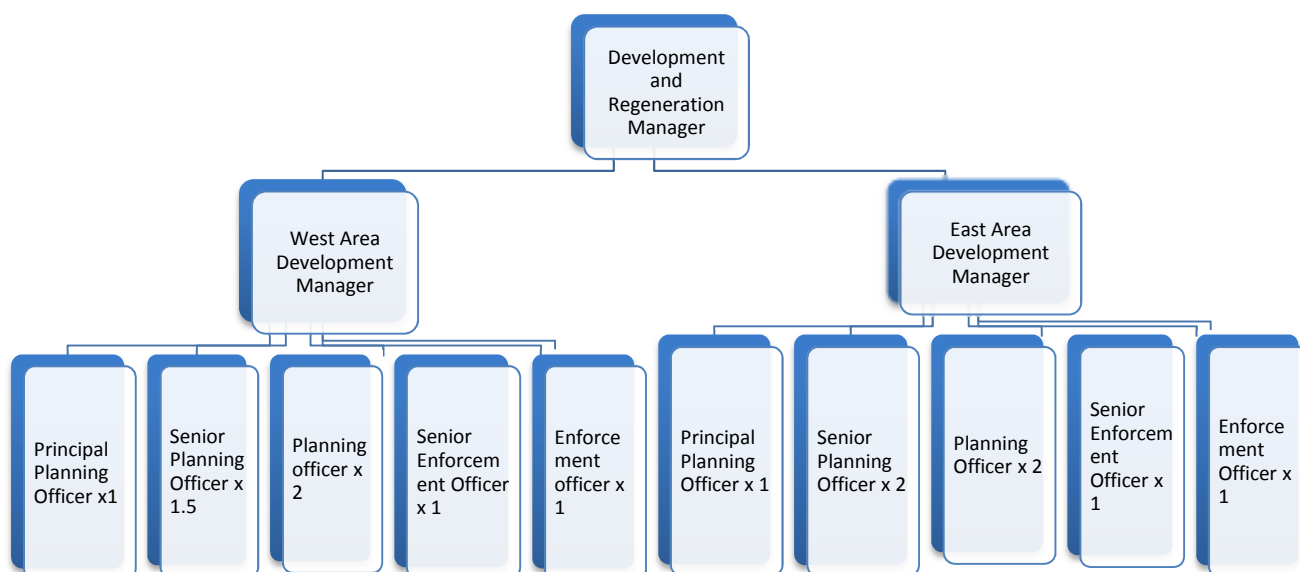


The Development and Regeneration Service comprises Development Management, Development Management Support (Technical Services), Pooled admin, Planning Policy, Building Control, Regeneration, Economic Development and European Funding. The section has a total of 42.2 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff, of which Development Management has 20.7 (including Tech Support), Building Control has 6.1 (including Tech Support), Planning Policy 4.6, Pooled Admin has 3 FTE staff, Regeneration 7.8 (including Economic Development and European Funding). This structure is shown in table 3 below.



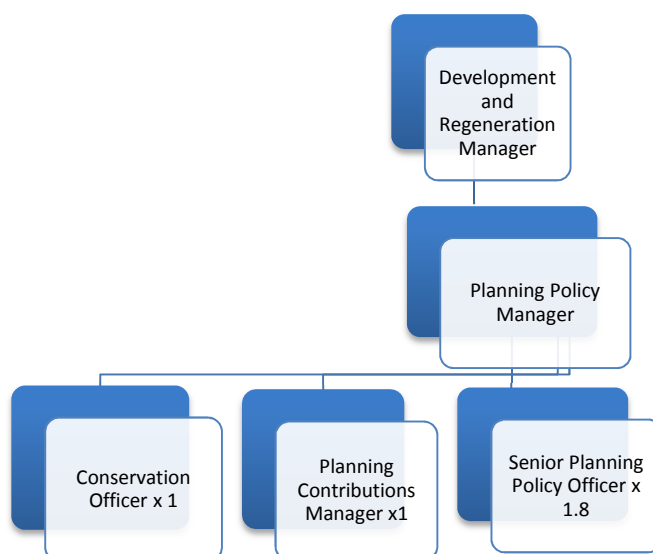
The Development Management Team are responsible for processing planning applications, appeals and exercising the planning enforcement function. It is split into two area teams headed up by two Area Managers that report to the Development and Regeneration Manager. Within each area team, there is 1 Principal Planning Officer, 2 Senior Planning Officers and 2 Planning Officers that deal with planning applications and their own appeals. There is also a Senior Enforcement Officer and an Enforcement Officer within each team. The structure is shown in table 4 below.

**Table 4 – Development Management**



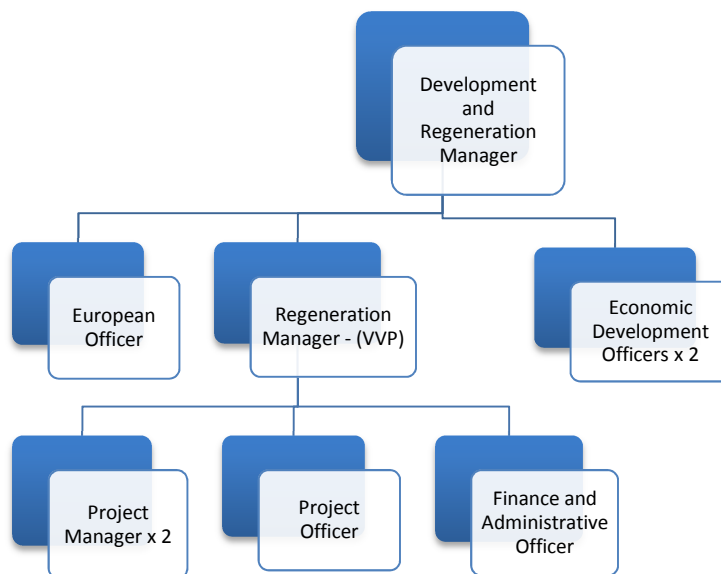
Planning Policy is headed up by a Planning Policy Manager whom also reports to the Development and Regeneration Manager. Planning Policy are responsible for the formulation and review of the Council's Development Plan and other local planning policy, historical building conservation, Section 106 agreements and the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy. Reporting to the Planning Policy Manager are 1.8 senior policy officers, a conservation officer and the planning contributions manager. The structure is shown in table 5 below.

**Table 5 – Planning Policy**



The Regeneration Team has a slightly different structure compared to the other teams in the Service. Two Economic Development officers report directly to the Development and Regeneration Manager. Their goal is to support and promote existing businesses as well as attracting inward investment to the City, with the overall objective of increasing economic prosperity and job numbers within Newport. A European Officer also reports directly to the Development and Regeneration Manager. This officer seeks out European and external funding streams and attempts to boost economic development through regeneration and supporting Work and Skills programmes. In addition, the Regeneration Manager for Vibrant and Viable Place reports directly to the Development and Regeneration Manager, and in turn, a small project team working on the Vibrant and Viable Places project report directly to the Regeneration Manager. The structure is shown in table 6 below.

**Table 6 – Regeneration**



***Wider organisational activities impacting on the service***

The Department is continuously looking at efficiency and implementing new ways of working. These new innovations have principally involved the introduction of new IT systems including document management and bespoke Development Management systems. The Department works closely with other Sections to share information and avoid duplication of tasks and duties; for example Environmental Health Officers enforcing hours of work on construction sites rather than through the planning process, and sharing information regarding Gypsies and Travellers with the Housing and Assets Team.

Newport has not progressed any collaborative working with other Authorities in respect of Development Management but we do contribute to Strategic Policy and currently jointly chair the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group (SEWSPG). This group provides a vehicle for cross boundary collaboration between the 10 local authorities of South East Wales and the Brecon Beacons National Park. We also contribute to the South East Wales Regional Working Group and South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party which relates to cross boundary minerals and waste issues. Newport has also set up a joint venture with Norse to deliver asset management and maintenance on behalf of the Council. A potential application for a tidal lagoon between Cardiff and Newport will facilitate collaborative working between both Authorities.

***Operating budget***

The Development Management budget has decreased year on year over the last 4 years to the extent that the 2016/17 budget is approximately £135,000 less than the budget in 2013/14. The biggest budget savings have been derived through employee expenditure as well as a smaller decrease in the budget for supplies and services. In comparison, fee income has remained relatively consistent with a slight decrease anticipated for 2016/2017. The Planning Policy budget increased by £30,000 between 2013 and 2015 in response to the LDP adoption timetable. Post LDP adoption there has been a decrease in budget due to staff rationalisation.



Fee income is retained by the Development Management Section and we use a fairly robust method of predicting fee income which tends to result in no shortfall from the figures predicted. Income does not influence future budgets as the expenditure to operate the Development Management and Policy Section is fixed by staff, supplies and services costs. However, any surplus income which exceeds what has been spent at the end of the financial year can be pooled to offset budget pressures elsewhere within the department and wider Authority.

### ***Staff issues***

The current structure of the Development Management Team was established following a restructure in 2012 which resulted in the loss of one enforcement officer post and a reduction in the number of managers. The service used to offer 2 student placement positions each year via the local University, but this is no longer the case due to budget pressures. However we do currently employ an Apprentice within the Tech Support Team who is gaining valuable experience as well as working towards a level 2 qualification in Business Administration.

There is a training budget allocated each year to develop staff. Annual reviews of staff help assess performance and identify training needs. Staff are encouraged to attend relevant training courses and conferences in order to broaden and develop their skills and knowledge. The Service is also contributing towards the costs of post graduate qualifications in order to meet RTPI corporate membership requirements.

As with all Authorities, Newport is under pressure to make savings and reduce budgets and it is possible that the Section will be subject to further review of processes and structures at some point in the near future.

## **YOUR LOCAL STORY**

### ***Workload***

Newport is continuing to witness significant growth. In 2015/16, 908 new homes were delivered, which is the highest annual completion figure for over 25 years, demonstrating that the LDP strategy appears to be working well. The numbers of planning cases and applications to discharge conditions remains high, mirroring the activity in the development industry.

Caseloads for a DM planning officer would typically be expected in the region of 45 applications at any given time, approximately 30 applications for senior officers and around 24 applications for a principal planning officer. The vacancy of Development and Regeneration Manager (Chief Planning Officer) has now been filled. The role has been expanded to include the Council's Regeneration Team.

Enforcement officers carry a larger individual caseload, varying from 60-80 per officer. This figure dramatically increases if there are any staff issues such as vacant posts. Whilst caseload is noticeably more than Planning Officers, cases are not comparable. Some enforcement cases can be closed following an initial site visit if no breach is found. However Newport has historically dealt with, and continues to deal with, significantly more enforcement cases than other Welsh Authorities.

As reported last year, despite improvements in the economy and increases in build rates, economic viability for developments in Newport continues to be a significant obstacle in getting legal agreements signed. Several large LDP allocated sites are seeking to renegotiate S106 agreements or viability issues are causing lengthy delays meaning planning permissions are not being issued as quickly as possible. Consequently, affordable housing levels are likely to be reduced in order to make development viable, thus adding further pressure as those in need of social are having to wait longer for accommodation.

Finally, the Newport LDP was adopted in January 2015. The Council has just completed its first AMR, which has concluded the LDP is functioning well and there is no requirement for a review at this stage.

### ***Annual Monitoring Report***

The Council has submitted its first AMR to Welsh Government. It can be viewed from 31 October 2016 at [www.newport.gov.uk/ldp](http://www.newport.gov.uk/ldp)

In summary, the AMR reports that significant progress has been made in Newport, especially with regard to house building rates. Progress has been slower than anticipated with regard to employment land development; however significant positives have been achieved nevertheless. Further training and research is suggested with regard to a small number of policies, but overall, the AMR concludes that the LDP is performing well and enabling growth in sustainable locations. Following consideration of the evidence gathered, there is no need for a full or partial review of the LDP at this stage.

### ***Current Projects***

The Council submitted its Draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for examination in the summer 2016. Following examination, the Inspector recommended that the CIL rates be implemented. It is the intention to

take a paper back to Full Council in January 2017 to seek agreement that the CIL rates will be implemented in full on 1 April 2017. It is considered that this timeframe will give the development industry appropriate time to adapt and adjust accordingly. It will also give the Council time to prepare, and at present, officers are in the process of trying to devise a governance and expenditure process to deal with the CIL money.

The Council is also in the process of preparing four supplementary planning guidance documents which will help to provide further interpretation to LDP policies.

A Local Development Order which grants conditional planning permission for specified uses in the city centre was introduced in August 2015. Two LDO certificates of conformity have been granted since the LDO was introduced. One allowed the conversion of the old post office building to a church, whilst the other permitted derelict offices into high specification apartments. Further detail on these schemes and the progress of the LDO can be found in Appendix 2 of the AMR. In general, these two schemes (the church has already been completed) will help to increase footfall in the city centre and increase economic activity, so the LDO has been positive in this respect, but it was hoped that more developers would have made use of the LDO. The city centre conservation area and the numerous listed buildings in the city centre meant that the LDO did not permit external alterations, which is probably a factor as to why only two LDO schemes have been received.

### ***Local pressures***

The University of South Wales, Caerleon Campus has closed and pre-application discussions have taken place with the Council, other stakeholders and the local community, with regard to the re-use of the site. Residential development is likely to be a significant feature, however there are issues with regard to air quality and transport congestion in Caerleon that would need addressing first. The situation is further complicated by the prospect that some elements of the campus are identified for listing by CADW. It is expected a planning application for this scheme will be lodged with the Council this autumn and it is likely to be contentious.

The application for a Gypsy/Traveller site at Hartridge Farm Road has recently been approved, however there was significant opposition to the scheme which the planning department fully considered. The next stage is for the Local Authority to apply to Welsh Government for funding, with delivery of the scheme expected to be in 2017.

Fewer major renewable energy projects have been received this year, however there are proposals for two tidal lagoons in the Severn Estuary at Newport. These will be developments of national significance, so will not be determined by the local planning authority, but planners are expected to be heavily involved in the process. Similarly, the M4 relief road is also another development of national significance which will require major involvement from the planning department.

As noted above, viability continues to be an issue in Newport. With large proportions of the city within C1 or C2 flood risk, flood risk also remains a constraint that development often needs to address.

### ***Service improvement***

The Regeneration, Investment and Housing Service Plan (2015/2016) identified the following planning related outcomes:

1) Newport grows in a sustainable manner

Commentary: Key regeneration sites are well underway, including Jubilee Park, Glan Llyn, Monbank Siblings and Loftus Garden Village. 2015/16 has seen the highest housing completions for over 25 years and Newport has also retained a housing land supply in excess of 5 years (5.9 years), required by Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 1.

The city centre Friars Walk scheme opened on 12 November 2015 and has been a great success with over 350,000 visitors on the opening weekend. 12,000 new jobs have been created and a survey undertaken by the Citizen's panel found that 75% of Newport residents considered Newport to be a better place to live.

2) Continued regeneration and growth of the city centre and wider city areas, delivering opportunities for investment through an excellent economic environment.

Commentary: Year 2 of Vibrant and Viable Places (VVP) was completed with £5.3m spent and saw the demolition of properties on the lower end of Commercial Street and the refurbished King's Hotel being over 60% sold. Seren Homes also completed work on Phase 1 of Griffin Island. A number of properties along Cardiff Road and lower Commercial Street have been refurbished and refurbishment works on the Potters Arms was successfully completed in November 2015.

Key actions from the 2015/2016 Service Plan which have been completed include:

- Minimum of 80% of all housing completions delivered on brownfield land;
- At least 20% of completed dwellings are affordable.
- Sufficient planning contributions are secured to enable appropriate infrastructure delivery to support growth.
- 72% of all planning applications determined within 8 weeks.
- 70% of enforcement cases resolved within 12 weeks.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy is adjudged to be sound by the Planning Inspectorate.
- A 5 year supply of land for residential development is maintained.
- A 5 year supply of land for employment uses is maintained

The Next steps:

- Adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

## WHAT SERVICE USERS THINK

In 2015-16 we conducted a customer satisfaction survey aimed at assessing the views of people that had received a planning application decision during the year.

The survey was sent to 301 people, 8% of whom submitted a whole or partial response. The majority of responses (64%) were from local agents. 8% were from members of the public. 16% of respondents had their most recent planning application refused.

We asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the planning service. They were given the following answer options:

- Strongly agree;
- Tend to agree;
- Neither agree nor disagree;
- Tend to disagree; and
- Strongly disagree.

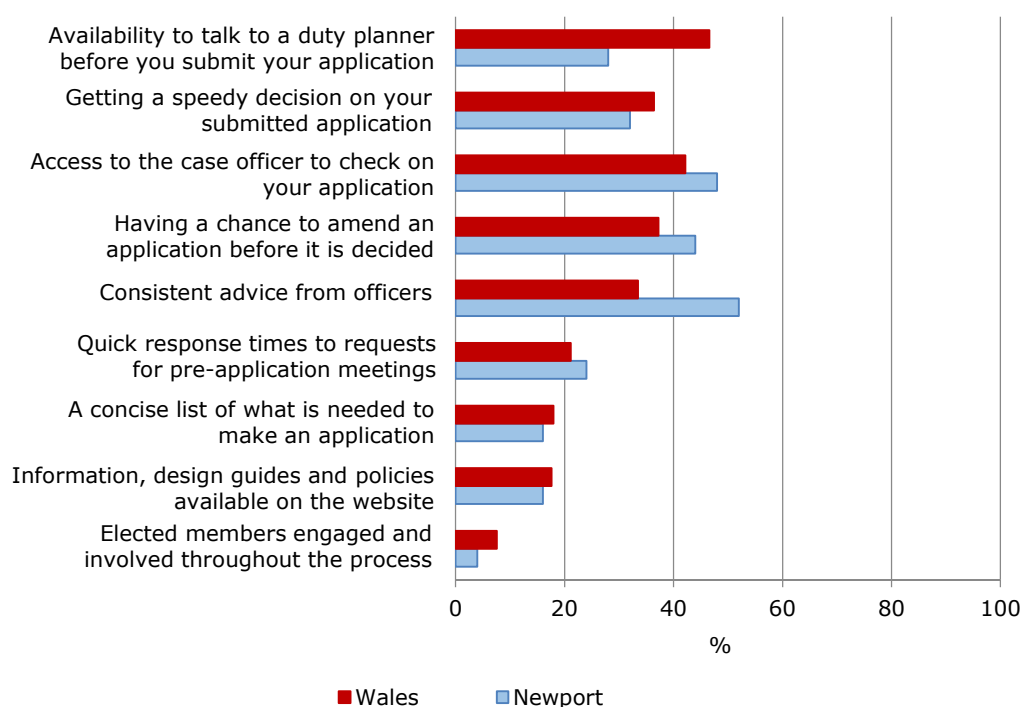
Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents that selected either 'tend to agree' or 'strongly agree' for each statement for both our planning authority and Wales.

**Table 1: Percentage of respondents who agreed with each statement, 2015-16**

	%	
	Newport LPA	Wales
<b>Percentage of respondents who agreed that:</b>		
The LPA enforces its planning rules fairly and consistently	42	47
The LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application	35	58
The LPA gives help throughout, including with conditions	39	49
The LPA responded promptly when they had questions	50	58
They were listened to about their application	36	57
They were kept informed about their application	33	49
They were satisfied overall with how the LPA handled their application	50	61

We also asked respondents to select three planning service characteristics from a list that they thought would most help them achieve successful developments. Figure 1 shows how often each characteristic was selected as a percentage of the total number of selections. For us, 'having consistent advice from officers' was the most popular choice.

**Figure 1: Characteristics of a good planning service, Newport LPA, 2015-16**



Comments received include:

- "There seems to be an acute shortage of experience officers and a reliance on part time officers, it's hard to speak to the right officer in a lot of cases and the back log of applications causes problems with clients."
- "My experience of NCC Planning has been a positive one."
- "Generally a very good and swift response from Newport so no concerns currently."

## OUR PERFORMANCE 2015-16

This section details our performance in 2015-16. It considers both the Planning Performance Framework indicators and other available data to help paint a comprehensive picture of performance. Where appropriate we make comparisons between our performance and the all Wales picture.

Performance is analysed across the five key aspects of planning service delivery as set out in the Planning Performance Framework:

- Plan making;
- Efficiency;
- Quality;
- Engagement; and
- Enforcement.

## Plan making

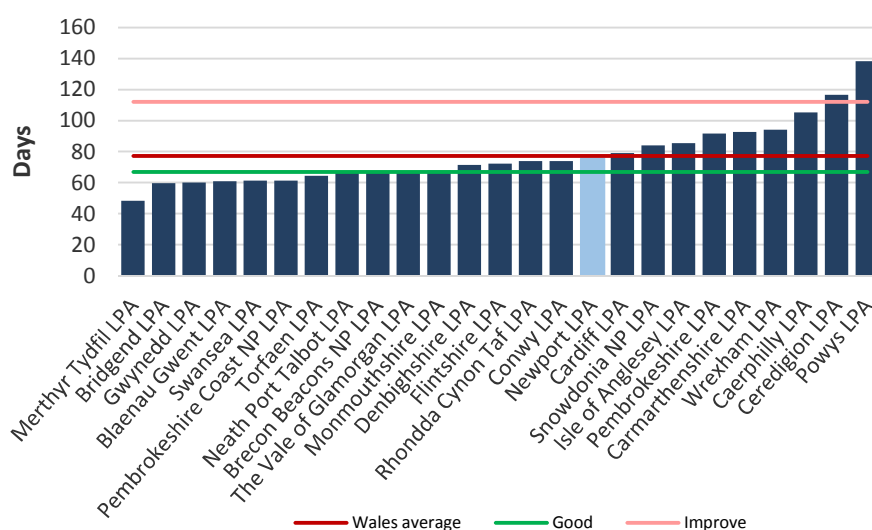
As at 31 March 2016, we were one of 22 LPAs that had a current development plan in place.

During the APR period we had 6.3 years of housing land supply identified, making us one of 8 Welsh LPAs with the required 5 years supply.

## Efficiency

In 2015-16 we determined 1128 planning applications, each taking, on average, 76 days (11 weeks) to determine. This compares to an average of 77 days (11 weeks) across Wales. Figure 2 shows the average time taken by each LPA to determine an application during the year.

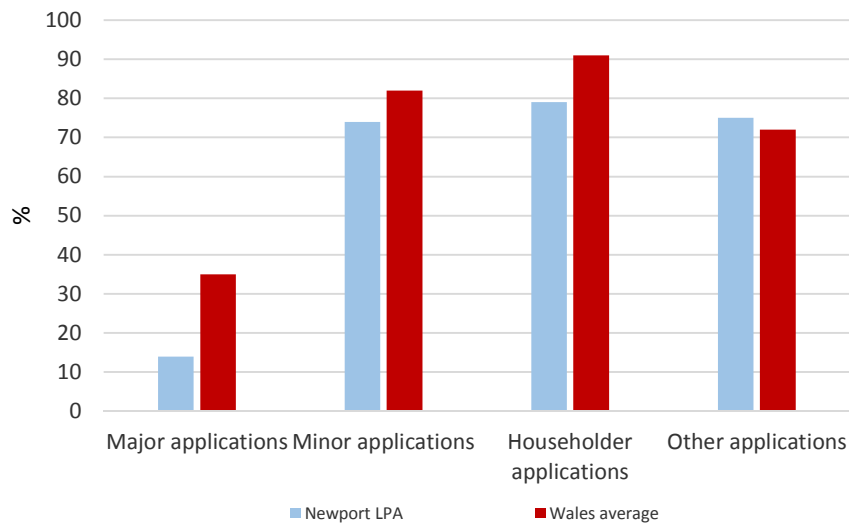
**Figure 2: Average time taken (days) to determine applications, 2015-16**



73% of all planning applications were determined within the required timescales. This compared to 77% across Wales and was below the 80% target. Only 8 out of 25 LPAs met the 80% target.

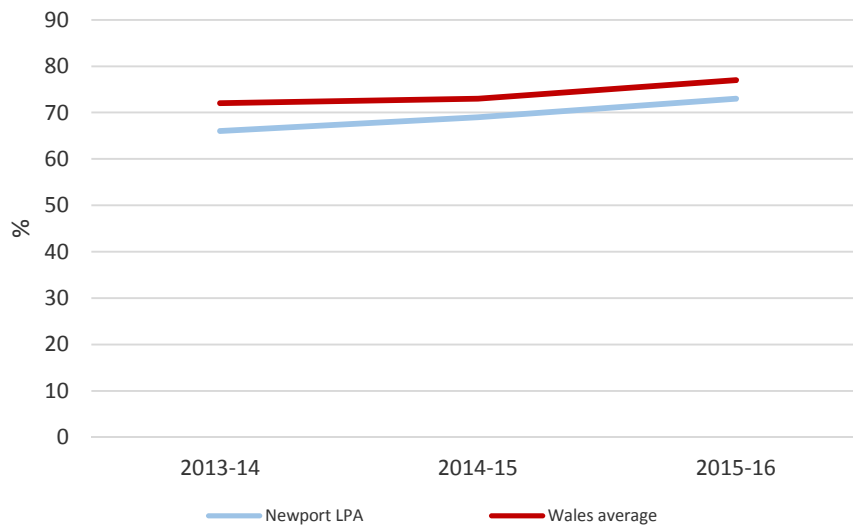
Figure 3 shows the percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales across the four main types of application for our LPA and Wales. It shows that we determined 79% of householder applications within the required timescales.

**Figure 3: Percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales, by type, 2015-16**



Between 2014-15 and 2015-16, as Figure 4 shows, the percentage of planning applications we determined within the required timescales increased from 69%. Wales also saw an increase this year.

**Figure 4: Percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales**



Over the same period:

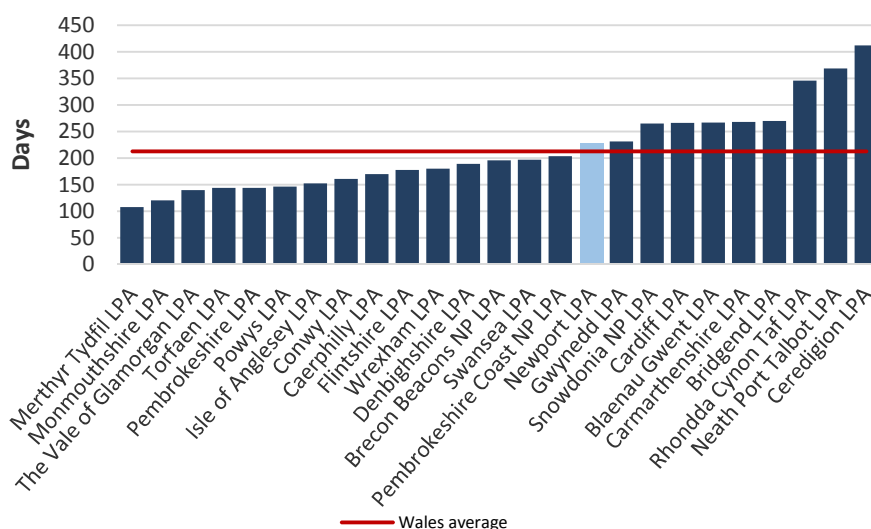
- The number of applications we received increased;
- The number of applications we determined increased; and
- The number of applications we approved increased.



## Major applications

We determined 36 major planning applications in 2015-16, 8% (3 applications) of which were subject to an EIA. Each application (including those subject to an EIA) took, on average, 229 days (33 weeks) to determine. As Figure 5 shows, this was longer than the Wales average of 213 days (30 weeks).

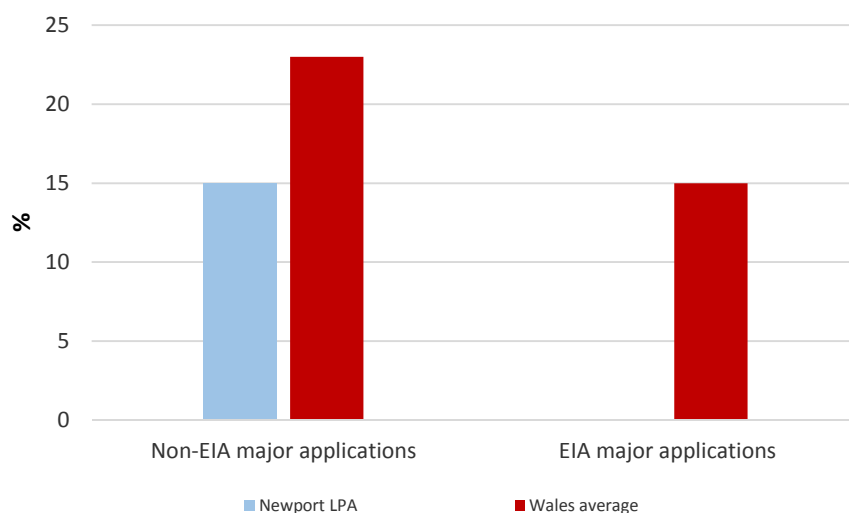
**Figure 5: Average time (days) taken to determine a major application, 2015-16**



14% of these major applications were determined within the required timescales, the fifth lowest percentage of all Welsh LPAs.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales by the type of major application. 15% of our 'standard' major applications i.e. those not requiring an EIA, were determined within the required timescales during the year.

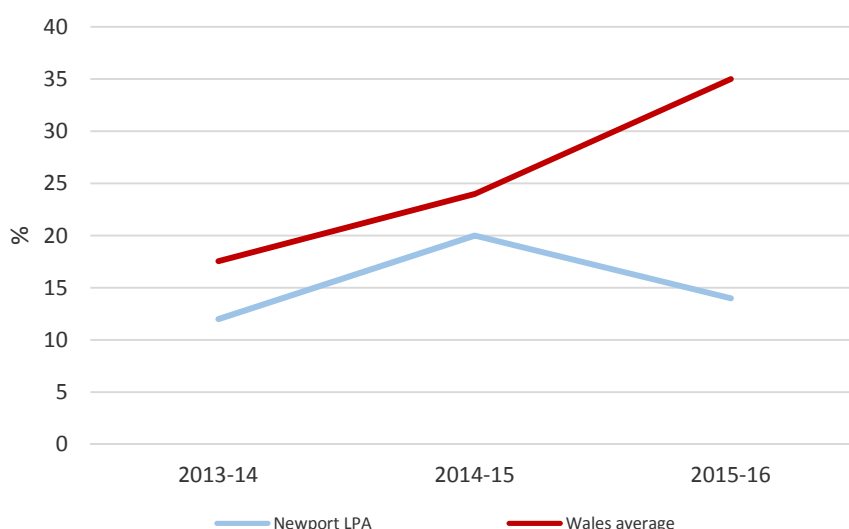
**Figure 6: Percentage of Major applications determined within the required timescales during the year, by type, 2015-16**



Since 2014-15 the percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales had decreased from 20%. In contrast, the number of major applications determined increased as had the number of applications subject to an EIA determined during the year.

Figure 7 shows the trend in the percentage of major planning applications determined within the required timescales in recent years and how this compares to Wales.

**Figure 7: Percentage of major planning applications determined within the required timescales**



Over the same period:

- The percentage of minor applications determined within the required timescales increased from 70% to 74%;
- The percentage of householder applications determined within the required timescales decreased from 80% to 79%; and
- The percentage of other applications determined within required timescales increased from 71% to 75%.

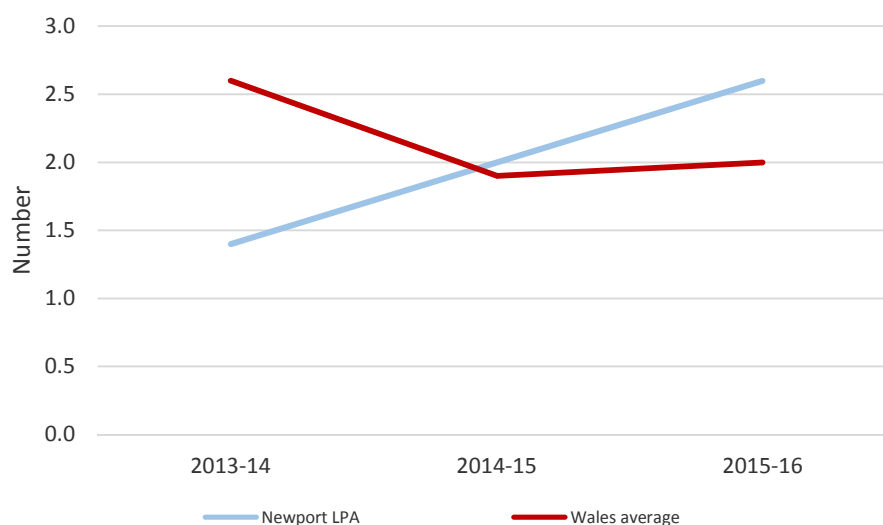
## Quality

In 2015-16, our Planning Committee made 57 planning application decisions during the year, which equated to 5% of all planning applications determined. Across Wales 7% of all planning application decisions were made by planning committee.

5% of these member-made decisions went against officer advice. This compared to 9% of member-made decisions across Wales. This equated to 0.3% of all planning application decisions going against officer advice; 0.6% across Wales.

In 2015-16 we received 31 appeals against our planning decisions, which equated to 2.6 appeals for every 100 applications received. Across Wales 2 appeals were received for every 100 applications. Figure 8 shows how the volume of appeals received has changed since 2014-15 and how this compares to Wales.

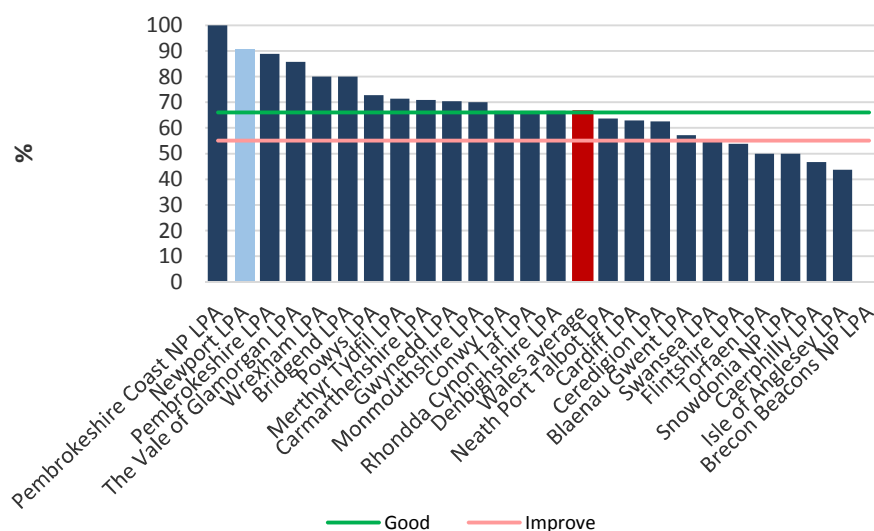
**Figure 8: Number of appeals received per 100 planning applications**



Over the same period the percentage of planning applications approved decreased from 88% to 85%.

Of the 21 appeals that were decided during the year, 90% were dismissed. As Figure 9 shows, this was the second highest percentage of appeals dismissed in Wales and we were one of 14 LPAs that reached the 66% target.

**Figure 9: Percentage of appeals dismissed, 2015-16**



During 2015-16 we had no applications for costs at a section 78 appeal upheld.

## Engagement

We are:

- one of 24 LPAs that allowed members of the public to address the Planning Committee; and
- one of 20 LPAs that had an online register of planning applications.

As Table 2 shows, 35% of respondents to our 2015-16 customer satisfaction survey agreed that the LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application.

**Table 2: Feedback from our 2015-16 customer satisfaction survey**

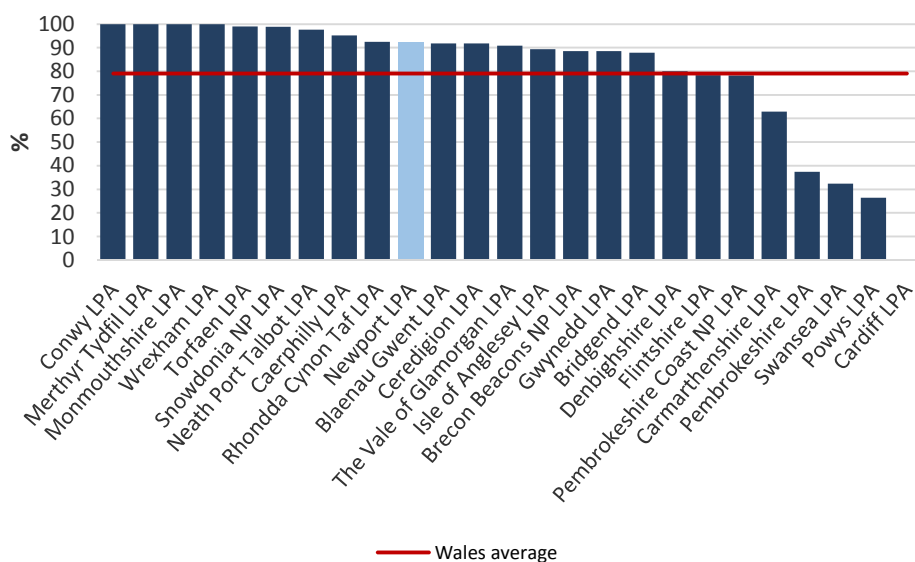
Percentage of respondents who agreed that:	%	
	Newport LPA	Wales
The LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application	35	58
They were listened to about their application	36	57

## Enforcement

In 2015-16 we investigated 373 enforcement cases, which equated to 2.5 per 1,000 population. This compared to 1.9 enforcement cases investigated per 1,000 population across Wales. We took, on average, 35 days to investigate each enforcement case.

We investigated 92% of these enforcement cases within 84 days. Across Wales 79% were investigated within 84 days. Figure 10 shows the percentage of enforcement cases that were investigated within 84 days across all Welsh LPAs.

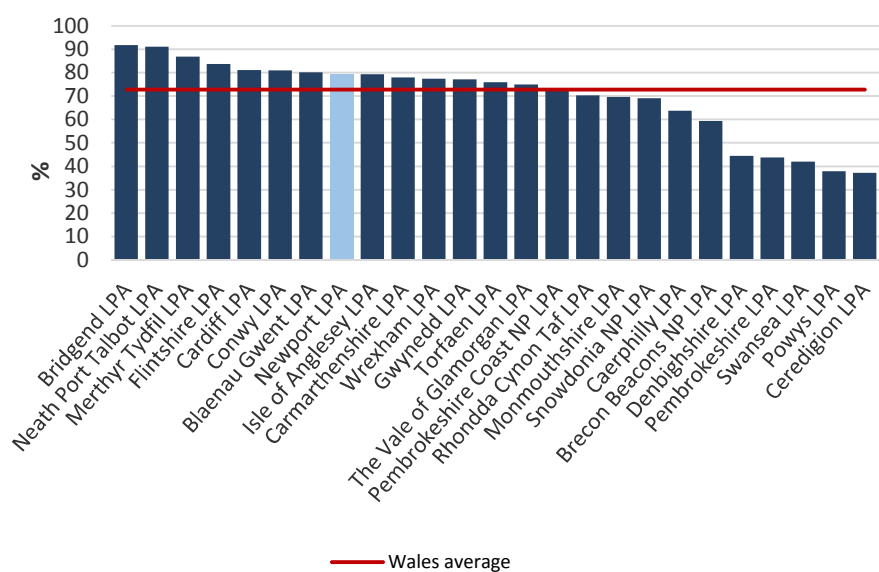
**Figure 10: Percentage of enforcement cases investigated within 84 days, 2015-16**



Over the same period, we resolved 387 enforcement cases, taking, on average, 151 days to resolve each case.

79% of this enforcement action was taken within 180 days from the start of the case. As Figure 11 shows this compared to 73% of enforcement cases resolved within 180 days across Wales.

**Figure 11: Percentage of enforcement cases resolved in 180 days, 2015-16**



## PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

On the basis of the performance indicators currently set, the Authority is performing well. The following summary highlights those areas where Newport is doing well and meets performance expectations:

### Plan Making:

- Newport has an Adopted Local Development Plan
- The first Annual Monitoring Report has been completed and confirms that the LDP is performing well and enabling growth in sustainable locations.
- Newport had a 6.3 year Housing Land Supply during the Review period.

### Efficiency:

- Average number of days taken to determine major applications reduced by 73 days since the last Annual Monitoring Report
- Percentage of applications determined 'within time' has improved by 4% since the last Annual Monitoring Report.
- Average number of days taken to determine all applications reduced by 18 days since the last Annual Monitoring Report.

### Quality:

- 90% of all appeals were dismissed, representing the second best appeals success rate in Wales.
- Zero applications for costs were awarded against the Council in connection with planning appeals.

### Engagement:

- Newport welcomes public speaking at Planning Committee.
- Newport provides a duty officer service to the public.
- Newport provides an online register of planning applications which allows members of the public to view and track the progress of planning applications.

### Enforcement:

- 92% of enforcement cases are investigated within 84 days.
- Newport took an average of 35 days to investigate enforcement cases, compared to the Wales average of 88 days.
- Enforcement action was taken in a timely manner in 79% of all cases.
- The average time taken to take enforcement action reduced by 25 days since the last Annual Monitoring Report.

Whilst the Authority has performed well against national indicators, there are areas for improvement, particularly in the Efficiency category and to a more limited extent, in the Quality category. These are summarised below:

- The speed at which applications are determined (Efficiency).
- The percentage of decisions made by Members against Officer advice (Quality).

The Authority is taking steps to address timeliness but due to budget pressures, this will not involve the recruitment of staff. Instead we are continually looking at efficiency and putting mechanisms in place to enable Officers and Area Managers to be fully aware of, and meet target deadlines. New technology is also being used to improve efficiencies; the latest innovation allows Officers to contemporaneously input site notes and photos into the back office IT system.

Whilst the Authority would like to improve the percentage of applications, particularly major applications, determined within time, the Authority deals with a number of very large strategic schemes with significant constraints. As previously mentioned, Newport is environmentally constrained by SSSI's, a Special Area of Conservation, a National Nature Reserve, a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, large areas designated as Green Belt, Special Landscape and Archaeologically Sensitive. Not least are the constraints and challenges posed to supporting growth within a City which has large areas within flood zones C1 and C2. It is hoped that changes to pre application consultation for major applications and increased participation with the pre-application advice service will assist both applicants and Officers in identifying issues earlier in the process. Whilst there has been some general reluctance to pay for advice which was historically provided free of charge, applicants are beginning to recognise the value of early engagement with statutory consultees and appreciate the quality of advice provided by Officers in Newport.

#### *Future Pressures*

In respect of Enforcement, the Authority has certainly improved since the last review period and Newport now out performs the national average in all categories. However due to staff recruitment and retention issues within the Enforcement Team, there is a backlog of cases which could affect future performance statistics. However, the Enforcement Section are fully staffed and committed to delivering an efficient and effective enforcement service.

Another pressure on the service relates to the Authority's duty under the Welsh Language Act and the need to have all correspondence and press notices translated into Welsh. There is very limited demand for Welsh translations and correspondence in Newport and certainly Welsh has not historically featured in the top 5 languages spoken within the City. Nonetheless the Act places a duty on the Authority and time delays for having press notices translated into Welsh will continue to be factored into timescales which have very little capacity for extra delays. The Welsh translation requirement for press notices has also placed an £8,000 budget pressure on the Service and it has been forecast that the total costs of press notices will double compared to the previous year.

Continual reviews of legislation by Welsh Government and the numerous subsequent consultations sent to Local Authorities represent a very real pressure on resources. Consultations are dealt with by more senior officers within the Planning teams who are responsible for performance management and the larger, more strategic developments. Such additional duties represent a noticeable draw on their time.

Whilst meeting targets is challenging, the future of Newport is positive. The City has undergone a period of significant transformation with multi million pound regeneration projects being delivered and significant growth in the housing sector. Officers are committed to continuing this journey and will endeavour to provide an efficient and effective service.

## ANNEX A - PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

### OVERVIEW

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE	WALES AVERAGE	Newport LPA LAST YEAR	Newport LPA THIS YEAR
<b>Plan making</b>						
Is there a current Development Plan in place that is within the plan period?	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes
LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	<12	13-17	18+	47	N/A	N/A
Annual Monitoring Reports produced following LDP adoption	Yes		No	Yes	N/A	Yes
The local planning authority's current housing land supply in years	>5		<5	3.9	9.2	6.3
<b>Efficiency</b>						
Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	Not set	Not set	Not set	35	20	14
Average time taken to determine "major" applications in days	Not set	Not set	Not set	213	302	229
Percentage of all applications determined within time periods	>80	60.1-79.9	<60	77	69	73



MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE
required			
Average time taken to determine all applications in days	<67	67-111	112+
<b>Quality</b>			
Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	<5	4.9-8.9	9+
Percentage of appeals dismissed	>66	55.1-65.9	<55
Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	0	1	2
<b>Engagement</b>			
Does the local planning authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee?	Yes		No
Does the local planning authority have an officer on duty to provide advice to members of the public?	Yes		No
Does the local planning authority's web site have an online register of planning applications, which members of the public can access, track their progress (and view their content)?	Yes	Partial	No

WALES AVERAGE	Newport LPA LAST YEAR	Newport LPA THIS YEAR
77	94	76
9	3	5
66	81	90
0	0	0
Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE
<b>Enforcement</b>			
Percentage of enforcement cases investigated (determined whether a breach of planning control has occurred and, if so, resolved whether or not enforcement action is expedient) within 84 days	Not set	Not set	Not set
Average time taken to investigate enforcement cases	Not set	Not set	Not set
Percentage of enforcement cases where enforcement action is taken or a retrospective application granted within 180 days from the start of the case (in those cases where it was expedient to enforce)?	Not set	Not set	Not set
Average time taken to take enforcement action	Not set	Not set	Not set

WALES AVERAGE	Newport LPA LAST YEAR	Newport LPA THIS YEAR
79	49	92
88	No Data	35
73	81	79
210	176	151

Indicator	01. Is there a current Development Plan in place that is within the plan period?	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
A development plan (LDP or UDP) is in place and within the plan period	N/A	No development plan is in place (including where the plan has expired)

Authority's performance	Yes
Local Development Plan adopted January 2015 and is compliant and compatible with the policies within Planning Policy Wales.	

Indicator	02. LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
The LDP is being progressed within 12 months of the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement	The LDP is being progressed within between 12 and 18 months of the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement	The LDP is being progressed more than 18 months later than the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement

Authority's performance	N/A
n/a	

Indicator	03. Annual Monitoring Reports produced following LDP adoption	
"Good"		"Improvement needed"
An AMR is due, and has been prepared		An AMR is due, and has not been prepared

Authority's performance	Yes
<p>The AMR reports that significant progress has been made in Newport, especially with regard to house building rates. Progress has been slower than anticipated with regard to employment land development; however significant positives have been achieved nevertheless. Further training and research is suggested with regard to a small number of policies, but overall, the AMR concludes that the LDP is performing well and enabling growth in sustainable locations. Following consideration of the evidence gathered, there is no need for a full or partial review of the LDP at this stage.</p>	

Indicator	04. The local planning authority's current housing land supply in years	
<b>"Good"</b>		<b>"Improvement needed"</b>
The authority has a housing land supply of more than 5 years		The authority has a housing land supply of less than 5 years

<b>Authority's performance</b>	6.3 years
Newport continues to identify and supply an adequate supply of housing land to meet the City's growth requirement.	

## SECTION 2 - EFFICIENCY

Indicator	05. Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	
<b>"Good"</b>	<b>"Fair"</b>	<b>"Improvement needed"</b>
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

<b>Authority's performance</b>	14%
<p>A total of 36no. major applications were determined during 2015-2016, 5 of which were within 8 weeks of receipt. Compared to the previous year, the number of major applications determined has increased by one but the number of applications determined within 8 weeks decreased from 20% to 14%. Of the 36no. major applications determined during 2015-2016, 3 applications were accompanied by Environmental Impact Statements, of which none were determined within 16 weeks. The Authority has dealt with some particularly challenging applications within the Review period and this has been a significant drain on resources and goes some way to explain the drop in overall performance.</p> <p>In comparison to the Wales average of 35%, Newport's performance falls below expectations within this category. However, to give a little context to these figures, the Wales average in 2013-14 was 18%. Whilst the increase in the national average demonstrates that performance across Wales is generally improving, caseloads between Authorities vary and the type of application processed by Newport is significantly different to many other Authorities.</p>	

Indicator	06. Average time taken to determine "major" applications in days	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

<b>Authority's performance</b>	229 days
Significant decrease from previous year (302 days). Decrease has been partly due to changes in recording of dates relating to applications subject to a Section 106 Agreement. Whilst there is still improvement to be made in this category, in comparison to the Wales average (213 days) and other authorities who deal with comparable development pressures, such as Cardiff (266 days) and Swansea (197 days), the improvement Newport has made is considered to be positive.	

Indicator	07. Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
More than 80% of applications are determined within the statutory time period	Between 60% and 80% of applications are determined within the statutory time period	Less than 60% of applications are determined within the statutory time period

<b>Authority's performance</b>	73% within 8 weeks
There has been an improvement in performance year on year; 2013/14 (66%), 2014/15 (69%) and demonstrates Officer's commitment to improving performance. The Wales average for the same period is 77% and Newport has made positive progress in improving performance over recent years.	

Indicator	08. Average time taken to determine all applications in days	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Less than 67 days	Between 67 and 111 days	112 days or more

<b>Authority's performance</b>	76 days
Represents an improvement from last year's performance (94 days) and is comparable to the Wales average (77 days).	

### SECTION 3 - QUALITY

Indicator	09. Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Less than 5% of decisions	Between 5% and 9% of decisions	9% or more of decisions

Authority's performance	5%
Represents an increase of 2% from the previous year but remains below the Wales average of 9. Committee Members are provided with appropriate training sessions on a quarterly basis to ensure that they have a full understanding of Planning procedures and topics. Members are also well supported by Officers at the Planning Committee and the reasons for making a decision contrary to recommendation are fully discussed before a final decision is made.	

Indicator	10. Percentage of appeals dismissed	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
More than 66% (two thirds) of planning decisions are successfully defended at appeal	Between 55% and 66% of planning decisions are successfully defended at appeal	Less than 55% of planning decisions are successfully defended at appeal

Authority's performance	90%
Represents an improvement since last year (81%) and significantly better than the Wales average which stands at 66%. The Authority has met and noticeably exceeded the Welsh Government indicator, as well as having the 2nd best appeals performance in Wales. Whilst not necessarily the quickest to determine applications, Newport endeavours to make robust and sound planning decisions which can be defended at appeal. A success rate of 90% is testament to the quality of decision being made in Newport.	

Indicator	11. Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
The authority has not had costs awarded against it at appeal	The authority has had costs awarded against it in one appeal case	The authority has had costs awarded against it in two or more appeal cases

Authority's performance	0
Similarly to factor 10 above, Newport seek to make sound and robust planning decisions and have not had an award of costs against the Council.	

## SECTION 4 – ENGAGEMENT

Indicator	12. Does the local planning authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee?	
<b>“Good”</b>		<b>“Improvement needed”</b>
Members of the public are able to address the Planning Committee		Members of the public are not able to address the Planning Committee

<b>Authority’s performance</b>	Yes
The Authority has allowed members of the public and applicants to address the Planning Committee since March 2005.	

Indicator	13. Does the local planning authority have an officer on duty to provide advice to members of the public?	
<b>“Good”</b>		<b>“Improvement needed”</b>
Members of the public can seek advice from a duty planning officer		There is no duty planning officer available

<b>Authority’s performance</b>	Yes
A duty planning officer service is provided with no prior appointment necessary. All Officers are also accessible by telephone and email.	

Indicator	14. Does the local planning authority’s web site have an online register of planning applications, which members of the public can access track their progress (and view their content)?	
<b>“Good”</b>	<b>“Fair”</b>	<b>“Improvement needed”</b>
All documents are available online	Only the planning application details are available online, and access to other documents must be sought directly	No planning application information is published online

<b>Authority’s performance</b>	Yes
All application documents, responses and Officer reports are able to view online. Customers are able to search via an address, application number via a map based system called iShare. The Adopted Local Development Plan, Annual Monitoring Report and all Supplementary Planning Guidance is also available to view online. The Authority also broadcast Planning Committee meetings live on the website.	

## SECTION 5 – ENFORCEMENT

Indicator	15. Percentage of enforcement cases investigated (determined whether a breach of planning control has occurred and, if so, resolved whether or not enforcement action is expedient) within 84 days	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

<b>Authority's performance</b>	92%
The Authority's performance represents a significant improvement compared to last year when only 49% of cases were investigated within 84 days. With the Wales average being 79%, Newport is performing extremely well.	

Indicator	16. Average time taken to investigate enforcement cases	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

<b>Authority's performance</b>	35 days
Whilst no comparable data was captured as part of the last APR, the Wales average is 88 days and Newport is therefore performing very well in comparison.	

Indicator	17. Percentage of enforcement cases where enforcement action is taken or a retrospective application granted within 180 days from the start of the case (in those cases where it was expedient to enforce)	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

<b>Authority's performance</b>	79%
Whilst there has been a slight drop in performance compared to the last review period (81%), Newport's enforcement team are still delivering an efficient service and better than the Wales average of 73%.	



Indicator	18. Average time taken to take enforcement action	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

Authority's performance	151
The Authority takes, on average, 151 days to resolve enforcement cases. This represents an improvement since the last review period (176 days) and 28% quicker than the Wales average of 210 days.	

## SECTION 6 – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

The purpose of the Sustainable Development Indicators is to measure the contribution the planning system makes to sustainable development in Wales.

The Sustainable Development Indicators will be used to measure the progress against national planning sustainability objectives, set out in Planning Policy Wales, and can be used to demonstrate to our stakeholders the role and scope of the planning system in delivering wider objectives. The information will also be useful to local planning authorities to understand more about the outcomes of the planning system and help inform future decisions.

<b>Authority's returns</b>	In quarter 1 we provided a full response In quarter 2 we provided a full response In quarter 3 we provided a full response In quarter 4 we provided a full response
Full responses provided.	

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD1. The floorspace (square metres) granted and refused planning permission for new economic development on allocated employment sites during the year.</b>
------------------	--

<b>Granted (square metres)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	6,000

<b>Refused (square metres)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	0

Reserved Matters granted for 2no. business units at the Celtic Business Park, Glan Llyn.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD2. Planning permission granted for renewable and low carbon energy development during the year.</b>
------------------	--

<b>Granted permission (number of applications)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	6

<b>Granted permission (MW energy generation)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	29MW

Of the six permissions granted, 3no. permissions for solar farms generate 19MW of energy. (Including a 10MW solar farm allowed on appeal). An energy generation plant contributed 8MW to the approved total with the remaining 2MW being derived from a wind turbine and solar panels.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD3. The number of dwellings granted planning permission during the year.</b>
------------------	--

<b>Market housing (number of units)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	183

<b>Affordable housing (number of units)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	131

The total number of private market dwellings approved for 2015-2016 was actually just under 600 but a large number of these represented replans of sites which have previously had planning permission granted and the numbers have been counted as part of previous returns. On the basis of the total number of market dwellings granted (599), approximately 22% were classified as affordable housing. Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance defines affordable housing requirements based on need within individual wards. Recent regeneration projects within the City Centre have assisted with the delivery of new affordable homes but Newport continues to benefit from a healthy private housing market.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD4. Planning permission granted and refused for development in C1 and C2 floodplain areas during the year.</b>
------------------	--

<b>Number of residential units (and also hectares of non-residential units) that DID NOT meet all TAN 15 tests which were GRANTED permission</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	17 units and 0.3ha

<b>Number of residential units (and also hectares of non-residential units) that did not meet all TAN 15 tests which were REFUSED permission on flood risk grounds</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	0

<b>Number of residential units (and also hectares of non-residential units) that MET all TAN 15 tests which were GRANTED permission</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	30 units and 7.7ha

These figures demonstrate that decisions taken in Newport respect adopted local and national policy.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD5. The area of land (ha) granted planning permission for new development on previously developed land and greenfield land during the year.</b>
------------------	---

<b>Previously developed land (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	12

<b>Greenfield land (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	5

Development on greenfield land related to a proposed crematorium on the outskirts of Langstone. Alternative brownfield sites were considered as part of the application, however none were found to be acceptable. These figures demonstrate that the Authority seek the development of previously developed land in preference to greenfield land. This aligns with adopted local and national policy.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD6. The area of public open space (ha) that would be lost and gained as a result of development granted planning permission during the quarter.</b>
------------------	---

<b>Open space lost (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	0

<b>Open space gained (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	0

These figures demonstrate that decisions taken in Newport respect adopted local and national policy.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD7. The total financial contributions (£) agreed from new development granted planning permission during the quarter for the provision of community infrastructure.</b>
------------------	---

<b>Gained via Section 106 agreements (£)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	1,689,638

<b>Gained via Community Infrastructure Levy (£)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	0

The Draft Charging Schedule for the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy was recommended for approval on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2016. We are now in the process of preparing for adoption on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

In respect of Section 106 Agreements, the value of contributions secured is seen as positive and enables the Authority to continue delivering required infrastructure projects.