

Newport LPA

PLANNING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR) – 2017-18

PREFACE

I am pleased to introduce the fourth Annual Performance Report for Newport City Council's Development Services.

House building is continuing at record rates in Newport, with completions in excess of 900 units for the third year in a row. This is more than any other authority in Wales. These sustained growth figures demonstrate Newport is certainly a desirable place to live at present, and with the Severn Bridge Tolls being scrapped in December, this popularity is only likely to continue.

In addition to the high residential growth, Newport is also experiencing activity in the employment land sector. Following the success of retail giant, Amazon, opening at Celtic Business Park last year, a major train manufacturing plant will be open for business this autumn. The plant is being constructed and fitted out for Spanish train manufacturer, Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles (CAF). It will manufacture high-speed trains which will serve the South Wales Metro as well as the wider European market. Importantly for Newport, it will also create 300 new jobs.

The city centre regeneration remains a priority for Newport. Exciting projects are underway at Newport Market and Market Arcade, plus the conversion of the Chartist Tower to a four-star Mecure Hotel. Along with the opening of the Wales International Convention Centre at Celtic Manor in the middle of next year, it is hoped that visitor numbers to Newport will significantly rise, increasing the vitality and viability of the city centre.

Overall, Development Services is fundamental in helping Newport reach its potential. Excellent work has been achieved in a challenging environment with the help of dedicated staff and stakeholders in order to get to where we currently are, but there is still much to be done.

Cllr Jane Mudd, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing

CONTEXT

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 for 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.

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 that 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.

The Newport Single Integrated Plan and Community Strategy have been superseded by the Newport Well-being Plan 2018-2023. It includes 13 priorities that the LDP and planning services are well-equipped to assist with. The 13 priorities are listed below:

- 1. Improve the perceptions of Newport as a place to live, work, visit and invest**
- 2. Drive up skill levels for economics and social well-being**
- 3. Support regeneration and economic growth**
- 4. Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life**
- 5. Long and healthy lives for all**
- 6. Ensuring people feel safe in their communities**
- 7. People have access to stable homes in a sustainable supportive community**
- 8. People feel part of their community and have a sense of belonging**
- 9. Participation in sports and physical activity is important for people's well-being**
- 10. Participation in arts, heritage and history is important for people's well-being**

11. Newport has a clean and safe environment for people to use and enjoy

12. Improve air quality across the city

13. Communities are resilient to climate change

Sitting below the Newport Well-being Plan is the Newport Corporate Plan. This Corporate Plan covers the period 2017 – 2022. It sets out 20 commitments which represent a step change in how the council operates and aims to achieve Newport's well-being objectives and building a better Newport. The 20 commitments are grouped into four themes:

- **Resilient communities**
- **Aspirational people**
- **Thriving city**
- **Modernised council**

The LDP and planning services are well placed to help deliver these priorities, with particular emphasis on '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.

Existing and previous major influences on land use

The industrial revolution of the late 18th century and 19th 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 20th century, steelmaking was a mainstay of the economy along with the port.

Following a decline in heavy industry in the latter years of the 20th 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

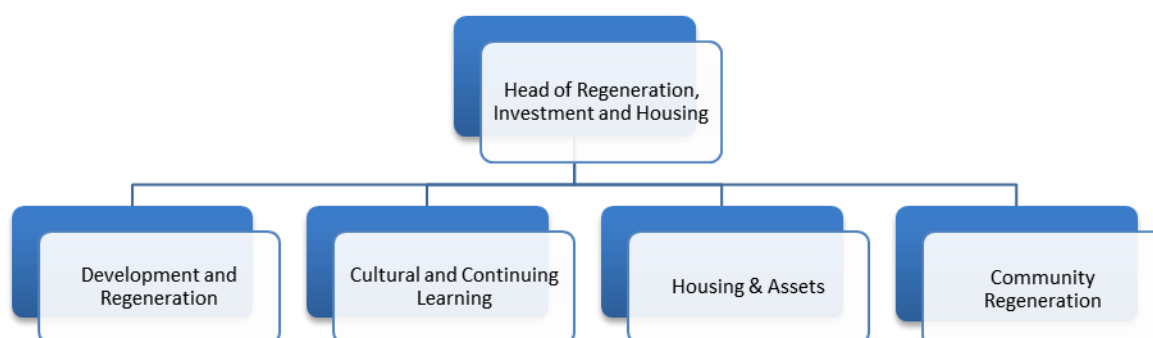
The Welsh Government (WG) 2011 Census projections predict a population increase of 15,588 in Newport between 2011 and 2026. This is in accordance with evidence submitted to support the LDP. However, the LDP housing projections are more ambitious than the WG 2011 Census projections. The WG 2011 Census household projections are based upon a continuation of conditions that were experienced during the recession, and fail to reflect the WGs 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

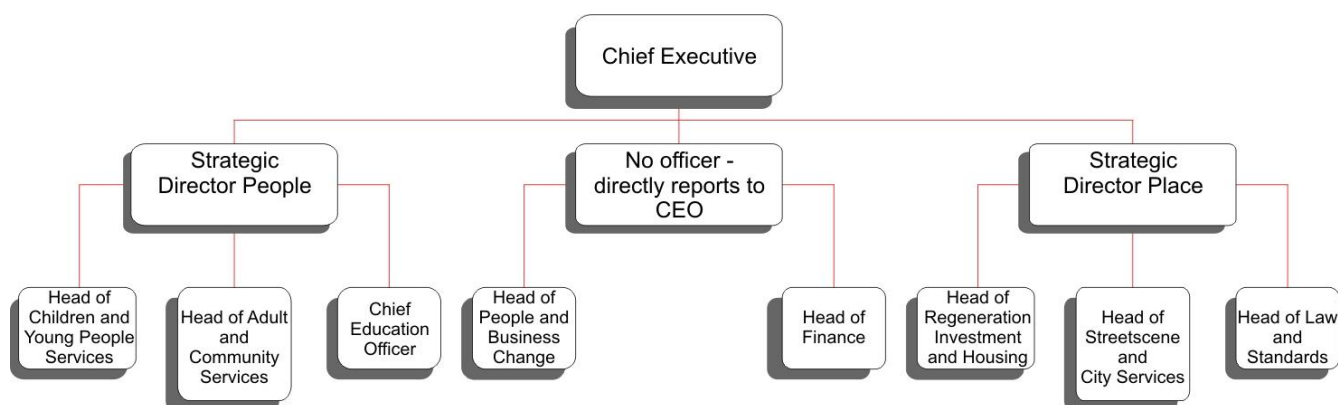
The statutory planning function in Newport sits within the Development and Regeneration section. The Development and Regeneration section is one of four business units within the Regeneration, Investment and Housing service; namely Development and Regeneration, Cultural and Continuing Learning, Housing 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

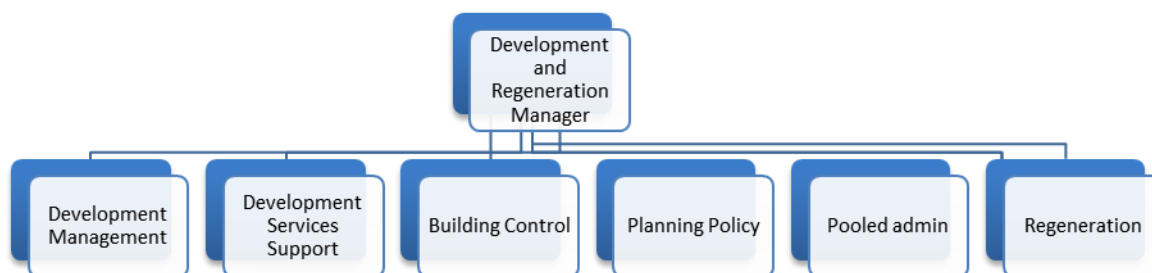


There are two strategic directors that report to the chief executive; strategic director for people and strategic director for place. The head of regeneration, investment and housing is one of eight heads of service across the council and one of three that report to the strategic director for place. This structure is shown in table 2 below.

Table 2 – Council structure

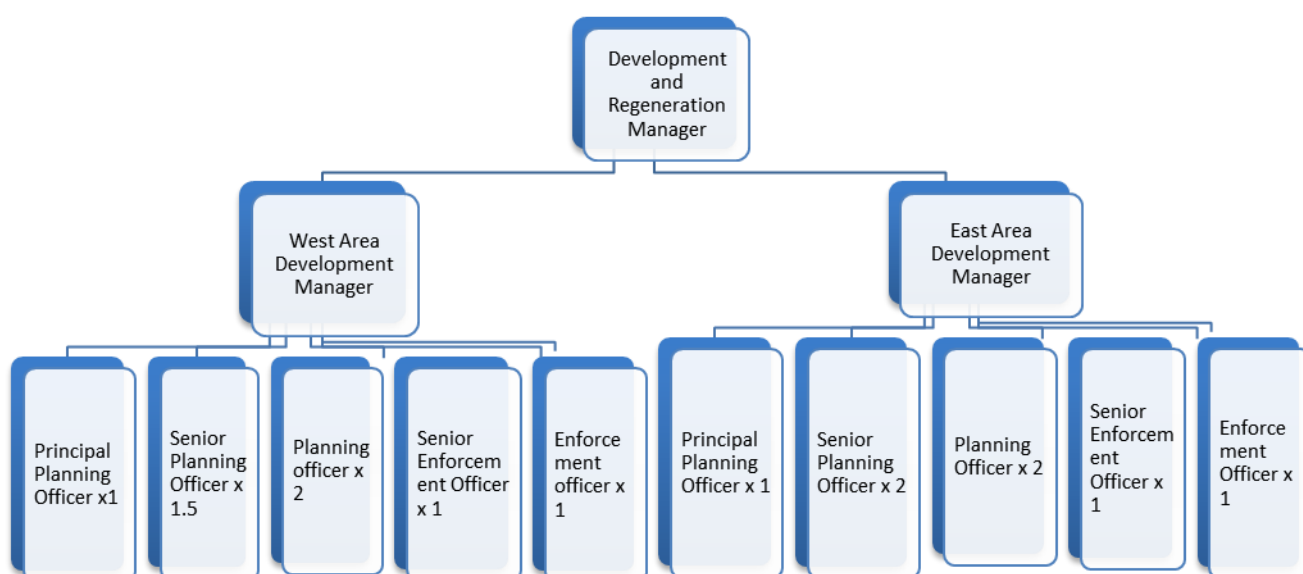


The development and regeneration service comprises development management, development management support (technical services), pooled admin, planning policy, building control, regeneration and economic development. The section has a total of 39.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff, of which development management has 20.5 (including tech support), building control has six (including tech support), planning policy 4.6, pooled admin has two FTE staff, regeneration 6.8 (including economic development). This represents a net reduction of two FTEs compared to the last Annual Performance Report. The structure of the development and regeneration service is shown in table 3 below.



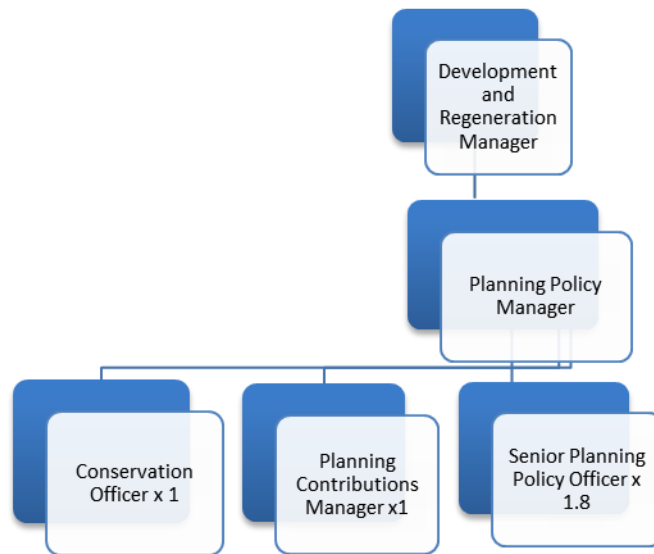
The development management team is responsible for processing planning applications, appeals and exercising the planning enforcement function. It is split into two area teams headed up by two area managers that report to the development and regeneration manager. Within each area team, there is one principal planning officer, two senior planning officers and two 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



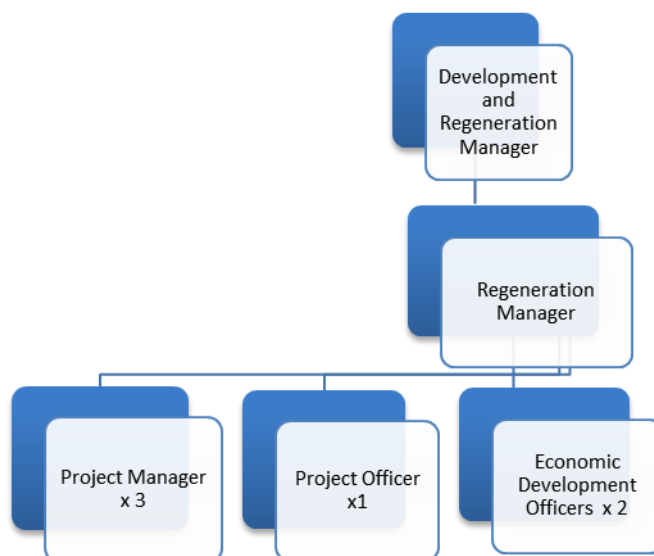
Planning policy is headed up by a planning policy manager who also reports to the development and regeneration manager. Planning policy is responsible for the formulation and review of the council's Development Plan and other local planning policy, historical building conservation, and Section 106 agreements. 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 similar structure with a regeneration manager reporting directly to the development and regeneration manager. Two economic development officers report to the 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 small project team also 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 host 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 historically decreased year on year since the financial year 2015/16, however the budget for 2017/18 was £21,000 more than the 2016/17 base line budget. This is mainly due to a corporate pay review which sought to align staff pay across the services as well as reflecting inflationary increases. While there has been a baseline increase, there have been savings made within the service over the last few years. The biggest budget savings have been derived through employee costs as well as a smaller decrease in the budget for supplies and services. In comparison, fee income has dropped by over £90,000 compared to 2016/17 whilst pre-application income has increased by over £20,000. The planning policy budget has also decreased by £15,000 since 2016/17.

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 minimal or 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 two student placement positions each year via the local university, but this is no longer the case due to budget pressures. The development services manager post was also revised in 2016 when the regeneration and business support functions were added to the portfolio to create the development and regeneration manager post.

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.

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. Newport has delivered over 900 new homes a year for the last three years in a row. This is the highest level of housing growth recorded in the whole of Wales. Considering Newport is only the seventh largest authority in terms of population out of the 25 local planning authorities in Wales, to be the highest provider of housing is a strong achievement. 951 new homes were delivered in 2017/18, of which 168 were affordable. Since the start of the LDP Plan period, 4,600 new homes have been provided, including 743 affordable. These figures are broadly on track with the adopted LDP projections, and as a result, Newport is unique in its success in maintaining a five year housing land supply since the adoption of its LDP to date.

However, it is not just residential growth occurring in Newport. Development of employment land, particularly on the east side of Newport is gathering pace. The Celtic Business Park at the former Llanwern Steelworks Regeneration Site has been successful in attracting major employers recently. The Amazon warehouse opened last year, and a major train manufacturing plant is in the process of being completed and is expected to open later this year. The plant is being constructed and fitted out for Spanish train manufacturer Construcciones y Auxillar de Ferrocarriles (CAF). The plant will be used to manufacture high-speed trains, light rail trains and trams and will create 300 new jobs. Trains manufactured in Newport will provide services for the South Wales Metro and will be sold all over Europe.

Another significant success story centres on the redevelopment of the Chartist Tower in the centre of Newport. Planning permission has been granted to convert the former office block into a 4-star Mercure Hotel which will hopefully act as a major anchor point which will attract further regeneration of the City Centre. In addition, the Wales International Convention Centre at the Celtic Manor is expected to be open mid-2019 and is capable of hosting global events. The opening of this facility is eagerly anticipated as it is expected to have widespread benefits for Newport, but also the Cardiff Capital Region and Wales as a nation.

As a result of this activity, the caseload for a DM planning officer would typically be 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.

Enforcement officers carry a larger individual caseload, varying from 60-80 per officer. While caseloads are 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 a heavy caseload of enforcement cases, compared to many other Welsh authorities.

Economic viability continues to be a significant obstacle in getting legal agreements signed or developments delivered, especially on large sites. The council has had to employ the services of the District Valuer on several occasions in order to assess the viability of the larger more complicated schemes. In terms of the smaller sites, the council has started to gain more success in achieving affordable housing contributions following a review of the sums sought in the Affordable Housing SPG.

With regard to the LDP, the Newport LDP was adopted in January 2015. The council has just completed its third AMR, which has concluded the LDP is functioning well and there is no requirement for a review at this stage. The LDP will have been adopted for four years in January 2019. This is normally the point a review should be considered. At present, as noted above, the LDP is functioning well. There is also progress being made with regard to the creation of a Strategic Development Plan (SDP). Therefore at this moment, it is unlikely that a Newport LDP review will be triggered in January. The rate of progress on the SDP and Newport's housing land supply will be key factors in deciding when LDP review should be triggered.

Annual Monitoring Report

The council has submitted its third AMR to Welsh Government. It can be viewed from 31 October 2018 at www.newport.gov.uk/ldp

In summary, the AMR has reported that significant progress is being made. As noted above, housing completion rates are at a record high. There has also been strong progress with employment land being delivered. Training and research is required in a small number of areas, but no indicators were recorded as triggering a policy review or plan review. The AMR has recommended further research should be conducted into the retail policies in the LDP and particularly whether the protection of the primary and secondary frontages of the city centre are still relevant. Despite significant regeneration schemes getting the green light, the city centre still struggles with declining footfall. This is not a problem unique to Newport as many high streets across the country are finding the economic climate difficult to operate in at present. Nevertheless, further research into how Newport can counter this trend is being explored.

Following consideration of all the evidence gathered, the AMR concluded there is no need for a full or partial review of the LDP at this stage.

Current Projects

As noted in last year's APR, the council is no longer actively pursuing a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Following the UK Government led review and the function being devolved to Wales, the council has decided to pause its adoption of CIL and await the Welsh Government's decision on the future of CIL. The council will continue to seek justified planning contributions using the Section 106 procedure.

In terms of other projects, the council is currently working to complete six conservation area appraisals in Newport, including the city centre and Caerleon. The work is considering boundary amendments to the current Conservation Areas, along with management plans that aim to improve the areas. It is the intention to adopt these appraisals as SPGs and go through the necessary legal processes to formally amend the boundaries where considered necessary.

The council is also in the process of creating a new waste SPG which will assist developers and the council in terms of planning for appropriate waste storage space and also ensuring adequate collection services can be established. Other current SPGs such as New Dwellings and Parking Standards are expected to be refreshed and readopted in the next year.

A City Centre Masterplan for Newport was unveiled at the Newport City Summit in January 2018. The Masterplan builds on the city's track record of successful delivering projects and the need to continue to shape and deliver positive change for the city centre. The Masterplan introduces three proposals:

- **Northern Gateway:** improved connectivity from the railway station with rejuvenation and reuse of key assets;
- **City Core:** consolidation through the new development and diversification of land uses;
- **Riverside:** creating improved linkages and more successfully integrating sports facilities, new development and the riverside.

Further work is expected to be conducted this year and throughout the future in order to try and fulfil the aims and objectives of the Masterplan.

In addition, together with our regional partners, the council is also working on aspects of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. Increasing housing delivery is one such priority, and the council plays its role in a regional group looking at new mechanisms to deliver more housing across south east Wales. Progress is also being made with the delivery of a Strategic Development Plan, and the council continues to feed into this work stream.

Local pressures

Flooding

Dealing with applications in flood risk areas remains a significant local pressure. With large proportions of Newport within C1 and C2 flood risk areas, flood consequence assessments are regularly required as supporting documents with planning applications. The balance between an area in need of desperate regeneration and being in a flood risk area is one that planning officers often have to deal with.

Poor design

This is a problem particularly with the volume housebuilders who very often provide 'off the shelf' designs. With no 'in-house' architect or design experts, it is difficult to make a stance. On the occasions a stance has been made and applications have been refused on design grounds, we are often not supported by the Planning Inspectorate. Reference to viability issues is the usual response for not improving design. Schemes have been referred to the Design Council for Wales in the past, but developers are often reluctant to engage as they consider that this incurs delays. Without the engagement of the developer, this process is not as effective.

Air quality

The council introduced an Air Quality SPG earlier this year to try and assist planners and developers in mitigating the negative impacts of developments on air quality, particularly in Air Quality Management Area. There is currently a lack of national guidance from Welsh Government when it comes to traffic generating

development within (or affecting) an Air Quality Management Area and what the appropriate mitigation measures might be.

Unauthorised gypsy/traveller encampments

This is becoming more of an issue in areas such as the Gwent Levels. Procedures to deal with the sites are in place, but processes are cumbersome. Local communities expect swifter action and better enforcement powers. The council is pursuing the use of injunctions to address the problem.

Section 106 Viability Issues

Almost all major schemes are now subject to a viability assessment. The council has a Section 106 manager who is able to perform viability assessments to a certain level, but the more complicated and larger schemes will often require the services of the District Valuer. The authority seek to recover the cost of the District Valuer from the applicant, but in some cases this financial pressure is borne by the council. Challenging Section 106 contributions pre and post decision is becoming more commonplace and the council has dealt with a number of viability challenges on large schemes. It is starting to feel like large developers and housebuilders are using viability as a standard means of releasing them from affordable housing and other financial commitments. This has a significant knock on effect for council's and communities when less affordable housing is delivered and less money is invested in schools, leisure facilities and infrastructure.

Major schemes

The new M4 relief road will have a significant impact on the Newport docks. Any redevelopment proposals for the docks will require significant resource to deal with applications. Additional resource may also be required for other major schemes such as the possible tidal lagoon schemes.

City centre footfall and vacant units

Footfall in the city centre continues to struggle. The numbers of vacant units are increasing which is a worrying trend; however this is not unique to Newport as many high streets across the UK are also finding it difficult to survive as shopping habits continue to change. Newport has a very large defined retail area and work is underway to understand the actual extent of primary and secondary retail areas. Work is underway on the City Centre Masterplan as well as other regeneration initiatives which will hopefully increase investment into the city centre and footfall.

Regional working

Despite some progress in the preparation of creating a strategic development, there is still uncertainty with regard to regional planning and how this will look in the future. In order for regional planning to be a success, officers and members will need to work truly as a region and represent the region, rather than simply working within a larger group of people but ultimately continuing to represent their individual authorities. This will be difficult to achieve and will require strong leadership to establish.

Service improvement

The Regeneration, Investment and Housing Service Plan (2017/18) identified the following planning related outcomes:

- 1) City Regeneration and Development/Maintain our focus on regenerating the city centre to become on the UKs top cities
 - Identification and securing of relevant funding sources.
 - Development and delivery of regeneration projects.
 - Work with our partners to create a safe attractive and well promoted City Centre.
 - Develop a City Centre Management Plan.
 - Improve the night time economy by attracting a more diverse mix of leisure and business.
 - Market Newport as a destination for work and leisure.
 - Market vacant retail units to national retailer.
 - Provide grant assistance to new businesses occupying vacant properties.
- 2) Create an economic environment to support population growth
 - Appropriate use of land and ensuring sufficient land is available for housing and employment.
 - Continuing to support and encourage job creation.
 - Encourage new areas of growth, such as sports and leisure.
 - Increase infrastructure and digital connectivity
 - Encourage responsive education and skills programmes which can react to changing needs and skill requirements
- 3) Protect and promote local built and natural assets and cultural heritage
- 4) Development sustainable communities through the provision of good quality, accessible and affordable housing

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 third Annual Monitoring Report has been completed and confirms that the LDP is performing well and enabling growth in sustainable locations.
- Newport had a 6.1 year Housing Land Supply during the review period and one of seven Welsh LPAs with the required 5 years supply.

Efficiency:

- The percentage of major applications determined within required timescales stands at 64%, compared to 69% across Wales.
- Average number of days taken to determine major applications was 195 days (28 weeks). This is better than the Welsh average of 240 days (34 weeks).

- 89% of all applications were determined 'within time' representing an improvement on the 83% recorded in the last Annual Performance Report. On average, it took 77 days (11 weeks) to determine an application in Newport. This is slightly better than the Wales average of 81 days (12 weeks).

Quality:

- 57% of all appeals were dismissed. This is lower than the 66% Wales average, and a significant fall from the 78% recorded last year.
- 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:

- 94% of enforcement cases were investigated within 84 days, exceeding the Wales average of 81%.

Whilst the Authority has performed well against national indicators, there remain areas for improvement. These are summarised below:

- The speed at which all applications are determined (Efficiency).
- The percentage of appeals dismissed (Quality)

Whilst the Team is meeting performance standards in respect of the percentage of all applications determined within required time periods, it is noted that, on average, it takes Newport longer to determine major applications compared to the Wales average. However it should be noted that the comparison of major applications between authorities is not truly representative. A major application involving the development of 12 houses is generally much easier to process than an application for over 300 units which involves listed buildings and complex issues such as air quality and flooding. 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. However 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 issues early on. This is being achieved through the promotion of pre-application advice (alongside the statutory PAC), however not all issues are resolved as part of this process and not all developers choose to engage outside of the PAC process. New technology is also being used to improve efficiencies; the latest innovation is the implementation of a new IT operating system which will allow officers to access their files on site and contemporaneously input site notes and photos into the back office IT system.

In respect of the percentage of decisions upheld on appeal, Newport maintains that it makes well considered and balanced decisions and there is no obvious reason for the decrease in the council's success in defending its decisions. Meetings have been held with the Chief Planning Inspector to better understand the shift in appeal success. While the Chief Inspector was unable to discuss individual cases, it was clarified that there were no fundamental issues with Newport's decisions, it was merely the case that the appointed Inspector's apportioned different weight to the issues raised. This is not something that officers can effectively anticipate and the council will continue to make well-reasoned and balanced decisions. Member training is provided on a quarterly basis for specific topics such as Affordable Housing and Section 106 Agreements and training will be tailored to suit any identified need.

Future Pressures

In respect of Enforcement, the authority continues to outperform the national average however previous staffing problems within the enforcement team has resulted in there being a large backlog of cases which could affect future performance statistics. While the enforcement section is fully staffed at present, further change is anticipated. However staff remain committed to delivering an efficient and effective enforcement service.

A number of controversial and strategic planning applications are likely to be determined within the next monitoring period, including the redevelopment of the former Caerleon University Campus site where traffic and air quality are key issues.

The authority is also installing a new back office IT system before the end of the current financial year. While this new system will align with the software used by a number of our neighbouring authorities, the transition between software systems is nevertheless a huge task and there is potential for performance to slip during the transition phase in the early part of 2019. Maintaining access to the online register of planning applications is essential to the service and will be a priority throughout the process.

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.

WHAT SERVICE USERS THINK

In 2017-18 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 440 people, 12% of whom submitted a whole or partial response. The majority of responses (41%) 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.

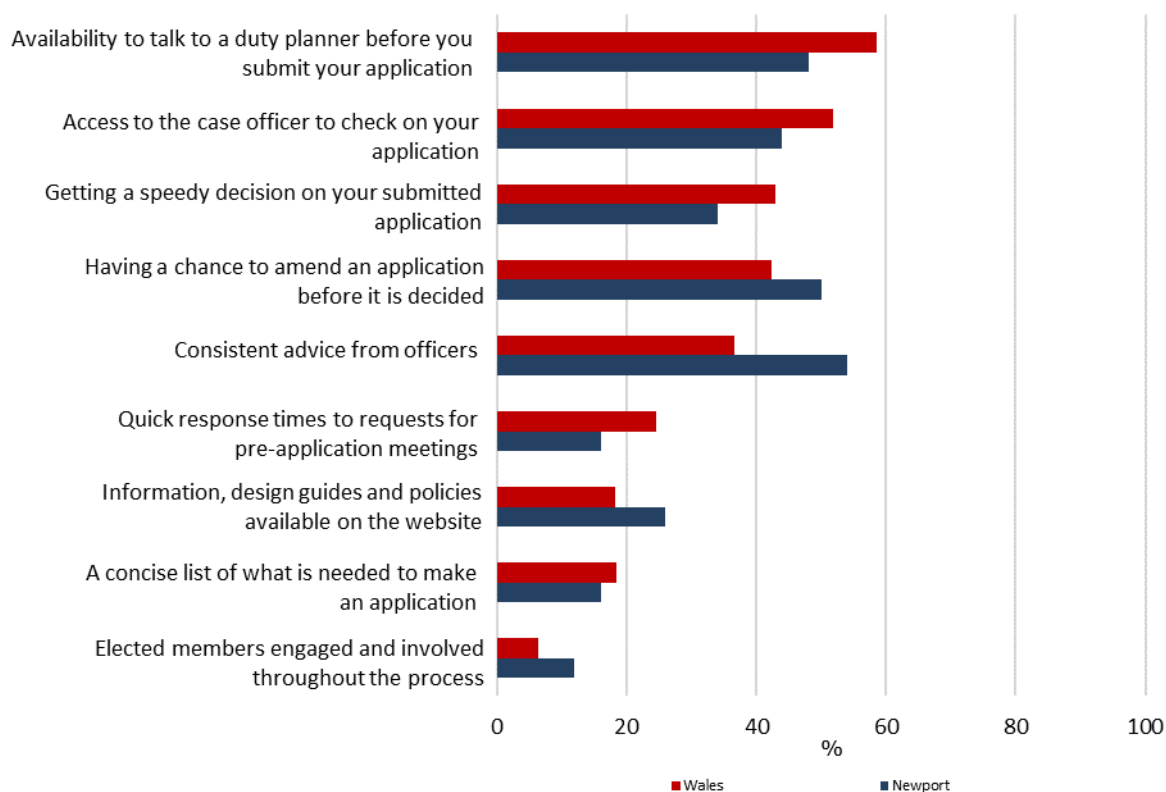
Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents that selected either 'tend to agree' or 'strongly agree' for each statement for both our planning authority and Wales.

Table 1: Percentage of respondents who agreed with each statement, 2017-18

Respondents who agreed that:	Newport LPA %	Wales %
The LPA applies its planning rules fairly and consistently	48	55
The LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application	45	60
The LPA gives help throughout, including with conditions	50	52
The LPA responded promptly when they had questions	54	62
They were listened to about their application	49	60
They were kept informed about their application	43	52
They were satisfied overall with how the LPA handled their application	51	63

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 the percentage of respondents that chose each characteristic as one of their three selections. For us, 'having consistent advice from officers' was the most popular choice.

Figure 1: Characteristics of a good planning service, 2017-18



Comments received include:

- “Newport Council has a consistent approach and apply their policies fairly.”
- “Consistently good and fair. My experience with the council in submitting planning applications over the last 12 years has been very good.”
- "Overall it was quite good and I achieved the intended result, some good advice early on in the procedures would have stopped me having an application rejected as I would have had a better idea of what was required.”

OUR PERFORMANCE 2017-18

This section details our performance in 2017-18. 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

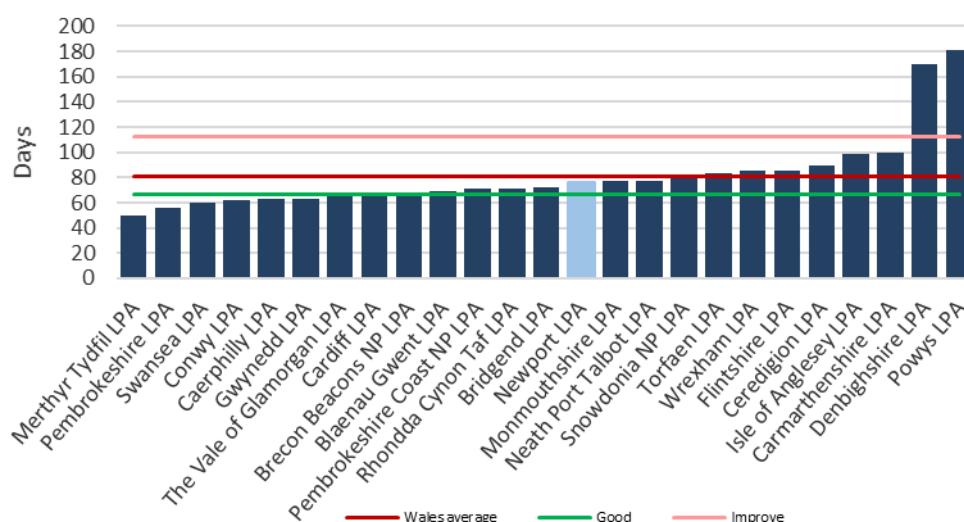
As at 31 March 2018, we were one of 22 LPAs that had a current development plan in place.

During the APR period we had 6.1 years of housing land supply identified, making us one of 7 Welsh LPAs with the required 5 years supply.

Efficiency

In 2017-18 we determined 898 planning applications, each taking, on average, 77 days (11 weeks) to determine. This compares to an average of 81 days (12 weeks) across Wales. Figure 2 shows the average time taken by each LPA to determine an application during the year.

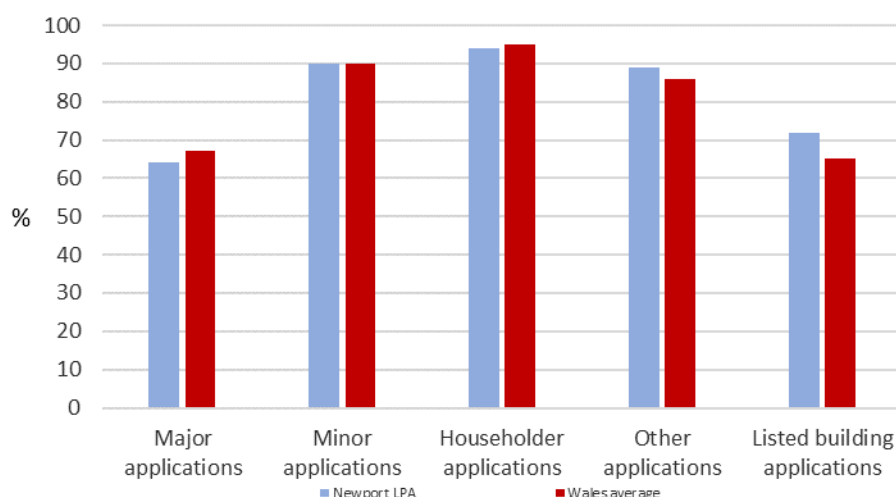
Figure 2: Average time taken (days) to determine applications, 2017-18



89% of all planning applications were determined within the required timescales. This compared to 89% across Wales and we were one of 22 LPAs that had reached the 80% target.

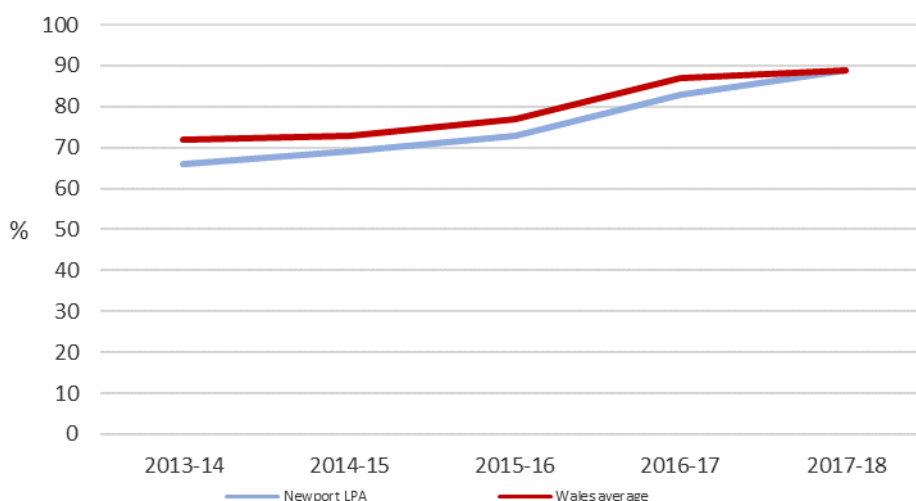
Figure 3 shows the percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales across the main types of application for our LPA and Wales. It shows that we determined 94% of householder applications within the required timescales. We also determined 72% of Listed Building Consent applications within the required timescales.

Figure 3: Percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales, by type, 2017-18



Between 2016-17 and 2017-18, as Figure 4 shows, the percentage of planning applications we determined within the required timescales increased from 83%. Wales also saw an increase this year.

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



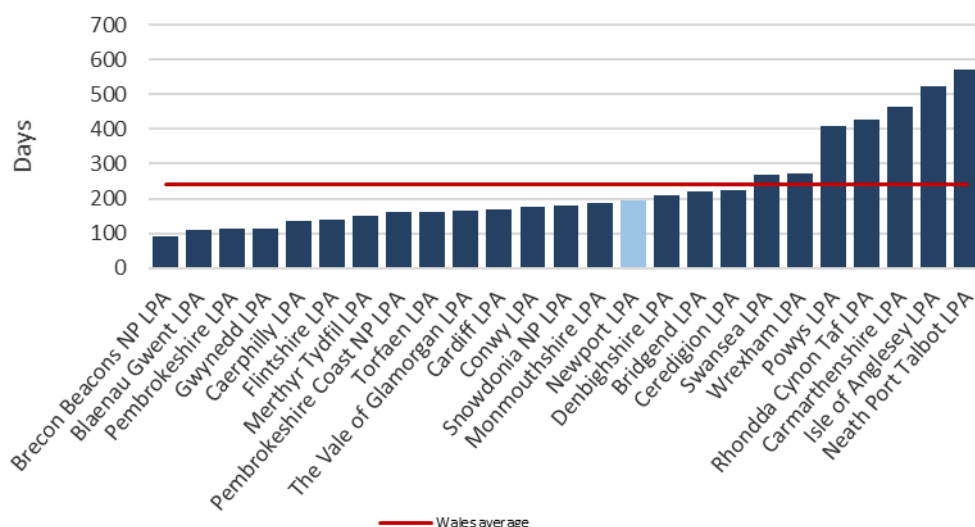
Over the same period:

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

Major applications

We determined 22 major planning applications in 2017-18, none of which were subject to an EIA. Each application took, on average, 195 days (28 weeks) to determine. As Figure 5 shows, this was shorter than the Wales average of 240 days (34 weeks).

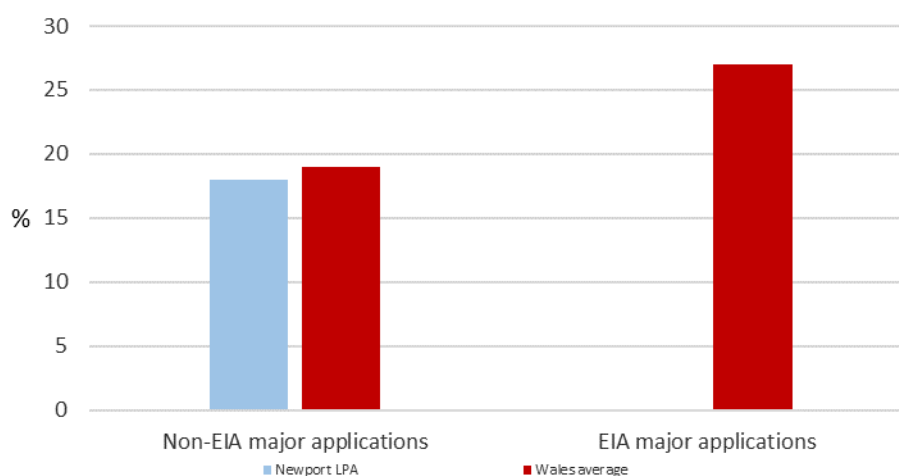
Figure 5: Average time (days) taken to determine a major application, 2017-18



64% of these major applications were determined within the required timescales, compared to 69% across Wales.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales by the type of major application. 18% 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, 2017-18

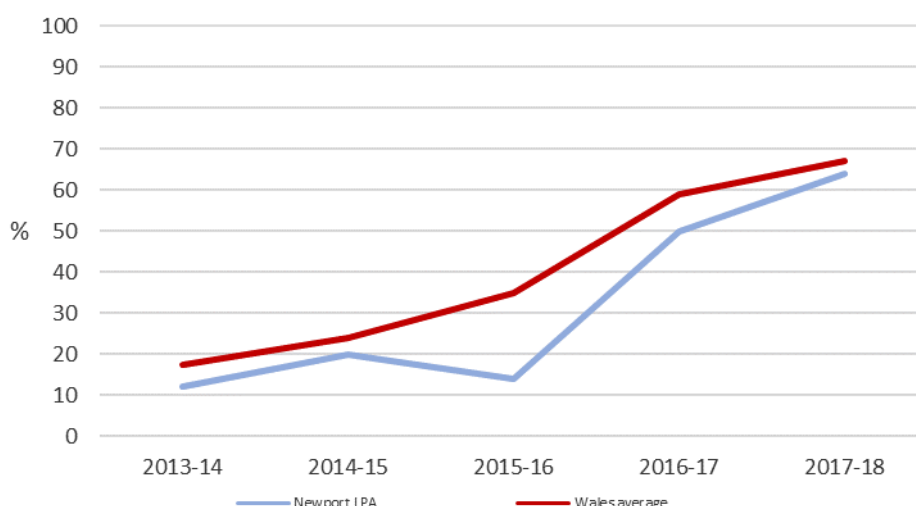


In addition we determined 10 major applications that were subject to a PPA in the required timescales during the year.

Since 2016-17 the percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales had increased from 50%. In contrast, the number of major applications determined decreased while the number of applications subject to an EIA determined during the year stayed the same.

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 86% to 90%;
- The percentage of householder applications determined within the required timescales increased from 90% to 94%; and
- The percentage of other applications determined within required timescales increased from 81% to 89%.

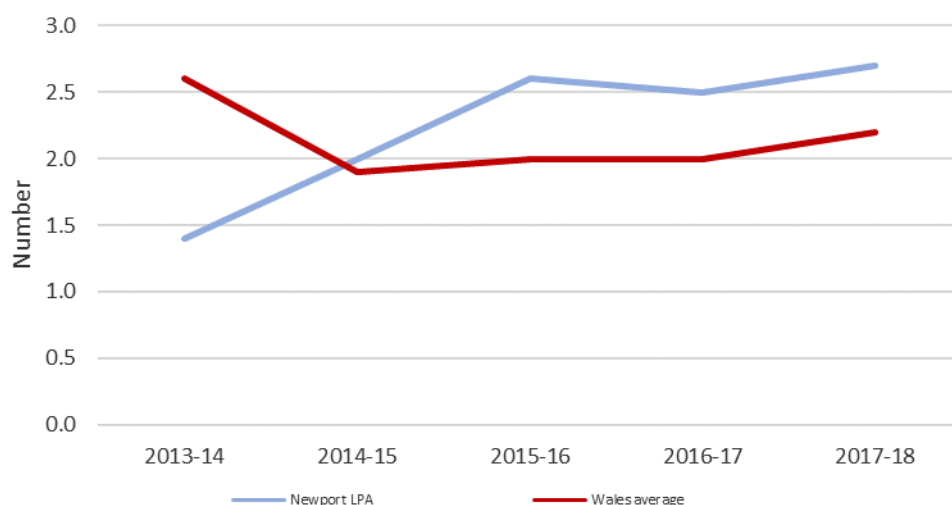
Quality

In 2017-18, our Planning Committee made 63 planning application decisions during the year, which equated to 7% of all planning applications determined. Across Wales 7% of all planning application decisions were made by planning committee.

3% of these member-made decisions went against officer advice. This compared to 9% of member-made decisions across Wales. This equated to 0.2% of all planning application decisions going against officer advice; 0.6% across Wales.

In 2017-18 we received 26 appeals against our planning decisions, which equated to 2.7 appeals for every 100 applications received. Across Wales 2.2 appeals were received for every 100 applications. Figure 8 shows how the volume of appeals received has changed since 2016-17 and how this compares to Wales.

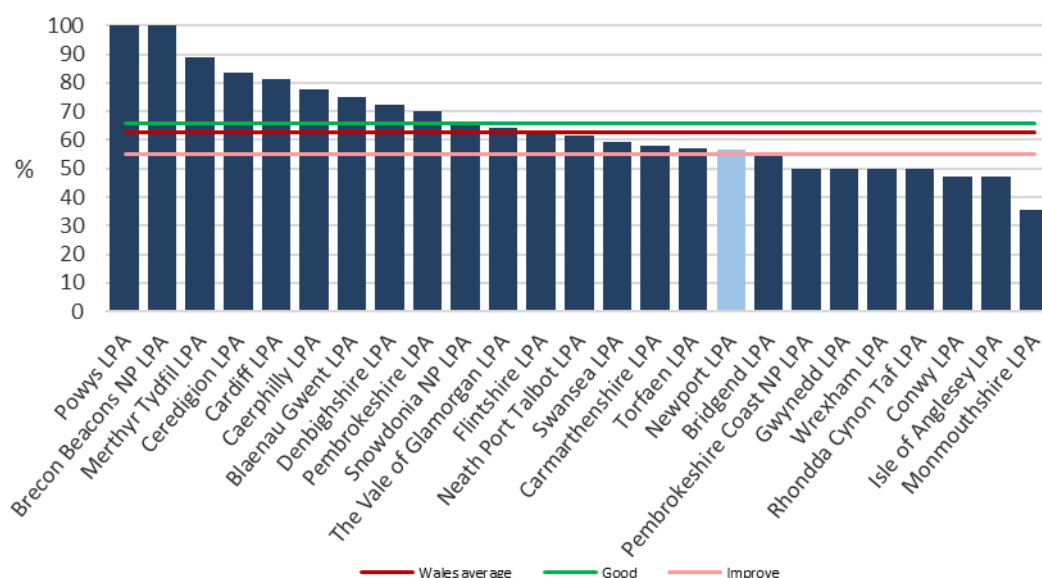
Figure 8: Number of appeals received per 100 planning applications



Over the same period the percentage of planning applications approved increased from 64% to 68%.

Of the 30 appeals that were decided during the year, 57% were dismissed. As Figure 9 shows, this was lower than the percentage of appeals dismissed across Wales as a whole and was below the 66% target.

Figure 9: Percentage of appeals dismissed, 2017-18



During 2017-18 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 21 LPAs that had an online register of planning applications.

As Table 2 shows, 45% of respondents to our 2017-18 customer survey agreed that the LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application.

Table 2: Feedback from our 2017-18 customer survey

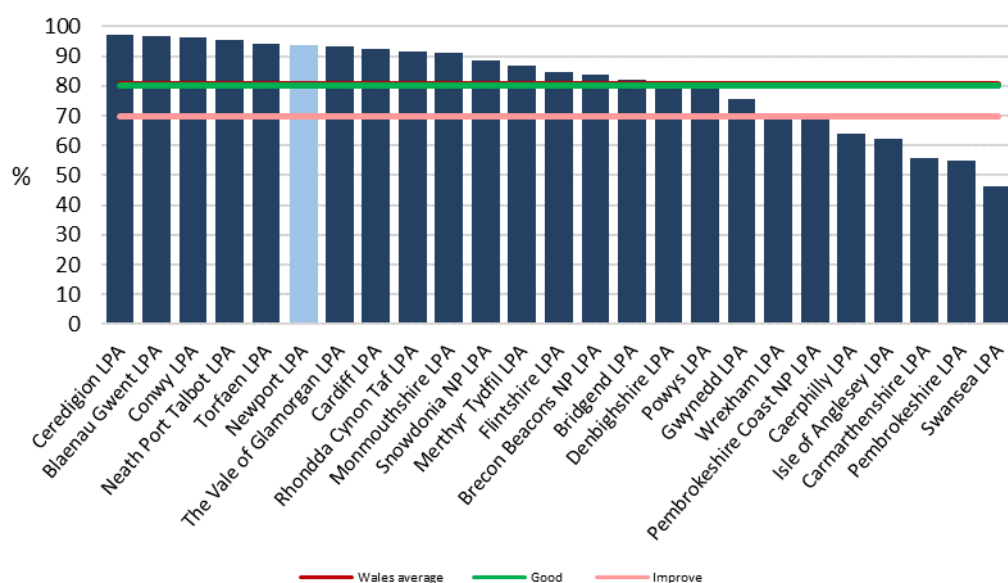
Respondents who agreed that:	Newport LPA %	Wales %
The LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application	45	60
They were listened to about their application	49	60

Enforcement

In 2017-18 we investigated 434 enforcement cases, which equated to 2.9 per 1,000 population. This compared to 2.0 enforcement cases investigated per 1,000 population across Wales.

We investigated 94% of these enforcement cases within 84 days. Across Wales 81% 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, 2017-18



The average time taken to pursue positive enforcement action was 136 days.

ANNEX A - PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

OVERVIEW

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE
Plan making			
Is there a current Development Plan in place that is within the plan period?	Yes		No
LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	<12	13-17	18+
Annual Monitoring Reports produced following LDP adoption	Yes		No
The local planning authority's current housing land supply in years	>5		<5
Efficiency			
Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	>60	50-59.9	<50
Average time taken to determine "major" applications in days	Not set	Not set	Not set
Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required	>80	70-79.9	<70
Average time taken to determine all applications in days	<67	67-111	112+
Percentage of Listed Building Consent applications determined within time periods required	Not set	Not set	Not set
Quality			
Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	<5	5-9	9+
Percentage of appeals dismissed	>66	55-65.9	<55
Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	0	1	2+
Engagement			
Does the local planning authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee?	Yes		No

WALES AVERAGE	Newport LPA LAST YEAR	Newport LPA THIS YEAR
Yes	Yes	Yes
67	N/A	N/A
Yes	N/A	N/A
7 of 25	5.9	6.1
67.4	50	64
240.1	239	195
88.5	83	89
80.7	90	77
65.4	-	72
8.6	10	3
62.6	78	57
0	0	0
Yes	Yes	Yes

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE
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
Enforcement			
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	>80	70-79.9	<70
Average time taken to take positive enforcement action	Not set	Not set	Not set

WALES AVERAGE	Newport LPA LAST YEAR	Newport LPA THIS YEAR
Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes
80.6	92	94
184.6	180	136

SECTION 1 – PLAN MAKING

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
The Newport Local Development Plan was adopted in January 2015. It covers the Plan period 2011-2026. It is functioning well, particularly with regard to housing delivery. There is no requirement to review the Plan at present.	

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	Third AMR completed
A third AMR has been completed and will be available to view on the Council’s website from 31 October 2018. It concludes that further training and research is recommended with regard to a small number of policies. It also suggests further research is undertaken with regard to the primary and secondary frontage policies within the LDP to understand whether these remain relevant in today’s commercial climate. However, following the consideration of all evidence gathered, there is no need for a full or partial review of the LDP at this stage.	

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

Authority's performance	6.1
Newport has maintained a five year housing land supply since adoption of its LDP. Housing delivery and supply of land remains strong.	

SECTION 2 - EFFICIENCY

Indicator	05. Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
More than 60% of applications are determined within the statutory time period	Between 50% and 60% of applications are determined within the statutory time period	Less than 50% of applications are determined within the statutory time period

Authority's performance	64
<p>A total of 22 major planning applications were determined during 2017-2018, 64% of which were determined within the required time periods. This is a strong result and represents an improvement on the 50% recorded in the previous year.</p> <p>The Authority has dealt with some particularly large and sometimes challenging planning applications. A major residential led planning application for the Former Whitehead Works site has been approved for 529 new homes. The scheme will have a high affordable housing presence, but viability of these major schemes is constantly proving to be an obstacle which takes time to address. The approval of the CAF Train Factory in May 2017 was another significant application, but the economic benefits of the scheme helped to significantly outweigh other considerations.</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

Authority's performance	195 days
<p>Newport is performing well with an average timeframe of 195 days. This figure represents a considerable improvement on last year's 239 days and the current Welsh average of 240 days.</p>	

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 70% and 80% of applications are determined within the statutory time period	Less than 70% of applications are determined within the statutory time period

Authority's performance	89
Newport continues to make progress year on year; 2013/14 (66%), 2014/15 (69%), 2015/16 (73%), 2016/17 (83%) and demonstrates Officer's commitment to improving performance.	

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

Authority's performance	77
The figure of 77 days is slightly below the Welsh average of 80 days. It is an improvement on the 90 days recorded in last year's APR. The 77 day average is attributable to officers trying to provide applicants with an opportunity to amend unacceptable schemes or to negotiate improvements to schemes. Feedback from our customers tells us that they would prefer a slow approval rather than a quick refusal. The improvement from last year is positive, but further improvement is needed and will hopefully be addressed through improved use of the pre-application advice service.	

Indicator	08a. Percentage of Listed Building Consent applications determined within time periods required	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

Authority's performance	74
<p>This figure has not been benchmarked. The 74% is considerably lower than the 89% recorded for 'all' applications determined within the time periods, but listed building consents, by their nature, are more likely to take longer to determine and it is often the case the officers will spend more time trying to negotiate improvements in order to preserve or enhance the special character of the listed buildings.</p>	

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	3
<p>3% of member-made decisions went against officer recommendation. This is considered a good result especially when considering that 9% is the average Welsh and Newport recorded 10% in last year's APR. Members of the Planning Committee receive regular training on important matters such as Section 106 Agreements and parking in order for them to fully understand the relevance of important planning issues. Together with a good working relationship with the Planning Officers, Members have confidence in the quality and robustness of the reports and recommendations being put before them.</p>	

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	57
<p>The 57% of appeals dismissed is a disappointing outcome as Newport prides itself on defending its decisions at appeal. Newport recorded 78% in 2016/17 and 90% in 2015/16. As mentioned previously, the Planning team has met with the Chief Planning Inspector to discuss the drop in performance. Whilst individual cases could not be discussed, it was clarified that there were no fundamental issues with Newport's decisions, it was merely the case that the appointed Inspector's apportioned different weight to the issues raised. This is not something that Officers can effectively anticipate and the Council will continue to make well-reasoned and balanced decisions.</p>	

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
During 2017-2018, no applications for costs at a Section 78 appeal were upheld.	

SECTION 4 – ENGAGEMENT

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

Authority’s performance	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?	
“Good”		“Improvement needed”
Members of the public can seek advice from a duty planning officer		There is no duty planning officer available

Authority’s performance	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)?	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
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

Authority's performance	Yes
<p>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 are also available to view online. The Authority also broadcast Planning Committee meetings live on the website.</p>	

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"
More than 80% of enforcement cases are investigated in 84 days	Between 70% and 80% of enforcement cases are investigated in 84 days	Less than 70% of enforcement cases are investigated in 84 days

Authority's performance	94
94% of Newport's enforcement cases were resolved within 84 days. In comparison to the Welsh average of 81%, this is a very positive result.	

Indicator	16. Average time taken to take positive enforcement action	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

Authority's performance	136
The average time taken to pursue positive enforcement action was 136 days and marks a significant improvement compared to last year which was 180 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.

Authority's returns	Summary of Sustainable Development Indicators data here (i.e. full returns, partial returns or no data provided)
<p>In quarter 1 we provided a full response</p> <p>In quarter 2 we provided a full response</p> <p>In quarter 3 we provided a full response</p> <p>In quarter 4 we provided a full response</p>	

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

Granted (square metres)	
Authority's data	61,560 m ²

Refused (square metres)	
Authority's data	0

The largest planning application for employment land in 2017/18 was for the CAF train factory at Celtic Business Park. The plant will manufacture high-speed trains, light rail trains and trams and is expected to create 300 new jobs.

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

Granted permission (number of applications)	
Authority's data	1

Granted permission (MW energy generation)	
Authority's data	0.231

A scheme which granted solar panels on the roof of an office block was granted in 2017/18.

Indicator	SD3. The number of dwellings granted planning permission during the year.
------------------	--

Market housing (number of units)	
Authority's data	398

Affordable housing (number of units)	
Authority's data	145

Newport is continuing to witness significant housing growth. The figure is down on last year's figure, but still represents a sizeable number of new homes. Together with Newport's 6.1 year Housing Land Supply and recording over 900 housing completions for the last three years, Newport is still substantially helping to address the national housing shortage in the UK and Wales more specifically.

Out of the total number of houses approved, 145 were affordable, which represents approximately 27%. This is higher than the numbers being built at present and is evident of the push being made by the RSLs to develop more affordable housing in Newport.

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

Number of residential units (and also hectares of non-residential units) which were GRANTED permission	
Authority's data	371/ 25HA

Number of residential units (and also hectares of non-residential units) which were REFUSED permission on flood risk grounds	
Authority's data	0

Over the past year, 67 developments have been located within a Flood Risk Zone. In the vast majority of cases, the applications were able to meet the TAN 15 tests. In a small number of instances, the applications were unable to satisfy all TAN 15 tests, but the planning officer was satisfied following consideration of all matters and consultation responses from NRW. Further analysis is contained with the Council's AMR.

Indicator	SD5. The area of land (ha) granted planning permission for new development on previously developed land and greenfield land during the year.
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Previously developed land (hectares)	
Authority's data	25.3Ha

Greenfield land (hectares)	
Authority's data	6.4Ha

The Council's LDP Strategy is still very much a brownfield regeneration led strategy. The above figures are reflective of this approach. In 2017/18, over 99% of housing completions on major sites (10 units of more) were completed on brownfield land.

Indicator	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.
------------------	---

Open space lost (hectares)	
Authority's data	0

Open space gained (hectares)	
Authority's data	0

n/a

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

Gained via Section 106 agreements (£)	
Authority's data	11,750,557

Gained via Community Infrastructure Levy (£)	
Authority's data	0

There has been a significant increase in S106 contributions sought this year compared to last year's £668,312. This is seen as positive and enables the Authority to continue delivering required infrastructure projects. The significant increase this year is primarily down to the granted of 1,100 new homes and associated infrastructure in the Llanwern area.