



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

All Wales Planning Annual Performance Report 2017-18



INTRODUCTION

Lesley Griffiths AM – Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs

I am delighted to introduce this fourth all-Wales Annual Performance Report, which serves to highlight how stakeholders working within the planning system in Wales are striving together to create a sustainable and prosperous built and natural environment in which people can live, work and play.

The local application of the duties placed upon the planning system by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, articulated by Local Development Plans and decisions based upon them, serve to ensure Wales is creating healthy, vibrant communities.

Planning Policy Wales, our national policy for land-use planning, has been rewritten to reflect the duties placed upon us by the 2015 Act and ensures place-making is at the heart of policy considerations when development plans are being prepared.

Planning is the system with which development is directed and guided to enhance communities and make them prosperous. It creates and enhances wealth and quality of life. The Royal Town Planning Institute's research into the "value of planning" also reports the planning system contributed £2.3 billion to the Welsh economy in 2016-17.

In contrast, the Welsh Local Government Association's evidence to the National Assembly Finance Committee on the 2017-18 Welsh Government's draft budget stated planning services had received a 53% budget reduction in the previous 6 years. The Association's evidence to the Finance Committee on the draft 2019-20 budget advised local government cuts to planning services had caused a "catastrophic" impact. Whilst local funding decisions are a matter for local government, it is necessary to carefully monitor the operational delivery of this vital public service.

The individual Annual Performance Reports prepared by Local Planning Authorities and statutory consultees show a strong commitment to providing a quality planning service, despite the ongoing challenges of the UK Government's public sector austerity agenda. The RTPI research comes at an opportune time and serves to remind us all of the financial value, as well as environmental and community value, created by a plan-led system.

I am pleased to see Local Planning Authorities coming together in a spirit of collaboration in order to inform improvements in local service delivery. The work of the North Wales Local Planning Authorities in particular is exemplar of how those responsible for delivering services at a local level are best informed, and best able, to recommend and introduce changes to planning practice.



I understand the financial pressures which are faced by those responsible for local service delivery and am open to the concept of a change in the structure of planning fees, provided this results in an uplift in the funding available to deliver local planning services. I am grateful to colleagues in local government and in the Welsh Local Government Association, who continue to work with me to explore these issues.

Wales depends on a forward-thinking planning system which is committed to the principle of sustainable development in order to achieve prosperity for its citizens, and I believe this report shows we are working effectively together to create a healthier, more prosperous environment.

Lesley Griffiths AM
Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs
December 2018

1 – CONTEXT

Annual Performance Reports – Background

This is the fourth all-Wales Annual Performance Report (APR), covering the period April 2017 to March 2018, based on those APRs submitted to Welsh Government by Local Planning Authorities in October 2018. This report considers the operational performance of the planning system, and trend for performance, based on information collected using the Planning Performance Framework and on the contents of reports submitted by the Welsh Government, the Planning Inspectorate, Local Planning Authorities and statutory consultees.

The Planning Performance Framework emerged from the [Positive Planning Consultation](#), published in 2013, which proposed the introduction of a consistent suite of performance indicators, and the introduction of an annual report upon them. The Performance Framework consists of three components:

- A performance table, listing the indicators and targets agreed with Local Planning Authorities and each Authority's performance against them;
- The Annual Performance Report which is prepared by each Local Planning Authority, reflecting on its performance over the previous financial year, and identifying areas of best practice improvement; and
- An All-Wales APR, prepared by the Welsh Government. The All-Wales APR seeks to provide an overview on the operation of the system, and identify any need for legislative or operational change based on the performance of the planning service over a 12 month period.

Conclusions are drawn on the operation of the planning system in Wales, in order to inform possible future changes in legislation, Welsh Government policy and guidance. The all-Wales APR also enables stakeholders to gain insight into the operational issues and practices in play within Local Planning Authorities.

Further information

More information on the Planning Performance Framework is available from the following sources:

- The Performance Framework table for the period 2017-18 is at **Annex A**.
- Our [Planning Performance Framework webpage](#) sets out current targets and the latest published reports on performance.
- Our [APR webpage](#) contains the performance indicators and targets to be reported upon, guidance on the format and production of APRs, and hosts APRs from previous years for comparative analysis.

2 – PLANNING SERVICES DELIVERED BY WELSH GOVERNMENT

The business of the Welsh Government's Planning Directorate

Planning Directorate continues to work to implement the provisions of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 (the 2015 Act). Although the majority of provisions of the 2015 Act are already in place, detailed work to embed the policy intent behind those provisions is the major element of activity undertaken by the Directorate in the reporting year.

Work continues on the production of the first National Development Framework for Wales. Between October 2016 and March 2018, Planning Directorate undertook an evidence gathering exercise, including a formal call for evidence, inviting stakeholders to contribute to the vision setting for the future draft NDF document. Since the end of the reporting period, the Directorate has consulted upon issues and options papers, along with preferred options for the draft NDF.

The 2015 Act places a statutory duty on the planning system to operate in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. In order to ensure national planning policy complies with this duty, and to ensure policy is reflective of the well-being goals and ways of working defined in the Well-being Act, a review of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) has been undertaken. Consultation on the proposed revisions to PPW took place from February to May 2018. PPW Edition 10 was published on 06 December 2018 and focuses on placemaking to create sustainable communities.

There are currently 21 adopted Local Development Plans (LDPs). Swansea Council is currently at examination stage and is expected to adopt the plan early 2019. It is anticipated there will be full LDP coverage in Wales by 2020. Three LPAs have formally commenced a full revision of their LDP, Snowdonia National Park Authority (NPA), Pembrokeshire NPA and Merthyr Tydfil. Snowdonia NPA's LDP is the first to be prepared via the short term procedure; the plan is expected to be adopted early next year. In addition, many Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) have commenced the first review/revision of their adopted LDP.

Welsh Government Officials continue to work proactively with LPAs on a regional and individual basis, to support development plan preparation. Officials are currently working on Edition 3 of the Development Plans Manual which was subject to informal consultation in the autumn. It will build on the lessons learned from the first round of LDPs and contain practical guidance on how to prepare or revise a LDP, underpinned by robust evidence to ensure that plans are effective and deliverable and contribute to placemaking, supporting the delivery of PPW.

Work has been undertaken to introduce interim consenting arrangements for infrastructure projects in Wales, as a consequence the Wales Act 2017 devolving powers to Welsh Ministers on 01 April 2019. This will encompass decisions for:

- on- and off-shore electricity generating stations generating power up to 350MW, as well as associated electric lines up to 132KV.
- Management of harbours and creating harbour authorities
- Marine licences; and

- Offshore marine conservation

The Law Commission for England and Wales has undertaken a project reviewing planning law in Wales with a view to simplify and consolidate planning legislation. Following extensive stakeholder engagement during the project, the Law Commission published and submitted its final report to the Welsh Ministers on 30 November 2018. This will provide the evidence base to start the process of consolidating and simplifying planning legislation to ensure the law is made to work for Wales and to improve its accessibility to the general public and wider stakeholders. Officials have been extensively engaged with the Law Commission throughout the duration of the project.

New regulations were laid which bring into force the changes to the composition and size of planning committees, as well as changes to appeals processes to enable swifter and more effective decisions on appeals cases.

Officials worked on the development and introduction of a replacement service to take receipt of, and transmit, planning applications to LPAs in Wales. Called “Planning Applications Wales”, the service continues to be a single point of entry for electronic submission of planning applications. An Advisory Panel, which included representatives of planning consultants and applicants as well as planning officers, was instrumental in assisting the Welsh Government to select, design and procure a viable and effective IT service, and was also heavily involved in impact testing and reviewing the service prior to launch. We are grateful for the advice provided, which contributed to a successful launch in May 2018.

Planning decisions made by the Welsh Government

Case Type	Target			
	80% or more	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	60% - 80%			
Less than 60%				
Award of Costs cases	within 84 days	100% 3 of 3	100% 4 of 4	100% 4 of 4
Decisions whether or not to call in applications	within 21 days	95% 38 of 40	89% 25 of 28	83% 20 of 24
Notification Direction cases	within 21 days	100% (7 of 7)	60% 3 of 5	66% 2 of 3
Development Consent Orders – Non-material amendments	within 84 days			100% 2 of 2
Developments of National Significance	within 252 days			100% 1 of 1
Recovered Appeals and Called In cases	within 84 days	62% 5 of 8	0% 0 of 5	50% 4 of 8
Compulsory Purchase Order Confirmations	within 84 days	100% 3 of 3	100% 4 of 4	N/A 0 of 0
EIA Screening requests	within 21 days	86% 19 of 22	88% 8 of 9	100% 6 of 6
Listed Building Consent and Conservation Area Consent Confirmations	within 84 days	93% 28 of 30	100% 26 of 26	96% 29 of 30
Transport and Works Act applications	within 112 days	N/A 0 of 0	N/A 0 of 0	100% 1 of 1
Non-specialist applications (Article 4 Directions (confirmation), caravan and camping exemption certificates, disposal of allotment land, enforcement requests and revocation requests)	Within 84 days			98% 86 of 97

Fig 1 – Welsh Government Caseload Performance Statistics

The Planning Directorate determined 166 cases of which 155 were issued within its target date, representing an average percentage rate of 93%. The timeliness for determining these cases broadly meets the set targets, and has improved since last year. However it is acknowledged delays in processing a small number of complex cases has had an effect on the small sample size of the caseload.

Enhanced record-keeping practices have streamlined the case handling process, and better use of ICT solutions to log, process and monitor cases, including the production and monitoring of performance statistics, has ensured the data has more accurately reflected the performance of the Planning Directorate over time. It also ensures a more accurate understanding of performance data is available throughout the year.

While the performance figures indicate 93% of cases are determined within the target, it is recognised there is continuing scope to improve on this and will continue to seek further improvements in performance in 2018-2019.

Planning decisions made by the Planning Inspectorate (Wales), on behalf of the Welsh Government

Indicator	Target	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Appeals decided by written representations (part 1, & part 3 of 2017 Regulations)	85% in 8 weeks		97.8%	91.67%
Appeals decided by written representations (part 2) (until November 2017)	85% in 16 weeks	94.5%	96.2%	98.36%
Appeals decided by written representations (part 4)	85% in 15 weeks (from November 2017)			98.85%
Appeals decided by hearings	85% in 22 weeks	91.9%	92.6%	100%
	85% in 21 weeks (from November 2017)			87.50%
Appeals decided by inquiries	85% in 30 weeks	100%	72.7%	100%
	85% in 29 weeks (from November 2017)			100%
Enforcement appeals decided by written representations	85% in 30 weeks	100%	100%	100%
	85% in 28 weeks (from November 2017)			100%
Enforcement appeals decided by hearings and inquiries	85% in 41 weeks	88.9%	84.6%	95.65%

Fig 2 – Planning Inspectorate Wales Caseload Performance Statistics

The above chart shows PINS Wales’ performance is consistent. It meets all of its performance targets, exceeding some. Quality targets for both Inspector decisions and administrative performance are exceeded.

Stakeholder engagement

From feedback at a stakeholder event in October 2017, the Planning Inspectorate Wales (PINS Wales) identified an interest in Inspectors’ working practices and procedures. Two smaller events were also held in February in Aberystwyth and Llandudno. These events concentrated on practical matters and were aimed at practitioners. Following positive feedback, a more substantial stakeholder engagement event was undertaken in the autumn

of 2018. The PINS Wales Director and other Inspectors have also participated in events organised by other organisations, and continue to provide training to LPA members on the approach to decision making (most recently in Neath Port Talbot and Ynys Môn Councils).

Customer feedback

Customer feedback for PINS Wales is generally positive, with the majority of respondents more than satisfied with handling of administrative processes and quality of Inspectors' decisions. Feedback also included PINS Wales being believed to be impartial, fair, open, professional, trustworthy, consistent and quick. However, PINS Wales reports it could do more in terms of public perceptions of whether it listens to comments received.

Continuous improvement

Inspector involvement in an appeal is now sought at a much earlier stage, which enables the main issues in dispute to be identified quickly, in order to facilitate the maximum possible preparation time for the appeal.

PINS Wales works electronically for the majority of cases, allowing access to appeal documents quickly and easily for Inspectors, parties to an appeal and LPAs alike, through PINS Wales' casework management systems and Appeals Casework Portal (ACP).

Access Required Site Visits are widely used, reducing impact on LPA resources and increasing flexibility of Inspector resource.

In terms of areas for future development, PINS Wales recognises it could do more to improve its quality of administrative processing and clarity of decisions.

The Planning Inspectorate is also currently undertaking a Transformation Programme, which strives to deliver the strategic priorities set out in the PINS Strategic Plan 2017-2020. These set PINS the objectives to be:

- an exemplar of public service customer delivery, championing openness and transparency;
- recognised as a highly efficient and effective organisation; and,
- in the top quartile for staff engagement across the Civil Service

PINS Wales is focusing on an Operational Delivery Transformation workstream, which it anticipates will create positive change in its end-to-end delivery processes for planning appeals.

3 – PERFORMANCE OF STATUTORY CONSULTEES

This section considers the performance of statutory consultees in facilitating the smooth operation of the planning system in Wales.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 places a duty upon statutory consultees to provide a substantive response to pre-application consultations for major development and to consultations by Local Planning Authorities on submitted planning applications.

Statutory consultees are identified in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (as amended) as those organisations which should be notified of development proposals at pre-application and post application stages, in order to take account of their specialist expertise in specific aspects of proposals. The technical expertise and insight offered by their consultation responses can carry significant weight in the determination of planning applications.

This is the second year in which we have reported on the operational performance of statutory consultees. The 2012 Order sets out the timescale within which a substantive response is required.

PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATIONS

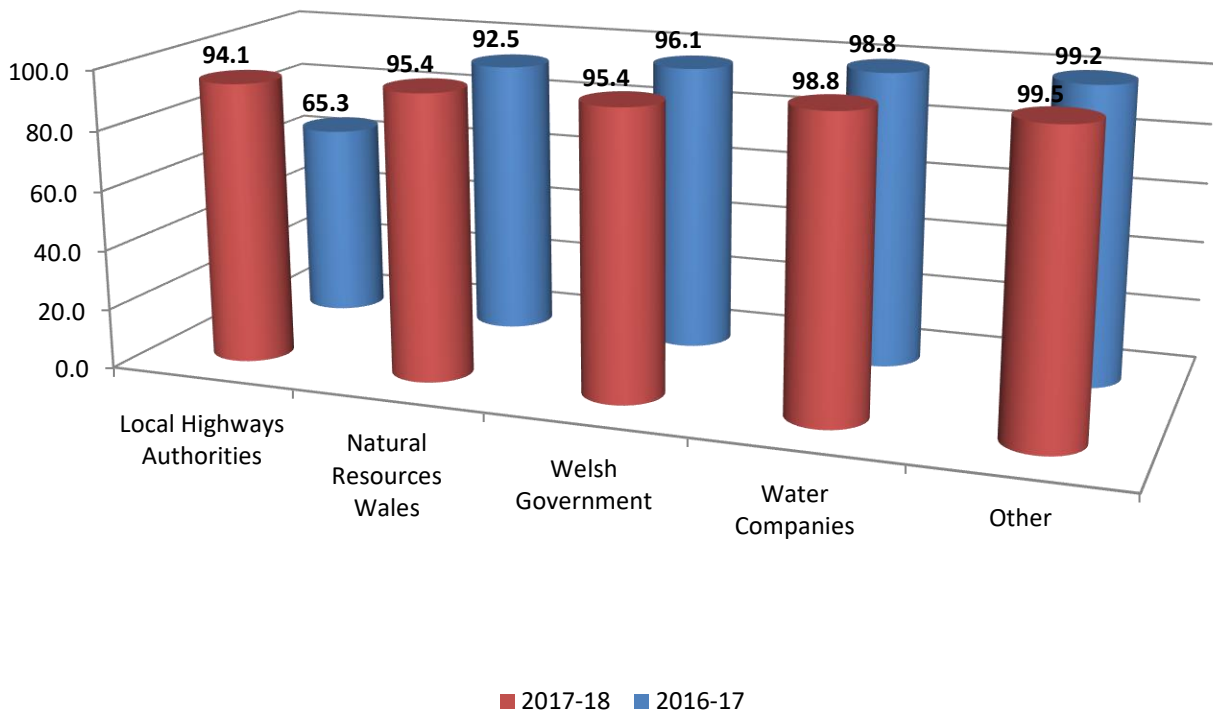


Fig 3 – Percentage of pre-application consultations responded to within time periods required, by consultee group

Fig 3 shows the average performance across five statutory consultee groupings. The “other” group includes the Canal and River Trust, the Coal Authority, Network Rail, Sport Wales and the Theatres Trust. The “Welsh Government” group includes Cadw as well as Welsh Government’s Agriculture and Highways Directorates.

Overall performance improved across almost all groupings compared to the last reporting period.

The Coal Authority, Health and Safety Executive, Sport Wales, Canal and River Trust and the Theatres Trust all achieved 100% response rates on pre-application consultations within the reporting period. Both Dwr Cymru and Severn Trent Water have also achieved exceptionally high on-time response rates on pre-application consultations, of 99.6% and 100% respectively.

In comparison to the previous year both Natural Resources Wales and “other” consultees have achieved slight performance improvements from already high performance standards. Welsh Government performance remained stable, as although the percentage of pre-application responses fell by 0.7% this represents less than one case in a relatively low workload. Performance remains very high at 95.4% of responses being sent on time. The Welsh Government’s Agricultural Land team responded to 88.9% (16 of 18) of pre-application enquiries on time, and the Welsh Government Transport Directorate responded to 100% (34 of 34) of pre-application consultations on-time.

There was a significant improvement in the reported performance of Local Highway Authorities compared to the previous year. The above statistic for Local Highways Authorities is the response rate for all pre-application consultation requests received across 16 of the 22 authorities across Wales, as the following Authorities failed to provide statistics on their performance (with the exception of Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council, for either this reporting period or the last one):

- Bridgend County Borough Council
- Denbighshire County Council
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Swansea County Council
- Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council
- Wrexham County Borough Council

For the Local Highways Authorities which provided data, their timeliness for responding to pre-application consultations is very high across the board for this reporting period, with an overall performance rate of 95.7% of pre-application consultations responded to on time, some 431 out of 458 cases. This service improvement is to be commended, although some Local Highways Authorities have chosen to reduce or withdraw all pre-application services as a consequence of under-resourcing. For example, Powys County Council’s Highways Department does not provide any pre-application advice following a decision by the Council’s Director of Highways in 2017.

Of the Local Highways Authorities reporting in this and the previous reporting period, Newport County Borough Council has made the greatest improvement, increasing its on-time performance from 48.6% to 83.2%. The Council reports this performance increase despite considerable efficiency and resource pressures, and an increase in pre-application consultation numbers. The Council advises the main reason for failing to provide a response on time is due to an absence of important information provided by the prospective applicant which would inform the response. The Council is in the process of adopting supplementary planning guidance which it hopes will assist the quality of pre-application submissions in the future.

CONSULTATIONS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

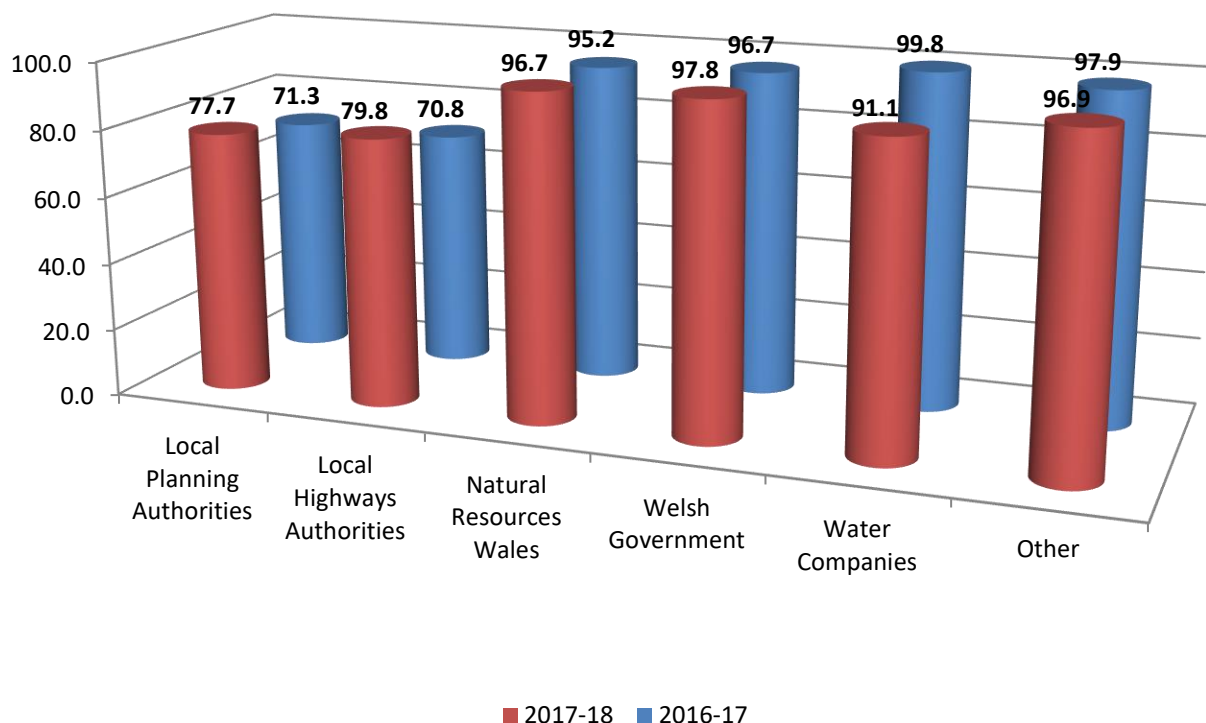


Fig 4 – Percentage of planning application consultations responded to within time periods required, by consultee group

Statutory consultees continue to achieve high standards of performance responding to consultations on planning applications, with both Local Planning Authorities and Local Highways Authorities making improvements to service standards on an all-Wales basis. The number of planning applications upon which Local Planning Authorities are consulted as statutory consultees is relatively small, at 121 across Wales for the reporting period. Nevertheless, the performance improvement is welcomed.

As with pre-application consultations, Dwr Cymru and Severn Trent Water maintain excellent response times on planning applications of 99.9% and 100% respectively. Welsh Government responded on time to 99.8% of statutory consultations on planning applications, including Cadw, which responded within 21 days on 955 of 993 applications (96.2%).

Network Rail responded to 84.4% (195 of 231) consultations within the required 21-day period. Where there was a delay, Network Rail reports these were a result of either needing to undertake internal consultations, such as with Level Crossing Managers or Asset Protection Engineers, or as a result of staff shortages due to annual leave.

As with pre-application responses, the above statistic for Local Highway Authorities is incomplete due to the failure of the following Authorities to comply with the duty placed upon them by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, to provide an annual report on their timeliness handling such consultations:

- Denbighshire County Council
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Swansea County Council
- Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council

On the basis of the returns from the remaining 18 Local Highways Authorities, they responded to 11,457 planning applications, with 9,145 of those responses being submitted within the 21-day period. Of those Authorities, 6 achieved a response rate of over 90% within required timescales and Blaenau Gwent CBC achieved a 100% response rate, despite a 50% reduction in the staff team responsible for responding to these consultations.

Powys County Council's Highways Department reports it responded to only 40.2% of statutory consultations on time, however, the Council qualifies its performance by stating these figures are based on a locally set 14-day response period, and also that it is unable to provide 21-day figures. It is anticipated the Council's reported performance would significantly improve if it were to report on a 21-day period instead, and it is noted the Council also reports it has chosen not to respond to pre-application consultations in order to shore up its performance on application responses.

Caerphilly Council's Highways Directorate also reports it has found the financial climate in the reporting period to be "extremely challenging". With this resource challenge expected to be maintained, it anticipates there will be a future decline in its own performance. The Council has however managed to achieve a 99% "on time" response rate for planning application consultations in the reporting period.

CONCLUSION

The 1990 Act places a duty on statutory consultees to respond to consultations and based on the reports received, consultees are responding in a timely manner in the majority of cases.

Timely and effective responses to pre-application consultation enable a developer to revise or adjust a planning application prior to submission, in order to ensure the application reflects any technical or infrastructure issues raised by consultees and is consequently more likely to be approved. Each consultee should expect to see the benefits of their advice post submission. On the whole, where respondents commented on the quality of submissions, they found the pre-application process improved quality.

The duty to report introduced by the 2015 Act, however, extends to commenting on the timeliness of consultations responses and does not extend to the quality of submissions. The commentary provided on the qualitative outcome of the pre-application process is consequently rather limited and it is not possible to draw conclusions on the qualitative merits of the pre-application consultation process by considering the reports submitted by statutory consultees. Further work will be required by Welsh Government to understand whether the comments being made at pre-application stage are being fully reflected in formal submissions.

The above statistics indicate there is a propensity for Highways Departments to fail to respond to consultations on planning applications in just above 20% of cases across Wales.

This is a slight improvement on performance in the previous year, although several Highways Departments articulated their concerns about a highly challenging resource environment within Local Government, and predicted their authority's performance would decline in future.

Local Planning Authorities work closely with their respective Highways Departments to deliver a joined-up approach to development and transport infrastructure. Whilst Highways Departments often sit outside of Planning Departments, it is evident pressures external to the planning system are affecting the ability of LPAs to deliver. As these pressures are expected to continue, the constraints on delivery are also expected to continue.

Local Authorities will need to make careful decisions about the level of resourcing they allocate to Highways Departments, as local development and investment is crucial to enable prosperity for all and delays investment projects.

The Welsh Government is committed to improving the quality of submitted planning applications and pre-application consultations remain crucial to achieving this aim. Failing to respond to statutory consultation is a serious block within the planning system. The Welsh Government will consider taking action where Authorities are failing to respond to statutory consultation in a timely and efficient way.

4 – PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES

At a local level, the planning system is fundamental to the implementation of local policies for the built and natural environment. The planning system is responsible for land use decisions for the places in which people live, work and play. Local planning policies and decisions serve to deliver outcomes for areas across the spectrum of local government including health, wellbeing, regeneration, recreation, education and play. In order for the planning system to play its part in the implementation of local aspirations, it must be in a healthy state.

This section reviews the performance of the 25 Welsh Local Planning Authorities, as measured by the Planning Performance Framework. The results are drawn from the Performance Framework table published covering the period of April 2017 to March 2018.

Changes to performance indicators and targets

The Performance Framework indicators and its targets are subject to an annual review. The most recent review meeting took place on 04 July 2018, and a number of revisions to the Performance Framework were agreed with the representatives of the Welsh Local Planning Authorities. These included:

- **Delivery Agreements for LDP Review** – a new indicator was introduced to reflect the need for timely review of LDPs. Regulation 41 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan) (Wales) Regulations 2005 (the LDP Regulations) requires LPAs to commence a full review of their LDPs every 4 years from the date of the LDP's initial adoption.

The new performance indicator measures compliance with Regulation 41, in particular the timeliness of submission of a Delivery Agreement to the Welsh Ministers. Delivery Agreements submitted less than 12 months of an LPA achieving Regulation 41 will be considered as “good” performance, whereas those submitted more than 18 months after achieving Regulation 41 will be deemed as within the “improve” performance banding.

- **Delay on LDP Review progress measured against the Delivery Agreement** – This is a new indicator, similar to the existing indicator for LDP preparation. Following submission of a Delivery Agreement for LDP Review, LPAs will be measured on their ability to comply with the timescales set out in the Delivery Agreement, for four key stages of the LDP Review – pre-deposit consultation, deposit, submission for examination and adoption.

Only the first Delivery Agreement will be used to measure performance, and revised Delivery Agreements will not be considered for this performance indicator, as is already the case with the equivalent indicator for preparation of the original LDP.

Those LPAs who reach the identified stages within 3 months of the dates set out in their first Delivery Agreement for LDP Review will be identified as achieving “good” performance, and those which do not will be identified as in need of improvement.

- **Percentage of Listed Building Consent (LBC) applications determined “on time”** – Statistics on the number of LBC applications determined by LPAs, and the

number of those which are determined “on time”, are already collected. The introduction of this indicator serves to highlight this important planning service, although LBC applications attract no application fee.

Performance bandings equivalent to planning applications have been introduced for this new indicator, as the way of measuring “on time” performance. Where LPAs do not have delegated authority from Cadw to determine LBC applications for Grade II Listed Buildings, then the date the application is passed to Cadw for decision is deemed to be the “on time” date, as at this stage the application passes outside of the LPA’s control.

- **Percentage of enforcement cases investigated in 84 days** – This existing enforcement indicator is subject to new agreed performance targets. LPAs which investigate 80% or more of enforcement cases within 84 days are considered to be performing to a “good” standard, and those investigating 60% or less cases in 84 days are deemed to be in need of service improvement. The definition of this performance indicator has been refined following development work by the Planning Officers Society for Wales, to ensure effective reporting.
- **Time taken to pursue positive enforcement action** – This indicator has been subject to refinement since its introduction and anecdotal feedback suggested ambiguity in the way the indicator was being interpreted at a local level. The Planning Officers Society for Wales has undertaken work to amplify and clarify guidance on this indicator to ensure it is effectively and consistently measured and reported upon. As existing data to date is not reliable, performance targets for this indicator have not been set.

These changes took effect from April 2018, and will be presented in the next all-Wales Annual Performance Report.

Resourcing and resilience

Resourcing continues to be a major challenge for LPAs in the light of continuing UK Government public sector austerity. Several LPAs have reflected upon the reality of continuous year-on-year cuts to operating budgets or “flat” budgets, where central funding is reduced to match planning application fee income. Many LPAs report they have relied upon holding posts vacant, or voluntary redundancy or reductions in working hours to meet budget reduction targets.

During the reporting period the Royal Town Planning Institute undertook a research exercise to identify the financial contribution the planning system makes to local communities. The “Value of Planning” research published in June 2018 included the development of a toolkit which enabled LPAs to quantify the value the planning system adds to the local community, including land value uplift as well as direct and indirect expenditure. The research concluded the planning system contributed £2.3bn to the Welsh economy in 2016/17.

Whilst it is for Local Government to decide how it allocates resources to local priorities, the RTPI research serves to illustrate the significant positive effect the planning system can have on local prosperity and growth. When considering budget savings, Local Government

should consider how under-resourced planning teams will be less able to bring this growth to the local economy.

Planning fees are also a major source of income for the planning system. Research to inform the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 identified the planning fee regime was recouping roughly 60% of the cost of processing applications.

The person who stands to benefit from the grant of permission should pay for consideration of consent, however in setting appropriate fees for planning applications it is necessary to take a pragmatic approach on the affordability and proportionality of fees as a proportion of build cost. Careful and detailed research is required to underpin any change to planning fees.

Work has already been undertaken by the Planning Advisory Service, in partnership with Welsh LPAs, to identify the cost of delivering planning application services and identifying the associated fee income, over a 4-year period, in order to illustrate the costs for delivering the current service. Further work is required to identify where systemic changes can be made to streamline and improve the legislative and administrative processes for determining applications, and to understand the cost impact of these changes.

The evidence gathered by this work to explore options for moving planning application fees closer to a cost-neutral model. Engagement from LPAs will be vital to this work. The evidence will also be necessary to support the Regulatory impact Assessment for future changes to planning application fees.

Areas of innovation

Despite an extremely challenging financial environment, LPAs continue to strive for excellence and frequently collaborate and strive to pursue best practice, or new ways of working, which retain or enhance the level of service they provide to customers. Each of the examples listed below is highlighted by the respective LPA as “good practice”, and we encourage other LPAs to look at the work being undertaken by their peers in order to inspire their own continuous self-improvement.

Strategic sites – several LPAs are working hard to prepare strategic sites identified in their LDP, for development. Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC is exploring options for bringing forward strategic sites, including seeking European funding and directing Council projects and developments to those sites. Swansea CC commissioned an independent review of strategic sites in its deposit LDP to “sense check” the Council’s viability deductions.

Conwy CBC has appointed a Strategic Sites Development Team comprising of key officers, tasked with helping developers in deliverability of the Conwy LDP’s strategic sites.

Alternative funding streams – several LPAs report exploratory work to identify options to charge for providing optional “value added” work for planning service users. These include:

- Fast-track upgrades for householder applications (Monmouthshire CC, Neath Port Talbot CBC, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, Vale of Glamorgan CBC)
- Similar schemes for LBC, minor applications and certificates of lawfulness (Monmouthshire CC)
- Charging for conveyance and land charges confirmation (Neath Port Talbot CBC)

Use of ICT services to secure efficiencies – several LPAs report they are making upgrades to their ICT system in order to facilitate more effective working. Bridgend CBC has procured a new system to enable remote or agile working and remote camera viewing of sites for later consideration.

Neath Port Talbot CBC has chosen the same ICT system as Swansea CC with a view to collaborative working in the future. Neath Port Talbot CC and Swansea CC also operate a joint agent accreditation scheme, standardising engagement with and expectations of agents working in both LPAs.

Direct collaboration – a number of projects are underway to facilitate collaborative or regional approaches to delivery. In some cases these are truly regional delivery models, such as the ongoing North Wales (Flintshire CC) and West Wales (Carmarthenshire CC) minerals and waste services.

Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd CCs continue to maintain a Joint Planning Policy Unit to implement the LDP on behalf of both LPAs. Pembrokeshire CC and Pembrokeshire Coast NPA continue to work closely on policy development, sharing resources and expertise. Monmouthshire CC also reports it is close to agreeing a Service Level Agreement to provide specialist expertise on conservation issues to Torfaen CBC.

In other examples work is being undertaken to standardise and introduce common practices. The North Wales Policy Officers Group is working on standardisation of local practices and procedures for built heritage applications, including its interface with Cadw, which will assist in streamlining such cases and also create resilience by enabling cross-authority working. The North Wales Policy Officers Group is also working on a similar project for natural heritage applications, and both of these projects are anticipated to be implemented across Wales upon completion.

Direct intervention in the housing market – Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC is considering making use of the Council's borrowing powers to assist in bringing forward sites for development where the private sector housing market has failed.

Performance analysis – the level of detail and intelligence used to inform some Annual Performance Reports is significant and it is welcomed that some LPAs, such as Cardiff CC, have incorporated their Annual Performance Report, and its findings, into an annual service improvement cycle. The Blaenau Gwent CBC APR presents service performance and planning outcomes information in an accessible way, helping readers of the report to understand the deliverables emerging from the Council's planning service and the challenges it is working to overcome.

OVERVIEW OF WALES AVERAGE PERFORMANCE AGAINST ALL INDICATORS

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE
Plan making			
1. Is there a current Development Plan in place which is within the plan period?	Yes		No
2. LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	<12	13-17	18+
3. Annual Monitoring Reports produced following LDP adoption	Yes		No
4. Number of Local Planning Authorities with a housing land supply of 5 years or more			
Efficiency			
5. Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	60+	60.1-59.9	<50
6. Average time taken to determine "major" applications, in days			
7. Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required	80+	70.1-79.9	<70
8. Average time taken to determine all applications, in days	<67	67-111	112+
9. Percentage of Listed Building Consent applications determined within time periods required	80+	70.1-79.9	<70
Quality			
10. Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	<5	5-8.9	9+
11. Percentage of appeals dismissed	66+	55.1-65.9	<55
12. Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	0	1	2

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
47	39	58	67
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	8	6	7
24	35.3	59	67.4
206	212.7	250.2	240.1
72.7	76.6	86.7	88.5
76.4	77.2	75.9	80.7
40.8	38.1	63.3	65.4
10.1	9.0	10.9	8.6
65.6	66.5	60.9	62.6
0	0	0	0

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE
Engagement			
13. Does the Local Planning Authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee?	Yes		No
14. Does the Local Planning Authority have an officer on duty to provide advice to members of the public?	Yes		No
15. 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			
16. 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+	70.1-79.9	<70
17. Average time taken to take positive enforcement action, in days			

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
65.8	79.4	85.0	80.6
			184.6

SECTION 1 – PLAN MAKING

Indicator 01 - is there a current Development Plan in place which is within the plan period? Yes (22 out of 25 LPAs)

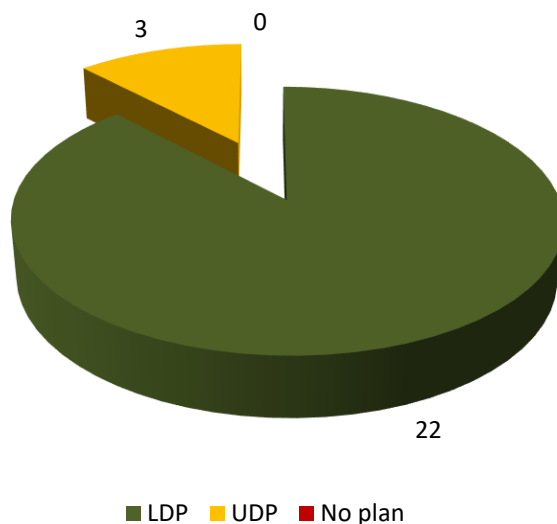


Fig 5 – Local Planning Authorities with an adopted development plan in March 2017

Figure 5 shows that 22 of 25 Local Planning Authorities had an adopted LDP. This gives Wales an up-to-date plan coverage of 88%. There are three LPAs that have an extant Unitary Development Plan.

Swansea Council submitted its LDP for examination in July 2017. At the time of writing this report, the LDP is still at examination stage and is expected to close soon, resulting in its adoption early 2019.

Wrexham County Borough Council submitted its draft LDP for public consultation in April 2018, just outside the reporting period.

Flintshire County Council submitted its LDP delivery agreement to Welsh Government in February 2014 and consulted on the preferred strategy for the LDP in November 2017.

Indicator 02 - LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months

67 months

Each Local Planning Authority must, at the very start in the process of preparing a Local Development Plan, publish a Delivery Agreement, setting out how it will prepare the plan, including a timeline setting out the key stages of the process. This indicator measures slippage from key milestones set out in the original Delivery Agreement timeline. It applies only to Local Planning Authorities which had not yet adopted their LDP in March 2018.

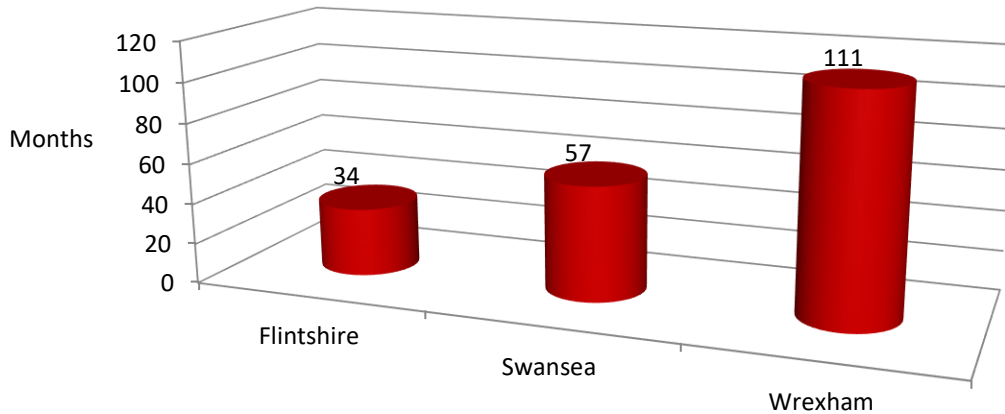


Fig 6 – Delay in LDP preparation, in months

The period is measured by the difference in, months, between the date when the first Delivery Agreement proposes an LDP will reach one of the four key stages, and the actual date the LDP reaches the relevant stage. The four key stages are the beginning of consultation on the preferred strategy, the beginning of consultation on the deposit LDP, the submission of the LDP for examination, and the adoption of the LDP.

In the case of Wrexham County Borough Council, the initial delivery agreement relates to the Council’s first Local Development Plan, which was withdrawn at examination in 2012. The Council submitted the second draft deposit LDP for public consultation in April 2018.

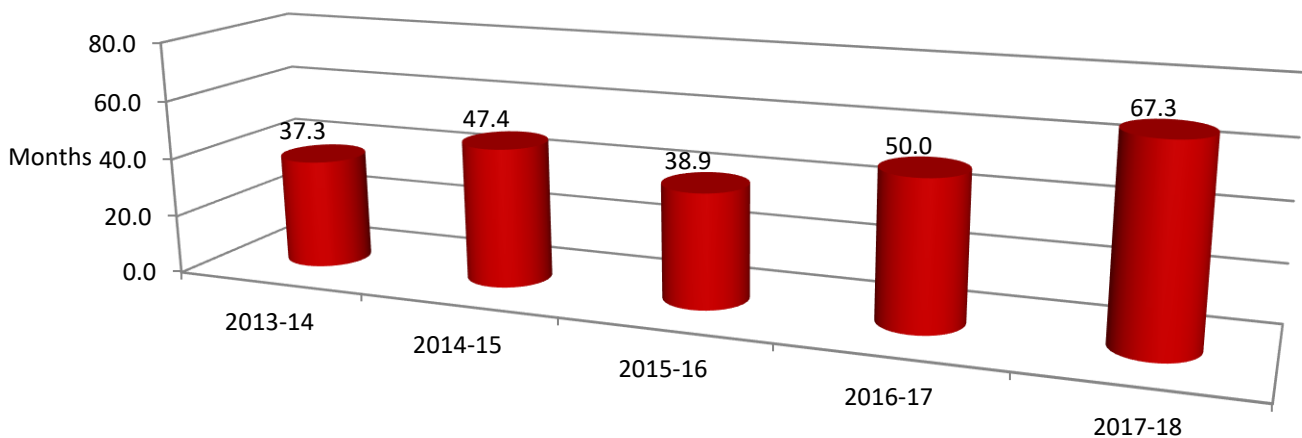
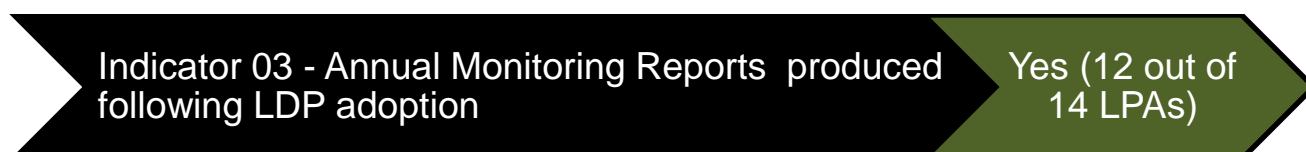


Fig 7 – Year-on-year comparison of average delay in LDP preparation, in months

Fig 7 shows another annual increase in the average delay in LDP preparation. There are now only three LPAs yet to adopt their LDPs, each of which is significantly delayed.

The Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint LDP was adopted in the reporting period and was subject to a 16 month delay in its preparation, which is significantly closer to the planned dates set out in the Delivery Agreement, than those LDPs still underway. As this LDP is now adopted, and the remaining LDPs yet to be adopted are subject to much greater delays, this has the effect of increasing the all-Wales average for this indicator.



Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) are required by legislation. They report on the progress on implementing the policies and achieving the objectives and vision of each LDP. AMRs indicate whether or not the LDP's strategy and policies are working as intended. Their context and indicators are agreed as part of the public examination process, prior to adoption of an LDP. Consideration of the findings of an AMR, particularly where there is a trend in the failure to meet targets, can trigger a partial, or full, review of an LDP.

Each Local Authority needs to give careful consideration to whether, or not, its policies are being achieved. Where there are shortcomings, remedial action should be taken to rectify any deficiencies promptly. This is particularly important as the evidence base becomes outdated. All Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty to review their adopted LDP four years from adoption.

Each Local Planning Authority with an adopted LDP is under a duty to submit an AMR to the Welsh Ministers, reporting on implementation of the LDP's targets. In this reporting period, two LPAs (Conwy and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Councils) failed to submit their Annual Monitoring Reports to the Welsh Government by the 31 October 2017 deadline. In both cases, early drafts were shared with Welsh Government before the submission date, however these had not been scrutinised or approved by the members of the respective Councils, in time for submission.

Whilst this could be attributed to Committee timescales, these important reports are necessary for each LPA to understand whether the development plan is meeting its goals, and this work should be given the prominence it merits. It should be noted that the Annual Performance Report (APR) of each LPA is requested to be submitted alongside the AMR for the same reporting period, and every AMR was submitted prior to the required submission date for October 2018, and next year's all-Wales APR will reflect positively on this.

Indicator 04 - The local planning authority's current housing land supply in years

6 LPAs
achieved a 5
year supply

The planning system is responsible for identifying suitable sites for new housing through the LDP process. Each Local Planning Authority is expected to demonstrate sufficient available and deliverable land within the authority to build housing for the next five years, based on the housing requirements identified in their LDP. The way this policy requirement is monitored is known as the Joint Housing Land Availability Study (JHLAS). Each year Local Planning Authorities conduct these studies and publish the findings.

As at 31 March 2018 six authorities had a housing land supply of five years or more (see Figure 8 below). A shortage of deliverable housing land, lack of delivery by the house building industry, or a lack of range and choice of sites, may mean the authority's plan cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply.

Where a Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, Local Planning Authorities should consider the reasons for the shortfall and whether to identify measures to address the shortfall as part of their LDP Annual Monitoring Reports.

The national policy context, is set out in [Planning Policy Wales](#) and [Technical Advice Note 1: Joint Housing Land Availability Studies \(TAN 1\)](#).

To alleviate some of the immediate pressures on Local Planning Authorities when dealing with applications for housing on sites not allocated for development in LDPs, the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs consulted in May 2018 on the dis-application of paragraph 6.2 of TAN 1 to remove the reference to attaching "considerable" weight to the lack of a five-year housing land supply as a material consideration in determining planning applications for housing. Following the consultation the Cabinet Secretary decided to dis-apply paragraph 6.2 of TAN 1 whilst a review of housing delivery through the planning system is undertaken.

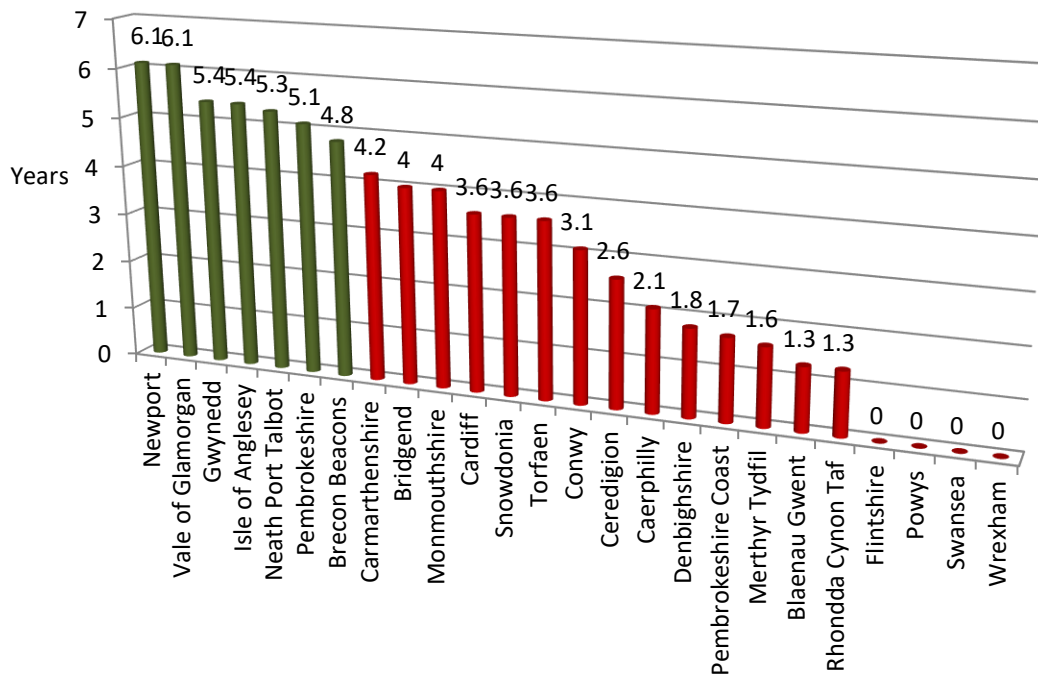


Fig 8 –Local Planning Authorities with a housing land supply of 5 years or more (as at 31 March 2018)

Figure 8 above shows the housing land supply of each Local Planning Authority as at 31 March 2018. Local Planning Authorities without an adopted LDP (or an adopted UDP still within its plan period at the base date of the JHLAS) are unable to carry out a JHLAS and therefore are considered to have a zero years housing land supply. Consequently, four Local Planning Authorities demonstrate a housing land supply of zero years.

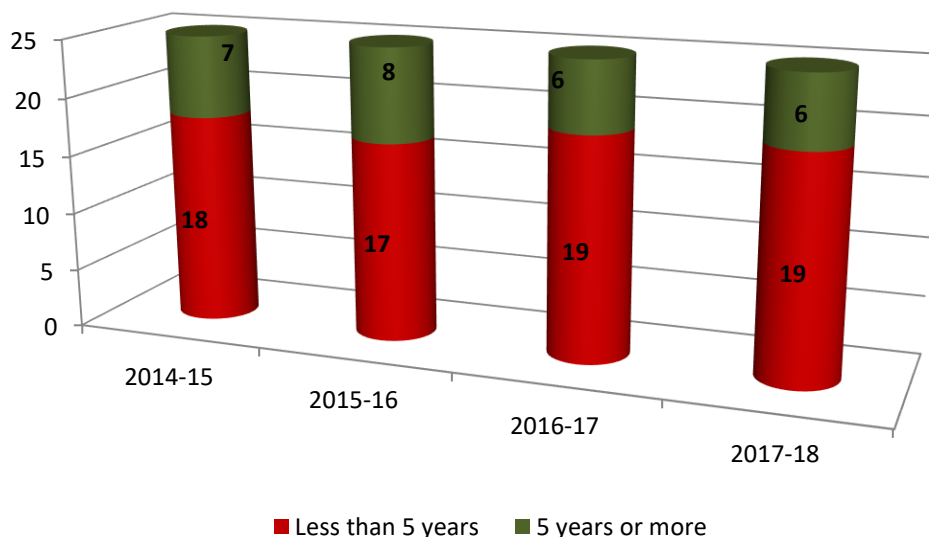


Fig 9 – Number of Local Planning Authorities with a 5 year supply of housing land

Figure 9 above shows the number of Local Planning Authorities with a 5-year housing land supply has remained the same as in 2016-17 and the 19 Authorities without a five-year housing land supply includes 16 of the same Authorities.

Land supply as reported in JHLASs has declined for many Local Planning Authorities, including some with recently adopted LDPs. Research carried out in 2016-17 (*Longitudinal viability study of the planning process*) demonstrated that viability is a key reason for delays in sites coming forward for development. Other reasons for delays include the allocation of sites for housing which are essentially undeliverable or only likely to come forward at later stages of the LDP period, or overly optimistic delivery rates. This has resulted in lower than expected delivery rates on sites allocated in LDPs and is clearly having a detrimental effect on housing land supply.

In response, Planning Policy Wales has been revised to require more rigorous assessments of sites prior to allocation in LDPs. This should negate the need for detailed viability assessments to be undertaken at the planning application stage where the development proposal complies with LDP policy requirements.

SECTION 2 - EFFICIENCY

Indicator 05 - Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required **67.4%**

LPAs have a statutory time period in which they should determine planning applications. If an application is not determined within this statutory time period, the applicant has the right to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate, on the grounds of non-determination. The time period is 16 weeks for an application subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, due to the technical complexity of the supporting information. For all other applications, the period is 8 weeks.

LPAs can seek a voluntary extension to this time period with the applicant, and this indicator includes cases where an extension is agreed, and the revised timescale met, as "on time".

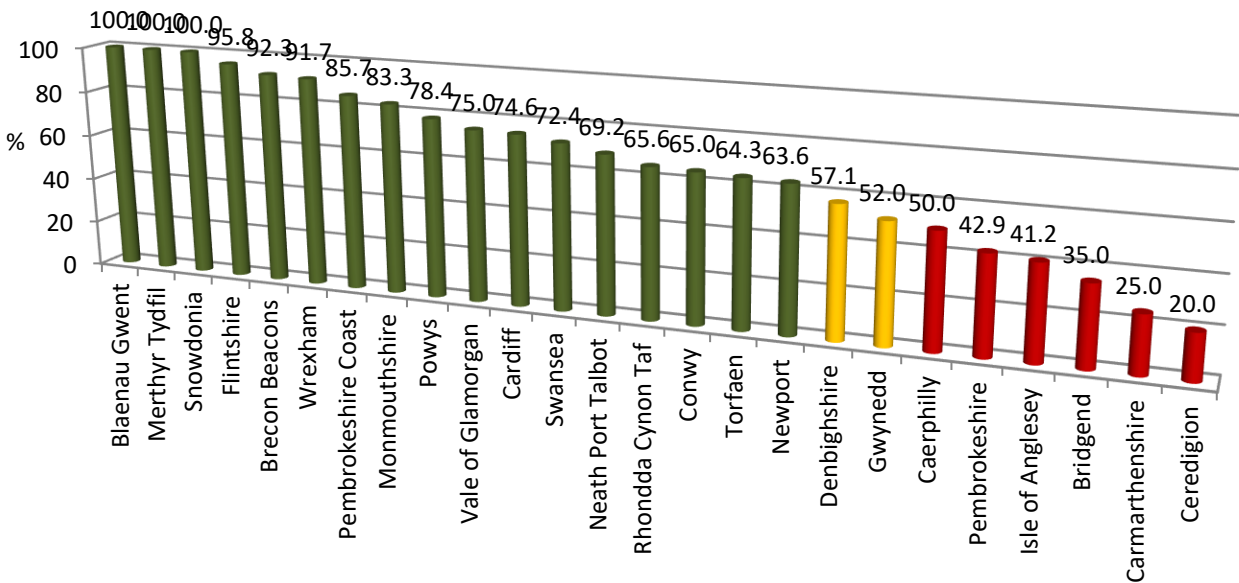


Fig 10 – Comparison of Local Planning Authority performance for determination of major planning applications

Figure 10 shows the individual performance of each LPA against this indicator. Individual LPA performance has again significantly improved compared to the previous year, with 17 of 25 LPAs performing within the "good" banding. 6 of 25 LPAs are within the "improve" banding, which is 3 less than in the previous year. Most notable amongst these are Flintshire CC, Pembrokeshire Coast NPA and Snowdonia NPA, which have all moved from being within the "improve" banding last year to within the "good" banding this year. Snowdonia NPA has improved from determining 33% of major applications "on time", to 100%, although this is based on performance for only one application. In comparison, Flintshire CC determined 23 of 24 major applications on time, and Wrexham CBC determined 22 of 24 major applications on time. Powys CC achieved a 78.4% "on time"

standard, determining 58 of 74 applications on time. Cardiff CC determined 74.1% (53 of 71) major applications on time.

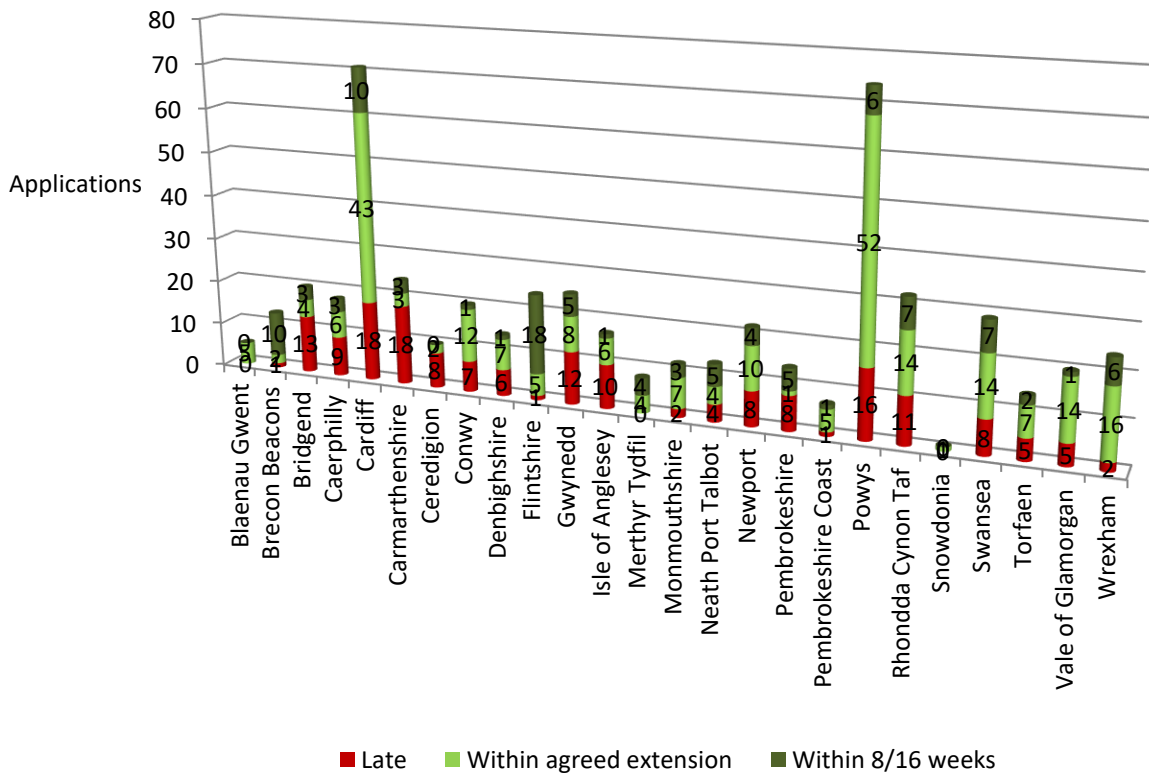


Fig 11 – Comparison of number of major applications determined on time and within agreed extensions

Cardiff CC and Wrexham CBC have significantly higher major application workloads than many others and demonstrate that whilst smaller authorities can achieve the highest performance rates with relatively few major applications, larger authorities with larger workloads can still deliver decisions on major applications in a timely manner.

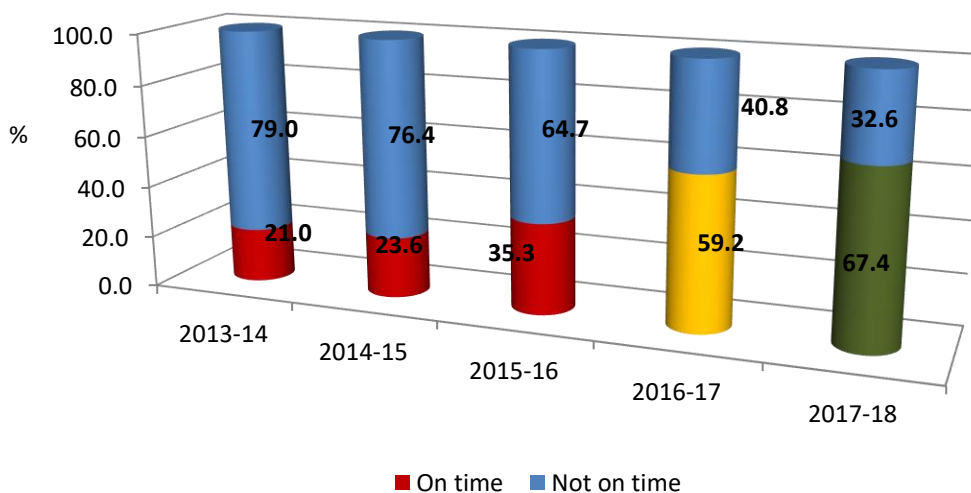


Fig 12 – Year-on-year comparison of percentage of major planning applications determined "on time"

Figure 12 shows all-Wales performance against this indicator, with performance colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good” accordingly. Performance continues to improve year-on-year. This is an encouraging trend and demonstrates efforts by LPAs to deliver acceptable service standards for major applications, which typically incur considerable planning fees.

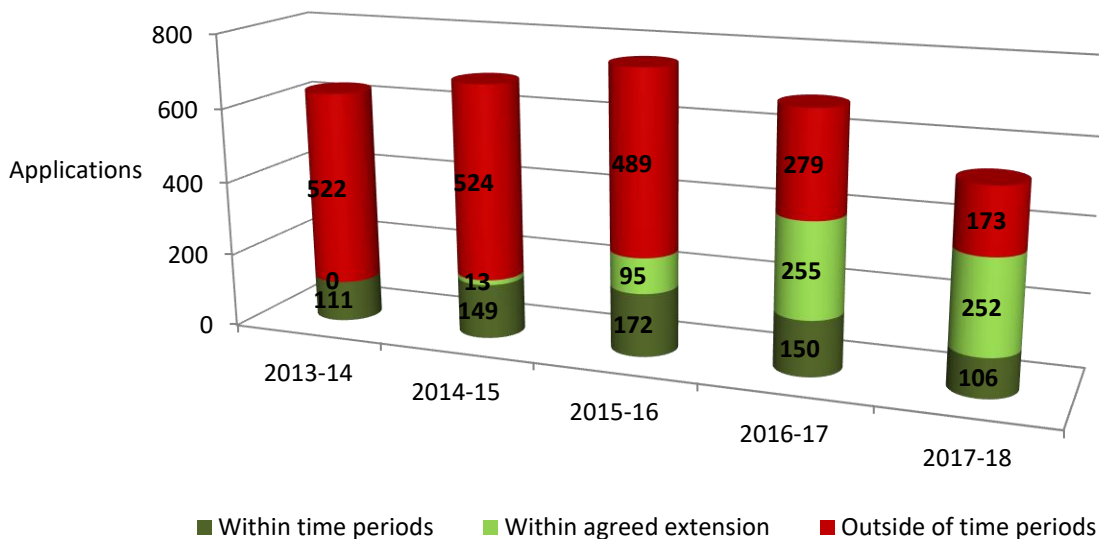


Fig 13 – All major applications determined, by time period for determination

Figure 13 above shows the number of major applications has fallen by 30% in three years, from 756 applications in 2015-16, to 531 in 2017-18. In this period the percentage of applications determined “on time” has significantly increased, however the number of determined “on time” fell over the last 12 months, from 405 to 358.

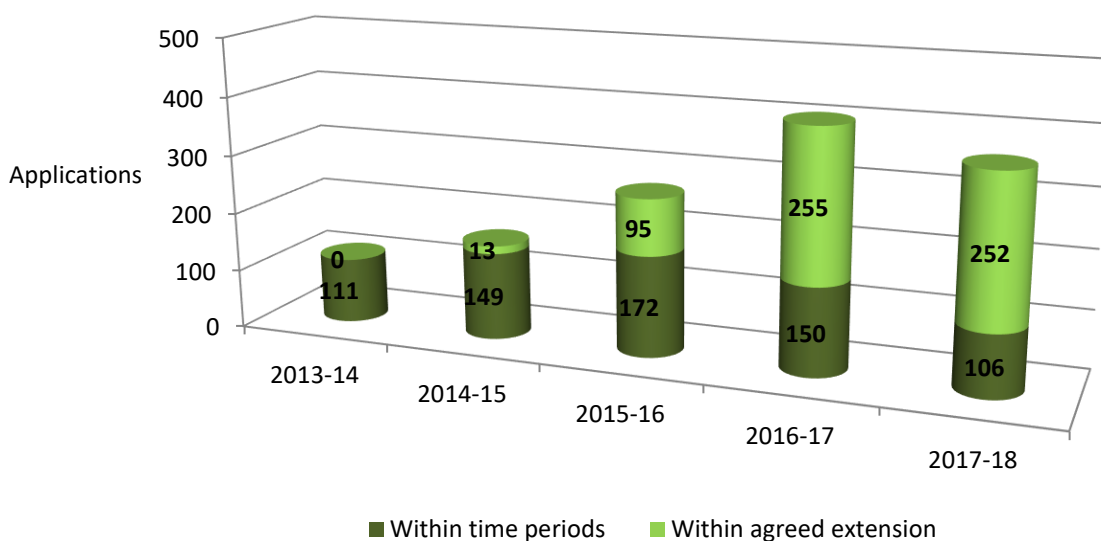


Figure 14 – Proportion of major applications determined “on time” which are subject to an agreed extension of time

Fig 14 above illustrates the number of “on time” applications which are determined within the statutory time periods of 16 weeks for applications subject to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), or 8 weeks for other applications, compared to those applications determined outside of these times but within an agreed extension of time.

The proportion of applications which are determined in accordance with agreed extensions of time continues to grow as an overall proportion of “on time” applications. It remains open to applicants to decline a request for an extension of time to determine these applications. These requests are not being refused, neither is there any corresponding increase in the number of appeals on the grounds of non-determination. Applicants appear to be content to agree to these extensions, which provide for continuity of contact, particularly when major schemes are subject to extensive local engagement and pre-application work.

Indicator 06 - Average time taken to determine "major" applications in days

240.1 days

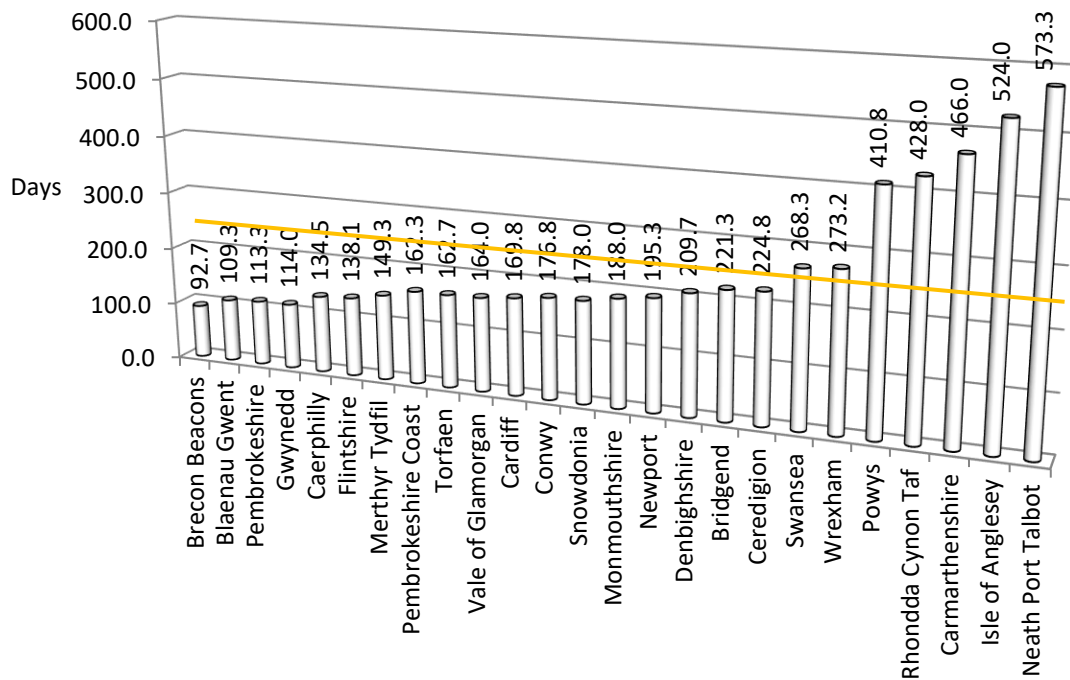


Fig 15 – Comparison of average time taken to determine major planning applications

Figure 15 above compares performance amongst LPAs against this indicator. The chart shows considerable variance in the average time taken to determine such applications. When considering LPA performance against this indicator, however, it should be understood that major applications have a considerable variation in size and complexity.

The criteria for major development is set out in detail in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012. For example, development of 10 dwellings or more constitutes major development, and there is a considerable difference between the depth and complexity of issues being considered by the LPA when determining, for example, an application for 10 dwellings and an application for 1,000 dwellings. The same applies particularly to some industrial developments which can raise considerable environmental and amenity issues. This variation in complexity of such applications should be borne in mind when considering performance against this indicator.

Authorities which achieve shorter average times for determining major applications report that a proactive, development team approach is effective in achieving decisions in shorter timescales. The pre-application consultation process can also be beneficial, although this is more dependent upon the actions of the applicant making adjustments to schemes in light of advice, rather than the service which the authority provides.

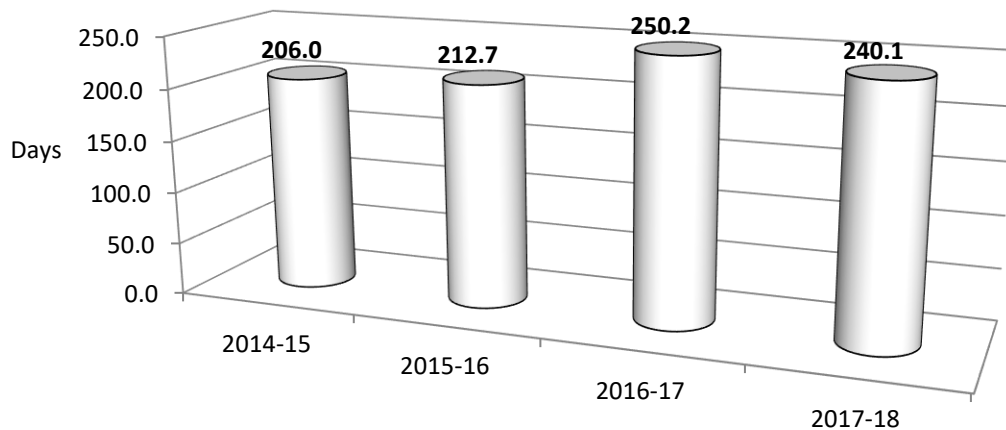


Fig 16 – Year-on-year comparison of average time taken to determine major planning applications, in days

All-Wales performance against this indicator has marginally improved over the last 12 months. There are 10 LPAs whose average is greater than 200 days compared to 14 LPAs last year. The average suggests the determination of major applications within 8 weeks is unachievable in many cases. Factors could include the complexity of impact analysis for larger applications or the continued negotiation with developers over aspects of scheme design. Continued willingness of applicants to agree extensions of time seem to support the latter. The introduction of pre-application procedures does not appear to have resulted in a 'step change' in average processing time.

Indicator 07 - Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required

88.5%

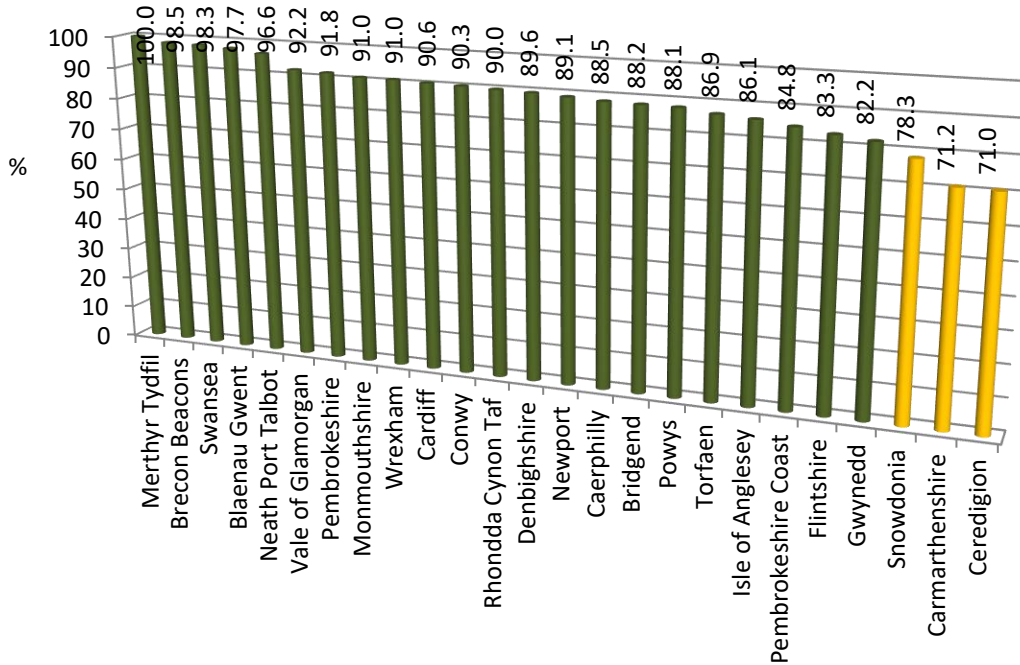


Fig 17 – Comparison of Local Planning Authority performance for determination of all planning applications

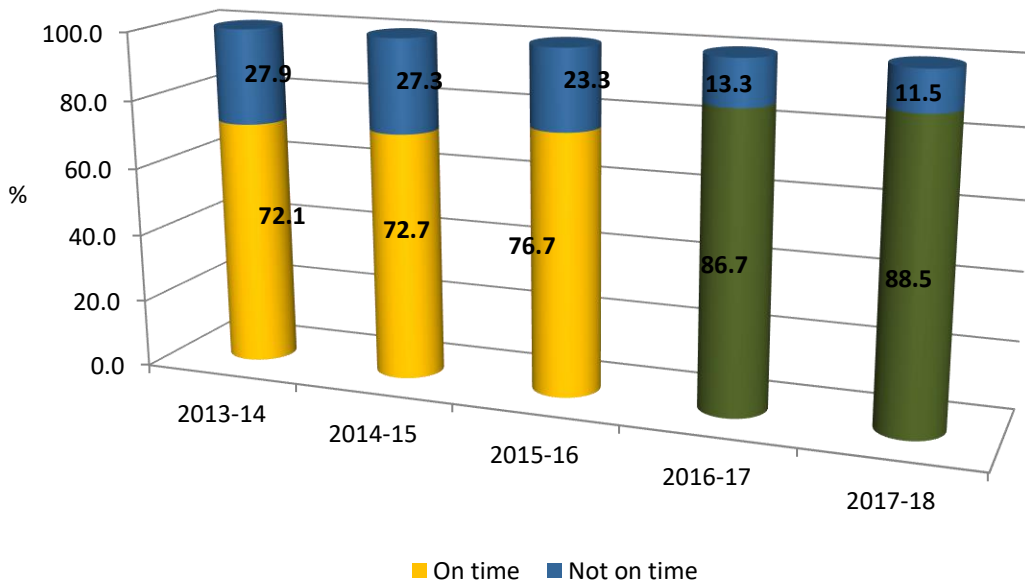


Fig 18 – Year-on-year comparison of percentage of all planning applications determined “on time”

Figure 18 illustrates year-on-year performance on an all-Wales basis, with performance colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good” accordingly. Both Merthyr Tydfil CBC and Brecon Beacons NPA have consistently appeared at the top of quarterly performance league tables for timeliness in determining planning applications since the Performance Framework was introduced in 2014.

Individual LPA performance against this standard continues to improve. All but three LPAs achieved the “good” performance standard against this indicator, an improvement from six last year, and no authority resides within the “improve” banding in this reporting period.

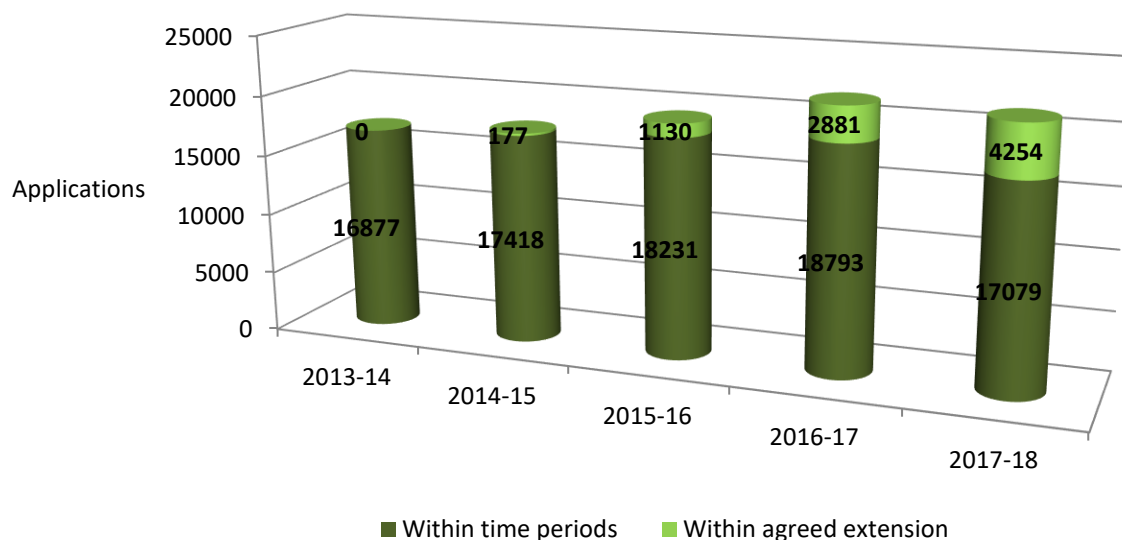


Fig 19 – Use of agreed extensions in determining all planning applications

Fig 19 shows the number and proportion of all applications being determined in accordance with an agreed extension of time rose for the second year. Over the last 12 months, a lower overall number of applications were determined on time, and of these, the proportion determined after the expected 8 or 16 week period, and within an agreed extension of time has grown, from 13.3% to 19.9%. This indicates LPAs are increasingly using agreed extensions of time to manage customer expectations.

Several LPAs are introducing paid-for “fast track” schemes for minor or householder applications, which guarantee a decision within a specific time period or the additional fee is refunded. This provides a greater level of certainty for applicants whilst also providing an alternative income stream for LPAs to invest additional resources into determination of applications. LPAs pursuing this approach include Monmouthshire CC, Neath Port Talbot CBC, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC and Vale of Glamorgan CBC.

Indicator 08 - Average time taken to determine all applications in days

80.7 days

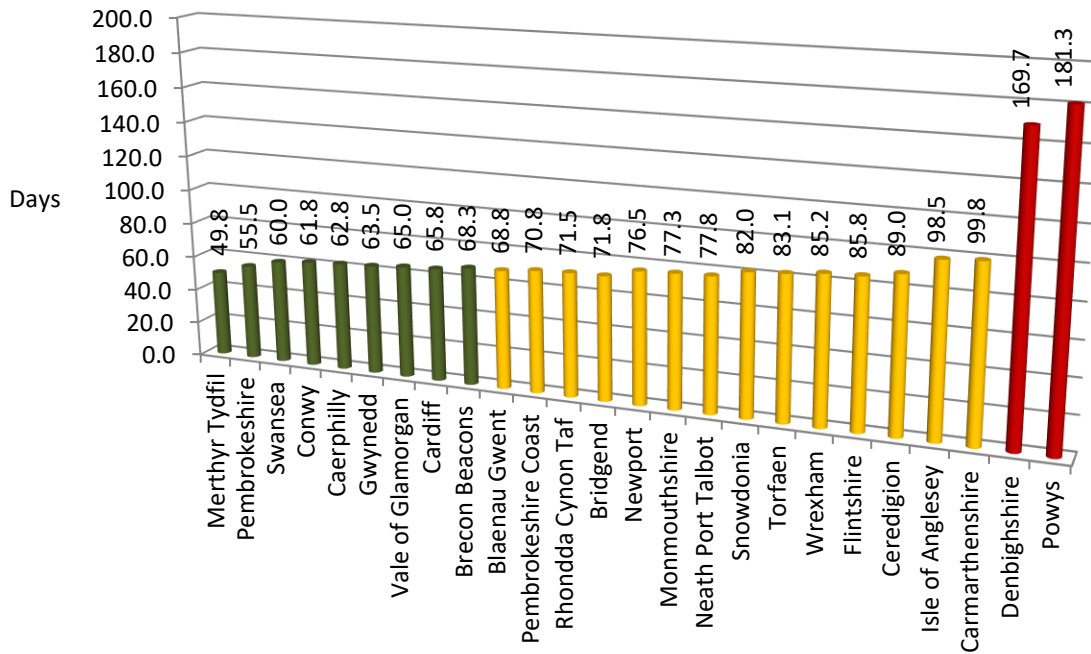


Fig 20 – Comparison of average time taken to determine all planning applications

Figure 20 above shows a comparison of average determination speeds for all application types, with performance colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good” accordingly. On the whole, performance of Local Planning Authorities against this indicator falls within reasonable expectations, with the exception of two extreme outliers. Powys County Council is the LPA with the longest average time to determine applications, with 181.3 days.

The Council advises this is a consequence of a number of applications being submitted for residential development outside of land allocations as a result of the Council failing to maintain a 5-year supply of housing land. The Council reports these applications have been referred to Committee for decision, increasing timescales for determination and impacting on the ability of officers to process other applications.

Denbighshire CC reported an average time to determine applications in the first two quarters of 2017-18 of 64 and 67 days, then reported an average of 378 days in the third quarter, then failed to provide figures for the fourth quarter. The Council’s reported performance information is not sufficiently reliable to accurately reflect its performance, and in its own APR the Council reports an average of 69 days for the year.

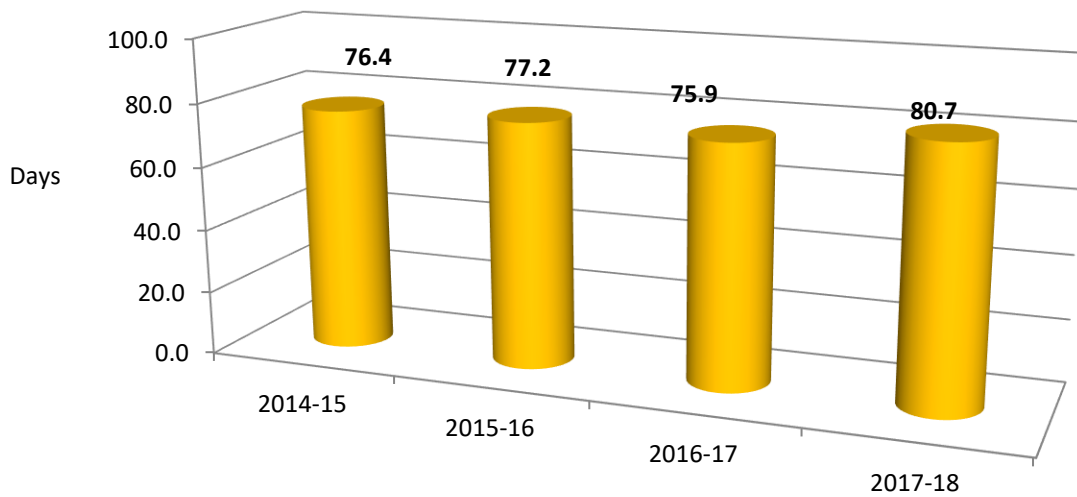


Fig 21 – Year-on-year comparison of average time taken to determine all planning applications, in days

Figure 21 illustrates year-on-year performance on an all-Wales basis, with performance colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good” accordingly. The Welsh average for time taken to determine applications was 80.7 days, a minor increase from the previous reporting year although the performance trend is broadly stable over the last 4 years. If the two identified outliers were removed for the purposes of calculating a Wales average, the figure would be 73.4 days.

As with indicator 08, this minor increase in time taken to determine applications is attributed to more common use of agreed extensions to planning applications.

Indicator 09 - Percentage of Listed Building Consent applications determined within time periods required

65.4%

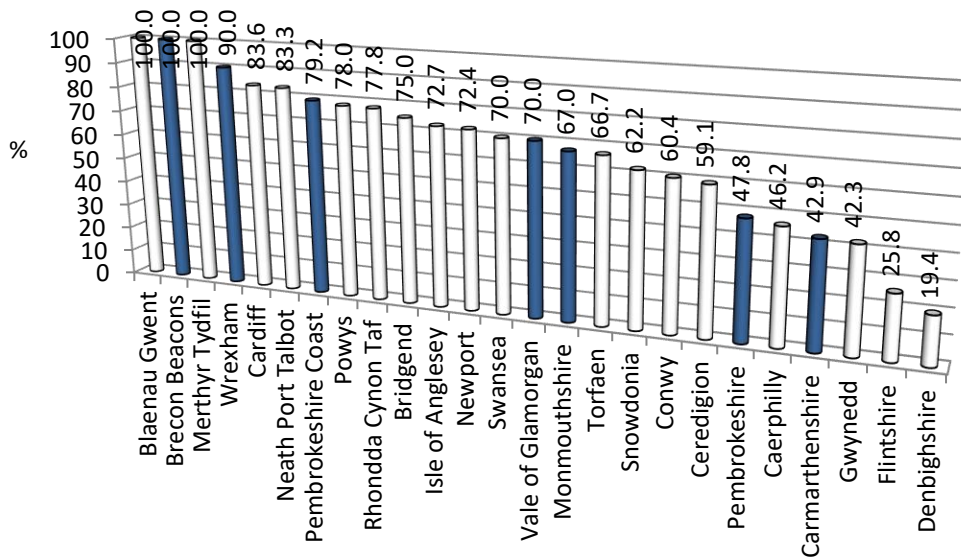


Fig 22 – Comparison of Local Planning Authority performance for determination of Listed Building Consent applications

(Those LPAs coloured **BLUE** have delegated authority to determine LBC applications)

A new indicator on the timeliness for determining Listed Building Consent (LBC) applications was introduced in June 2017, and has been reported upon for the first time in this Annual Performance Report.

LBC applications are deemed to be determined at one of two points:

- Those LPAs with delegated authority from Cadw (identified in blue in fig 22 above) can determine LBC applications for Grade II Listed Buildings themselves, so for these LPAs the determination date is straightforward.
- Those LPAs without delegated authority from Cadw (identified in white in fig 22 above) must refer applications to Cadw, at which point Cadw will decide whether or not to recommend the application be called in by the Welsh Ministers. For these LPAs the date upon which the application is referred to Cadw is deemed to be the “determined” date, as delays in Cadw’s processing of applications are beyond the influence of the LPA.

Although there are no performance thresholds illustrated in Figure 22, performance targets were agreed with the Planning Officers Society for Wales in July 2018.

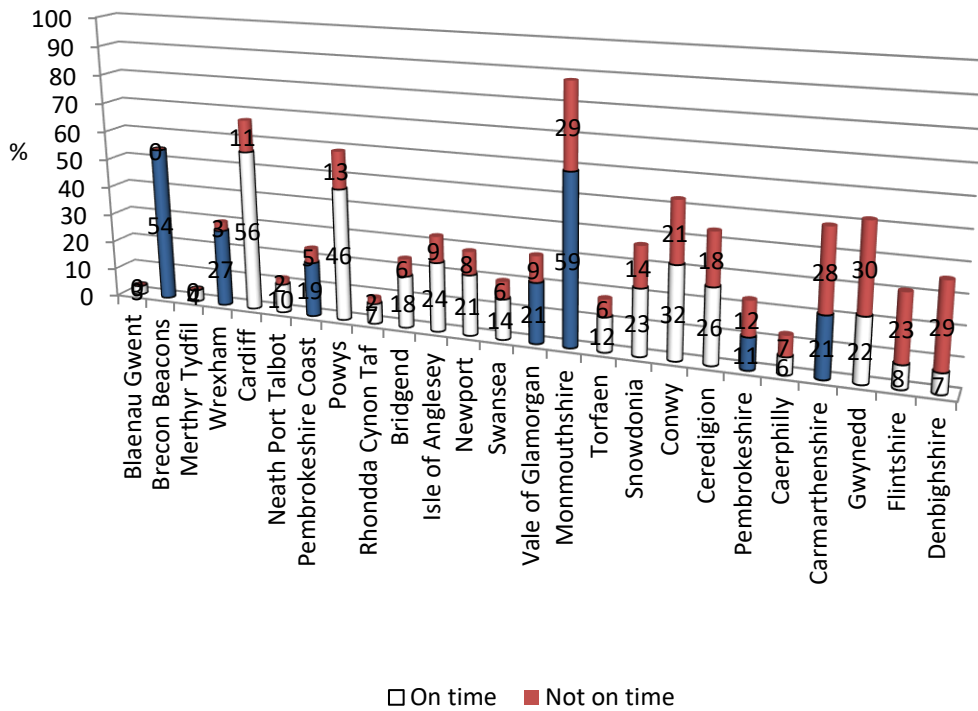


Fig 23 – Comparison of Local Planning Authority performance for determination of Listed Building Consent applications

Fig 23 shows there is no direct correlation between timeliness for determining LBC applications and delegated authority from Cadw to determine LBC applications. Brecon Beacons NPA, for example, has delegated authority and a significant LBC application workload, and determined 100% of its LBC applications on time. In contrast, Carmarthenshire CC, which has a similar LBC workload and delegated authority, determined only 42.8% of LBC applications on time.

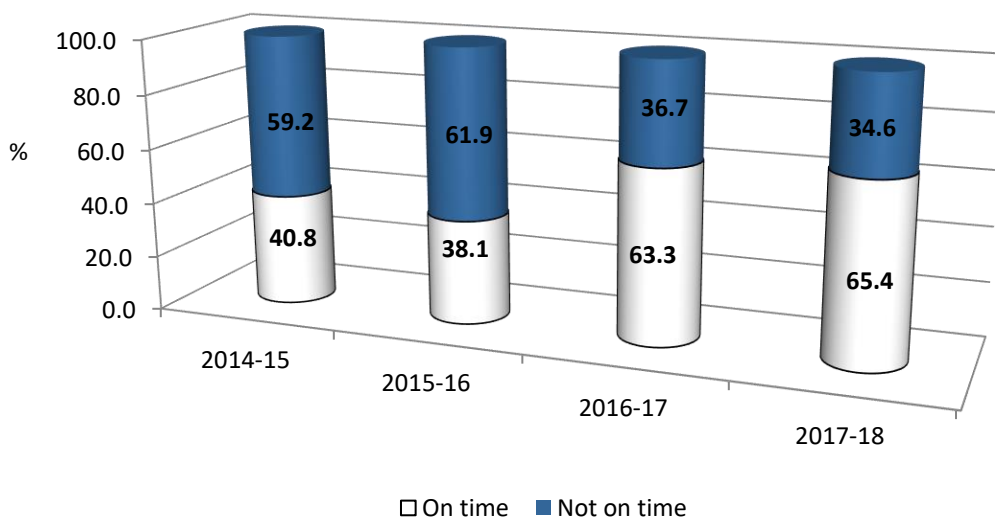


Fig 24 – Year-on-year comparison of percentage of all Listed Building Consent applications determined “on time”

Overall, performance on LBC applications across Wales has improved. This is notable when access to specialist expertise within local government is diminishing in general. LPAs are employing innovative approaches to ensure they can maintain access to specialists and make most effective use of their time.

SECTION 3 - QUALITY

Indicator 10 - Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice **8.6%**

Local Planning Authorities should determine applications in accordance with the relevant development plan, unless material considerations lead it to decide otherwise. Consequently, it should be a relatively infrequent occurrence for applications to be determined contrary to those policies. Where applications are determined contrary to plan policies, clear planning reasons should be stated in the decision notice, justifying the departure from the plan. Where an officer’s report is based on clear LDP policies, decisions contrary to that advice should be rare.

The Welsh Government expects LPAs to operate an effective scheme of delegation so planning committees can concentrate on the more sensitive, strategically important applications. Such applications can be technically complex and controversial, involving a number of issues and conflicting pressures. It is accepted, as delegation schemes are put in place, the number of member decisions against officer advice is likely to increase. The crucial point is any such decision must be based on sound planning reasons.

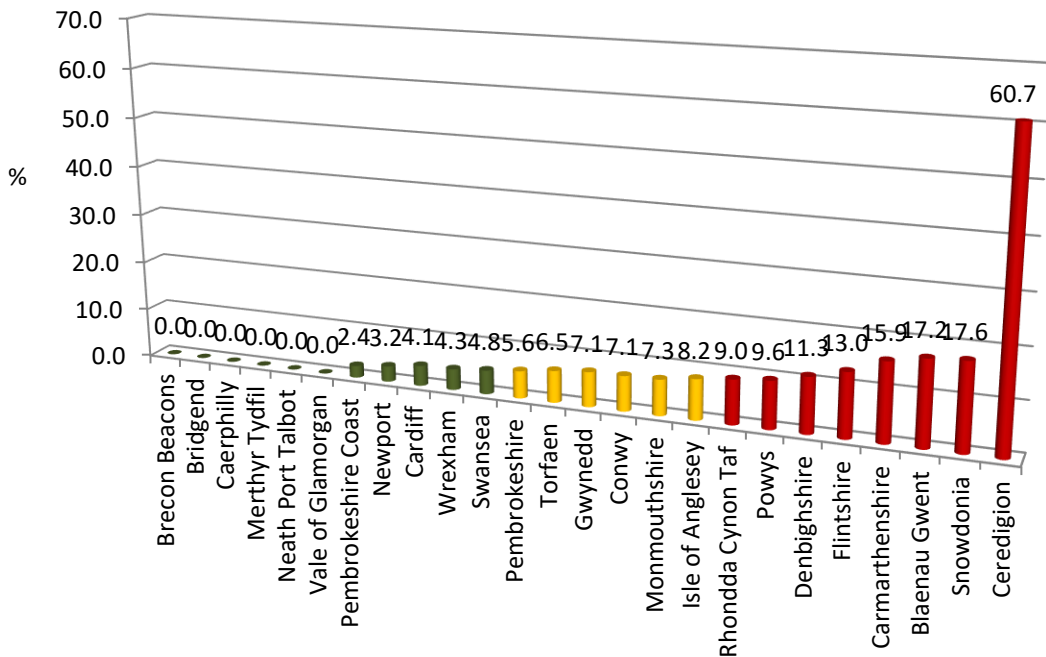


Fig 25 – Percentage of planning applications determined contrary to officer advice

Fig 25 above shows the percentage of applications which were determined contrary to officer recommendation by Planning Committees in Local Planning Authorities, as a percentage of all planning applications determined by the respective Planning Committee,

with performance colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good” accordingly.

As with previous years, one Local Planning Authority significantly skews the all-Wales average for this performance indicator. Ceredigion County Council accounted for 45 of 175, or over a quarter, of all overturn decisions in the reporting period. The removal of this extreme outlier would reduce the Wales average to 6.4%.

Snowdonia NPA determined 17.6% of all applications contrary to officer advice and the Park Authority has considered its performance in this area in its APR. The Park Authority has reviewed these decisions at Committee, and reports these were all decisions to approve contrary to officer advice and were, in the view of the authority, were finely balanced in terms of LDP policy. This reflective approach to Member overturns can be useful in identifying why Members have determined contrary to officer advice, and many LPAs report similar practices when considering overturns, particularly when applications which are refused contrary to officer advice are upheld at appeal.

Some LPAs maintain low percentages of decisions contrary to officer advice with a relatively high proportion of applications being determined by committee. For example, Wrexham CBC determined one third of all applications at Planning Committee in the reporting period, with only 4.3% of Committee decisions made contrary to advice. The Council concludes in its APR, however, that changes are required to its delegation arrangements to enable more swift decision making.

The small number of applications determined by committee can make performance significantly fluctuate in this indicator. For example, Brecon Beacons determined no applications contrary to officer advice, but only one decision contrary to advice would have changed the Park Authority’s performance from 0% to 7.7%.

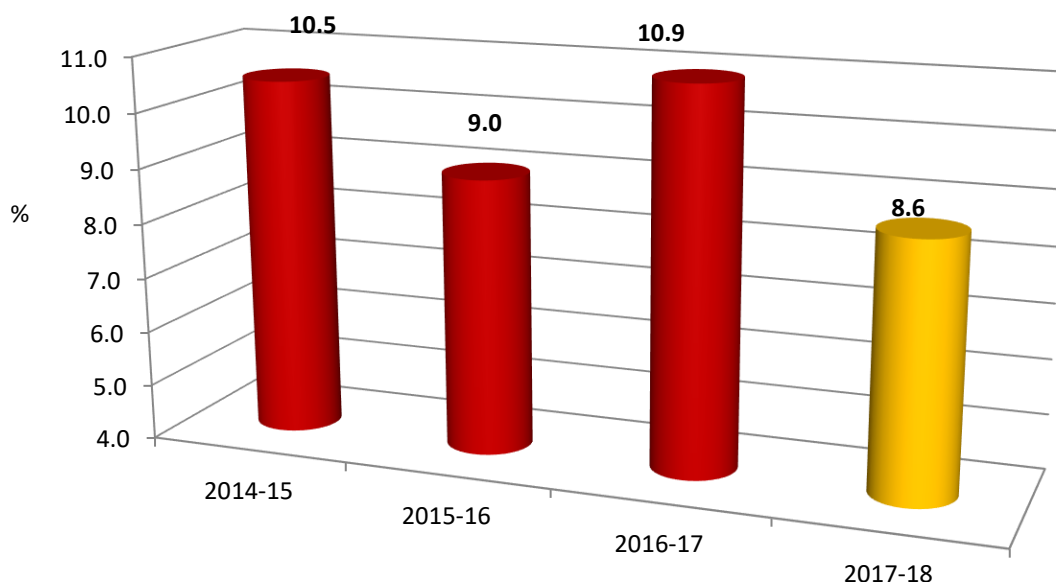


Fig 26 – Year-on-year comparison of percentage of Member decisions made contrary to officer advice

Figure 26 illustrates all-Wales performance year-on-year against this indicator, with performance colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good” accordingly. Planning Committees will normally consider larger, more complex or more sensitive applications, with smaller applications to be decided under delegated powers. This directs the time and the effort of the Planning Committee to cases most meriting attention. It follows that if less, but more contentious, applications are to be determined by Committees then those applications are more likely to be determined contrary to officer recommendation.

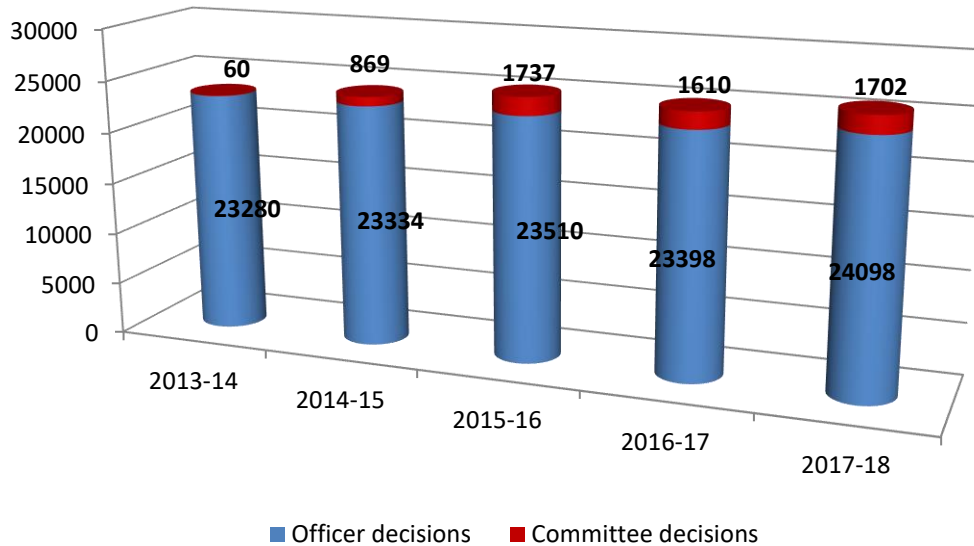


Fig 27 – Number of decisions made at Planning Committee

Figure 27 shows that the number of decisions being made by Planning Committee has remained consistent for the last 3 years. There are one or two LPAs which determine a high proportion of applications at Committee, although these authorities (such as Wrexham CBC) have already identified this as an area for improvement at a local level.

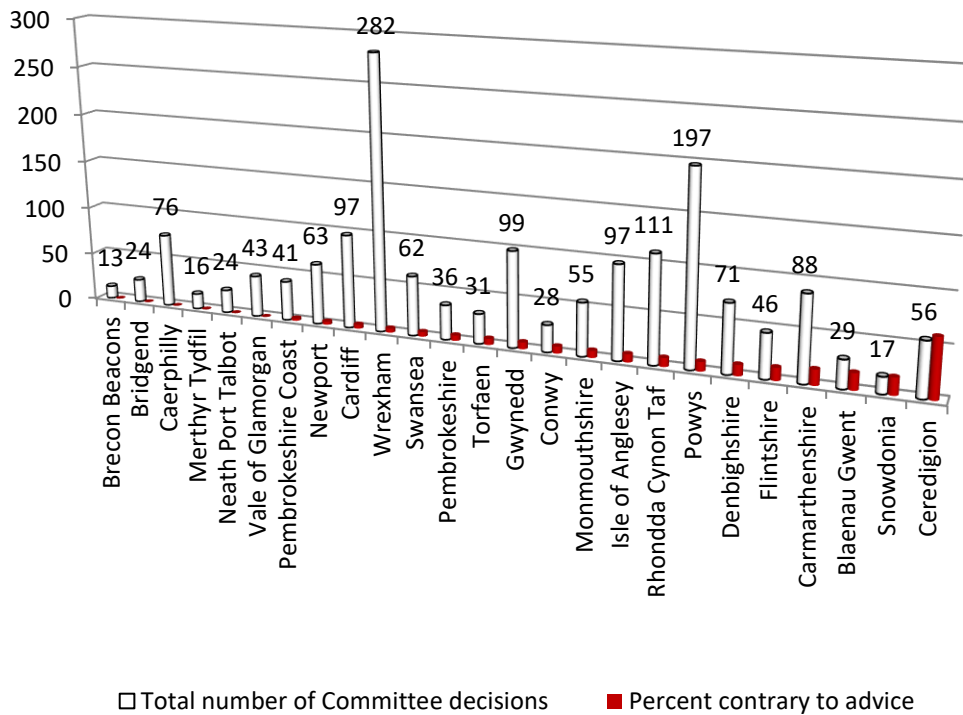


Fig 28 – Number of planning applications determined contrary to officer advice compared against total number of Committee decisions

Fig 28 above compares the number of overturn decisions to the overall number of Committee decisions. The LPA with the highest number of overturns also determines a relatively low number of decisions at Committee, and those LPAs with a higher proportion of decisions made by Committee, such as Wrexham CBC, do not show an equally high proportion of overturns.

As with previous years, no direct link can be drawn between the number of committee-made (or delegated) decisions and the likelihood of those decisions being overturned. Rather, some LPAs are simply more prone to overruling the advice of their officers. The propensity of Committees to determine contrary to officer advice indicates movement away from the policies set out in an adopted development plan by the respective Members, and undermines the integrity of the plan-led system.

As delegations scheme change, however, fewer applications will go to Committee. In such circumstances the performance targets for this indicator may need to change.

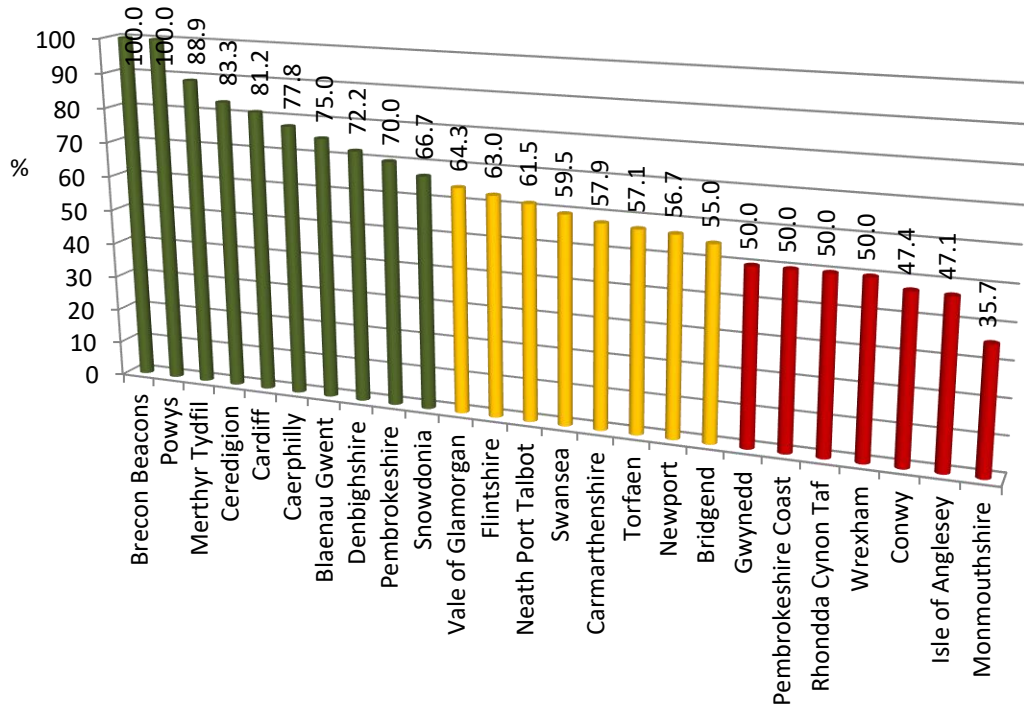


Fig 29 – Percentage of planning appeals dismissed

The chart at Figure 29 shows the comparative performance at appeal of each LPA, with performance colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good” accordingly. The average across Wales for the reporting period sits just below the “good” performance banding. As with previous years, and the previous indicator, it is accepted a small sample size may significantly skew the performance reported by some smaller LPAs.

Only two of those LPAs achieving an “improve” standard of performance were able to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land. This illustrates the vulnerability at appeal of refusals of planning permission for residential development in the absence of a housing land supply of at least 5 years.

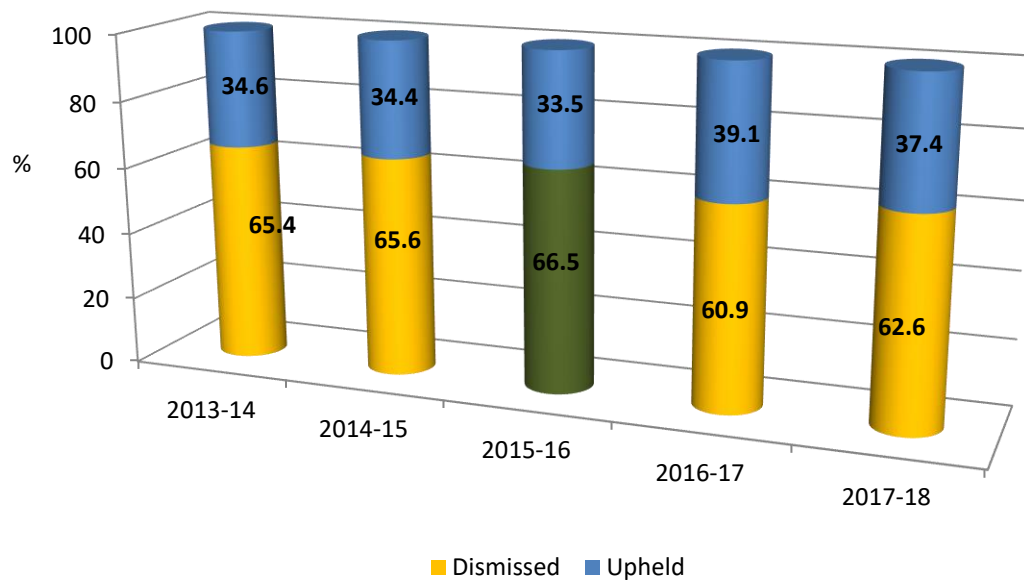


Fig 30 – Year-on-year comparison of percentage of planning appeals dismissed

Figure 30 shows all-Wales performance for this indicator, which is colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good” accordingly. It shows in total, 315 of 503 appeals (62.6%) were dismissed in 2017/18, which is a slight improvement on performance from the previous year, as a slightly higher percentage of appeals were dismissed, although the year-on-year trend is stable.

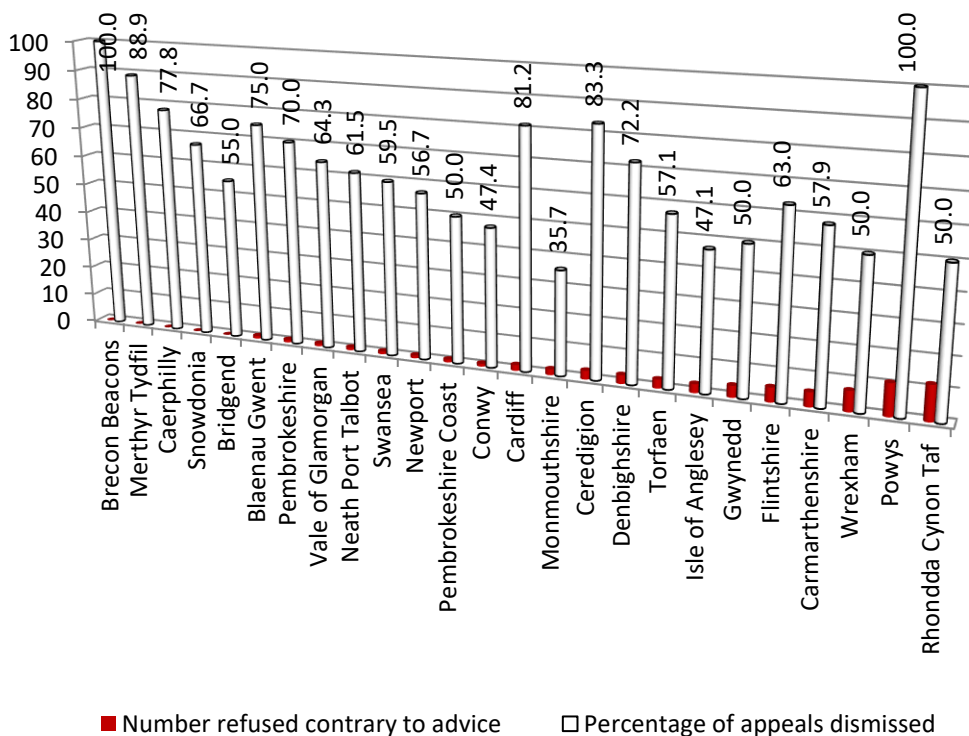


Fig 31 – Comparison of refusal overturns and appeals dismissed

As with previous APRs, we have compared the number of planning decisions where permission was refused contrary to officer advice, with the overall success rate at appeal. Whilst there are some LPAs which buck the trend (such as Powys CC), typically LPAs

which refuse consent contrary to officer advice do not fare well in performance against this indicator.

Members are entitled to determine applications contrary to the advice of their officers, although when doing so they should set out clear planning reasons for this, as failure to do so increases the vulnerability of such decisions at appeal.

Several LPAs have reported that they review appeal decisions, in order to help Members understand the outcome of overturn decisions and to prevent their authority from having decisions overturned at appeal in future cases.

Indicator 11 - Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period

0 (17 out of 25 LPAs)

During an appeal, both the appellant and the relevant authority have the opportunity to seek to recover costs for the appeal process if they believe the other party has acted unreasonably. The costs cover the work and effort required for the appeal to be considered – this can include the time and costs required for officers or agents to give evidence.

The award of costs against an LPA is a judgement by the Planning Inspector that the LPA has not just refused permission without good planning grounds, but has also been unreasonable in doing so.

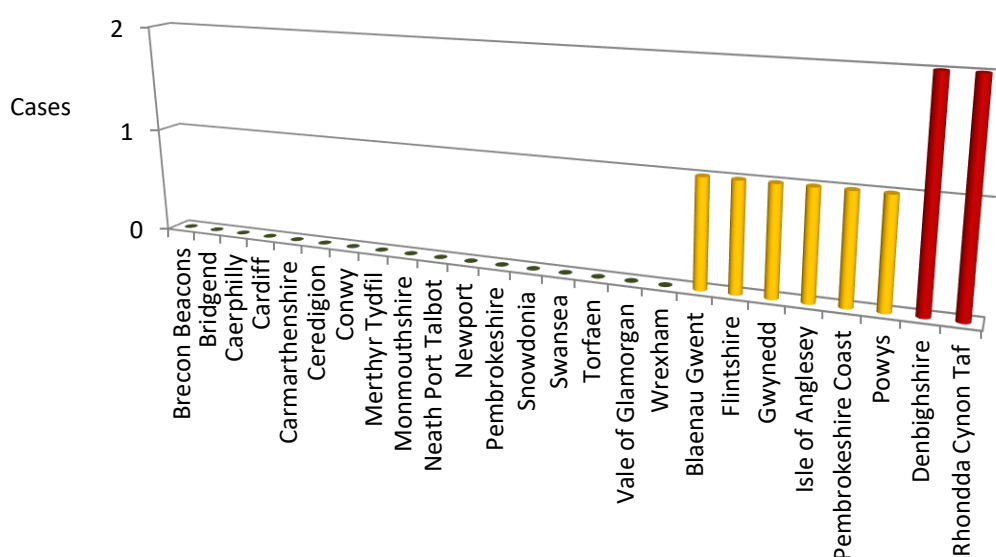


Fig 32 – Number of cases where costs have been awarded against the Local Planning Authority at appeal

Fig 32 above illustrates costs were awarded against LPAs in 10 cases. Two authorities were subject to award of costs in two cases, which makes those authorities fall within the “improve” banding.

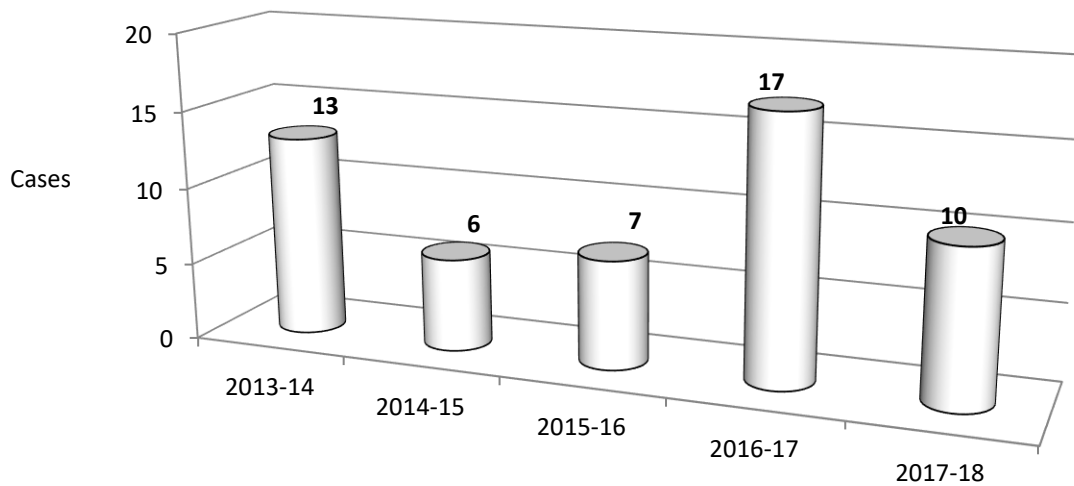


Fig 33 – Year-on-year comparison of number of cases where costs have been awarded against the Local Planning Authority at appeal

Several LPAs report that they conduct reviews of appeals which are the consequence of Member refusals. Previous years' APRs have indicated this is helpful in ensuring there are defensible planning grounds for future member refusals. Members must consider the likelihood of costs being awarded against the LPA, particularly given the pressure created by the current financial climate, when refusing applications contrary to officer advice.

SECTION 4 – ENGAGEMENT

Indicator 12 - Does the local planning authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee? **Yes (24 out of 25 LPAs)**

The general objective of the planning system is to make decisions on land use in the wider public interest. Fundamental to this is the principle of openness, transparency and accountability of the decision maker. Communities feel such decisions are representative of their views and aspirations when those communities are involved in the decisions, and providing members of the community with the opportunity to directly address Committee Members when they are about to decide upon a planning applications ensures communities understand their views are being taken into account.

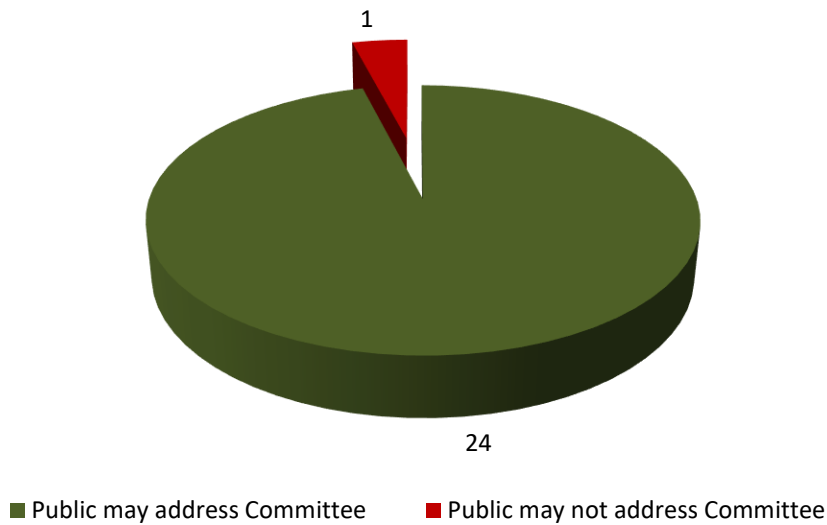


Fig 34 – number of Local Planning Authorities permitting members of the public to address Planning Committee

Since 2015, Merthyr Tydfil CBC remains the only LPA in Wales which does not provide the opportunity to allow members of the public to address Planning Committee. The Council has considered whether or not to introduce this opportunity and reports in its most recent APR that whilst the previous administration had considered introducing such a practice, the new Council administration, elected in 2017, has no desire to introduce this practice. Consequently Merthyr Tydfil CBC is likely to remain the only LPA which fails to provide public speaking rights at Committee.

Indicator 13 - Does the local planning authority have an officer on duty to provide advice to members of the public?

Yes
(22 out of 25 LPA's)

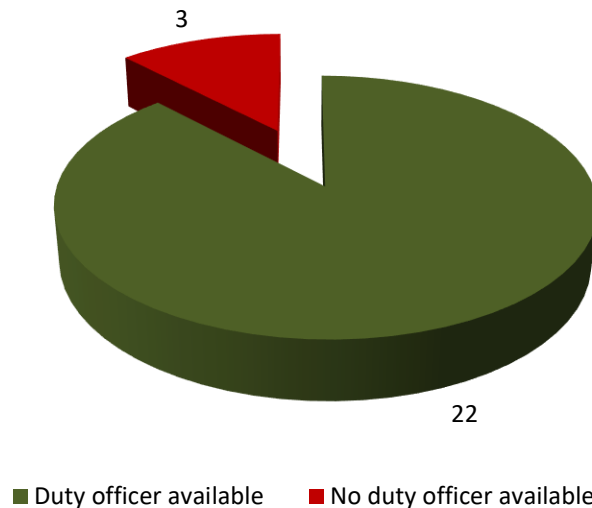


Fig 35 – Year-on-year comparison of number of authorities which provide a “duty officer” service

Figure 35 indicates three LPAs do not provide a “duty officer” service (Bridgend CBC, Ceredigion CC and Gwynedd CC). This is the same as in the two previous reporting periods.

The Planning Officers Society for Wales undertakes a customer survey, to identify popular areas of customer service and opportunities for improvement. “Access to a planning officer” is frequently cited as one of the most well liked service aspects offered by LPAs in these surveys.

It is interesting that Bridgend CBC still scores favourably in this regard. The Council reports in its APR that its charged pre-application service is well established and well used, and this accounts for its good customer feedback. It is positive to see that the Council’s pre-application service is well used, and also that some element of the cost of this service is being recovered from the beneficiary of the pre-application advice provided.

Indicator 14 - Does the local planning authority have an online register of planning applications?

Yes (23 out of 25 LPAs)

The ability to access planning applications and supporting documents on the internet increases opportunities for participation in the decision making process, particularly amongst those who are unable to attend LPA offices, due to access, travel or time commitments. Many LPAs make use of ICT systems which can publish planning application files and associated content directly to the authority's website.

During the reporting period, LPAs have prepared for the impact of the General Data Protection Regulation, which took effect just after the end of the reporting period, in May 2018. LPAs have reviewed the way in which information is shared online, and in particular the way in which third party representations are shared. Some LPAs have changed long-standing practices as a result, in order to ensure their own compliance with the Regulation.

Welsh Government has received some negative feedback from members of the public who feel disappointed that their LPA has chosen not to share their third party representations on the authority's online planning register. Although there is no duty to publish third party representations on the public planning register, it is best practice to do so provided no personal information is disclosed, and each LPA must fulfil its own obligations with regard to disclosure of personal information.

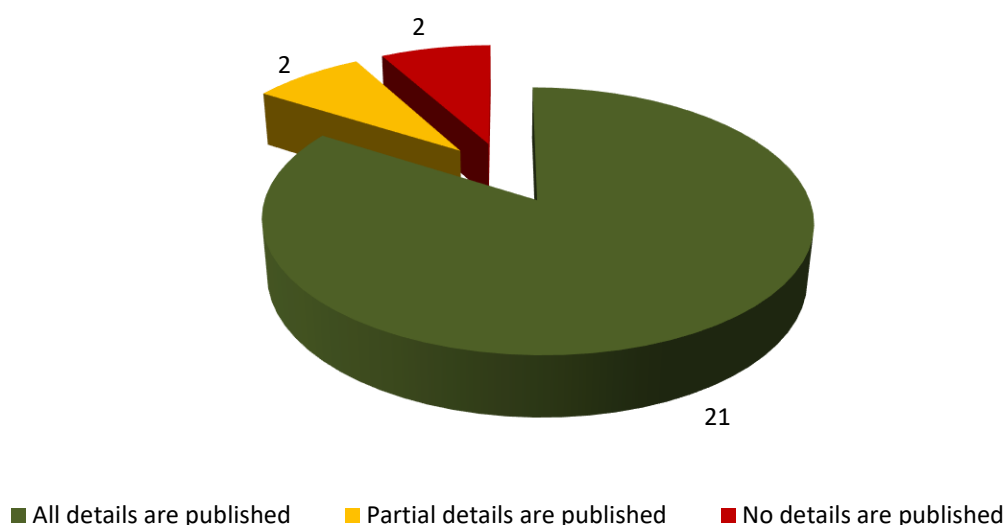


Fig 36 – number of Local Planning Authorities offering full, partial, or no planning application details on their web site

Figure 36 shows 21 LPAs provide full access to planning application files on their web site. Of the remaining 4, 2 (Ceredigion CC and Pembrokeshire Coast NPA) provide some level of planning application information and 2 (Blaenau Gwent CBC and Isle of Anglesey CC) provide no details.

There is no in-year change for performance against these standards in the reporting periods. All four LPAs, however, express an intention to purchase or upgrade ICT systems in the very near future.

Pembrokeshire Coast NPA anticipates its new document management system, which has been subject to some delays, will be live within the 2018 calendar year. This will enable residents to view applications and supporting documents online. Blaenau Gwent CBC is also in the process of renewing ICT infrastructure and plans to introduce a searchable web based service in 2019. Isle of Anglesey CC is also planning to introduce a new ICT system enabling online review of planning documents, in 2019.

SECTION 5 – ENFORCEMENT

Indicator 15 - Percentage of enforcement cases investigated within 84 days 80.6%

Third parties can expect alleged breaches of planning control to be investigated within a reasonable time frame. The target of 84 days, or 12 weeks, has been identified as reasonable time to respond to complaints.

Enforcement activity is not “fee earning”, in that where breaches of planning control occur, they are likely to cost an LPA in terms of staff resource and activity well beyond any potential fee from a retrospective application to regularise unlawful development. Enforcement of planning control is, however, fundamental to the planning system, in that without effective enforcement there would be no consequence for not securing planning permission.

LPAs must also strike a balance between using enforcement powers when it is expedient to do so, and being able to manage the expectations of communities who might wish for inconsequential breaches of control, which are acceptable in planning terms, to be enforced against. LPAs must also balance the demands for enforcement investigations against the broader work of development management teams.

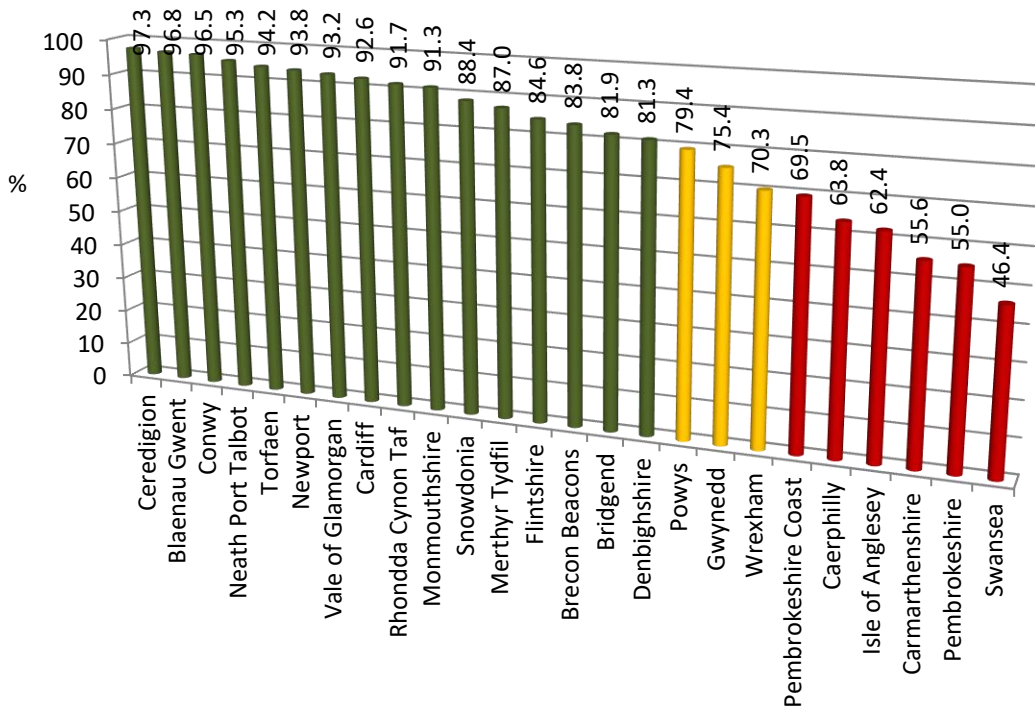


Fig 37 – percentage of enforcement complaints investigated within 84 days

Fig 37 above shows the individual performance of Local Planning Authorities against this indicator, which is colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good” accordingly. 16 LPAs comfortably meet the “good” performance banding. There are significant outliers in performance against this performance indicator.

Blaenau Gwent CBC has achieved excellent performance in this area despite having a small development management team. The Council undertook a review of its enforcement service within the reporting period, and has sought to change delegated powers to improve the way in which it handled enforcement matters. As a consequence of the review, the Council has appointed a “Member champion” for enforcement, and is also commencing work on a new enforcement policy.

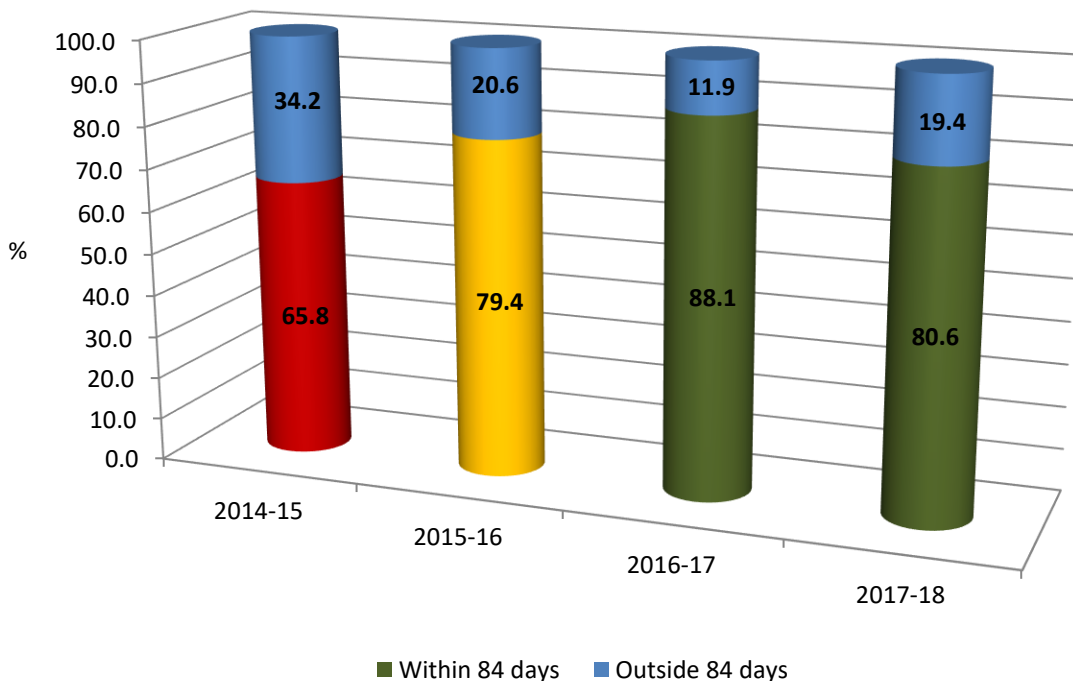


Fig 38 – Year-on-year comparison of the percentage of enforcement cases investigated within 84 days

Figure 38 shows all-Wales performance against this indicator, which is colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good” accordingly. It shows in the majority of cases (80.6%), complaints of breaches of planning control are investigated within the target date of 84 days. This is a slight performance drop compared to previous years, although the longer period trend is for improvement in this area. It is apparent from many APRs that resourcing pressures are directly affecting the delivery of enforcement services at a local level, although resourcing of planning departments is a local decision and each LPA must decide how to balance the service it provides.

In many cases, LPAs are either tasking enforcement officers to handle planning applications, or in some cases, doing away with enforcement teams and tasking enforcement activity to development management officers. For example, Swansea CC reports a backlog of challenging enforcement cases which has arisen as a consequence of historic under-resourcing. The Council is now working hard to overcome the backlog.

Indicator 18 - Average time taken to take positive enforcement action

184.6 days

This indicator shows the average time taken for Local Planning Authorities to take positive enforcement action to resolve enforcement complaints, as described in Indicator 17. This indicator only measures cases where action is taken to resolve a breach of control, and excludes cases where an LPA concludes no breach has occurred, or enforcement is not expedient.

The indicator is designed to capture an LPA's activity – for example, the “average time taken to resolve” measures time to bring a prosecution up to the point at which the case is first heard, as the time for the case to be determined by the court is beyond the LPA's control.

This indicator serves to illustrate the challenges LPAs face when pursuing enforcement action, and in particular the resources and time investment required to regularise development once a breach is confirmed.

Welsh Government introduced a new definition for this indicator at the request of the Planning Officers Society for Wales in order to ensure enforcement performance was measured only by those aspects of the service which are within LPA control. We understand, however, that there has been some variation in the way in which the indicator was interpreted. This is reflected in the commentary by some LPAs in their own APRs.

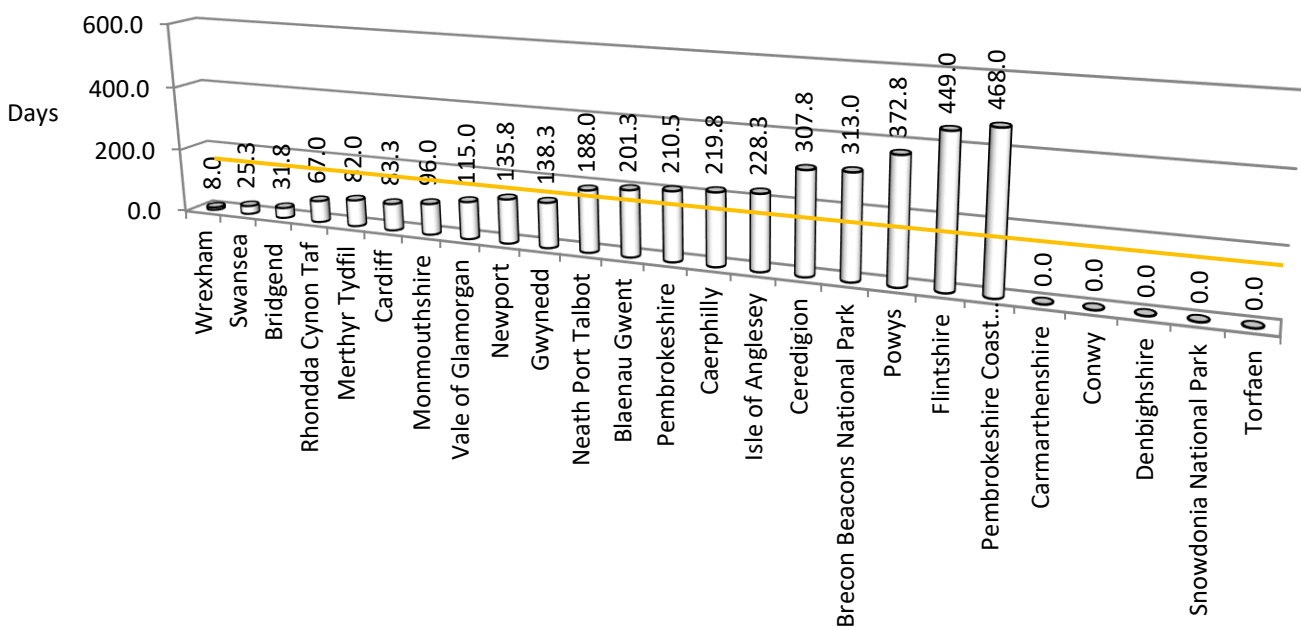


Fig 39 – Average time taken to resolve enforcement cases

Figure 39 above shows the average time taken by each LPA to pursue positive enforcement action. As this indicator has been recently redefined, performance targets

have not yet been agreed with stakeholders. Five LPAs failed to provide performance data during the reporting period. Whilst the definition of the indicator has changed within the reporting period, we consider there are some outliers which can be identified.

Pembrokeshire Coast NPA has worked to clear a large backlog of historic enforcement cases, which it accepts has skewed its reported performance, but considers will have a longer term positive impact on the delivery of planning services.

There is considerable variation in the time reported to pursue positive enforcement action and we are aware of ongoing uncertainty about the interpretation of this indicator. An enhanced definition was provided for this indicator in July 2018, which we consider will ensure more consistent reporting in future. As this is the first year in which the indicator has been measured in this way, we will need to consider future trend before coming to a conclusion on the operation of current enforcement procedures.

4 – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on public bodies, including Welsh Ministers, to carry out sustainable development. The Act defines sustainable development as:

“Sustainable development” means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.

Acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle means a body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The planning system is key to the implementation of sustainable development in Wales. It enables the legislative and policy framework for the use, management and development of land in the public interest. It is also a key mechanism to implement the National Strategy, “Prosperity for All”.

A new version of Planning Policy Wales was published in December 2018. This has introduced placemaking in to national planning policy and sets the creation of sustainable places as the goal of the planning system.

The Welsh Government operates a suite of seven key indicators designed to identify how the planning system contributes to the achievement of strategic sustainable development in Wales. They are:

- SD1 Economic Renewal - Economic Development
- SD2 A Low Carbon Economy - Renewable Energy
- SD3 Access to Better Homes – New Homes (including affordable housing)
- SD4 Resilience to Climate Change – Flood Risk
- SD5 Efficient Land Use – Previously Developed Land
- SD6 Open Space – Open Space Lost/Gained
- SD7 Community Infrastructure – Contributions Secured for Community Facilities

The information is collected from local planning authorities following their consideration of planning applications and submitted on an annual basis. This is used for cumulative, rather than comparative, analysis.

Provision of the data is necessary to demonstrate the significant role the planning system plays in helping to deliver a range of sustainable development outcomes and the value of planning to society more generally.

The following local planning authorities submitted complete data in the reporting period:

- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- Bridgend County Borough Council
- Cardiff City Council
- Caerphilly County Borough Council

- Ceredigion County Council
- Conwy County Borough Council
- Denbighshire County Council
- Gwynedd County Council
- Isle of Anglesey County Council
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
- Monmouthshire County Council
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
- Newport County Borough Council
- Powys County Council
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Snowdonia National Park Authority
- Torfaen County Borough Council
- Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council
- Wrexham County Borough Council

The following local planning authorities submitted partial records in the reporting period:

- Carmarthenshire County Council
- Flintshire County Council
- Pembrokeshire County Council
- Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

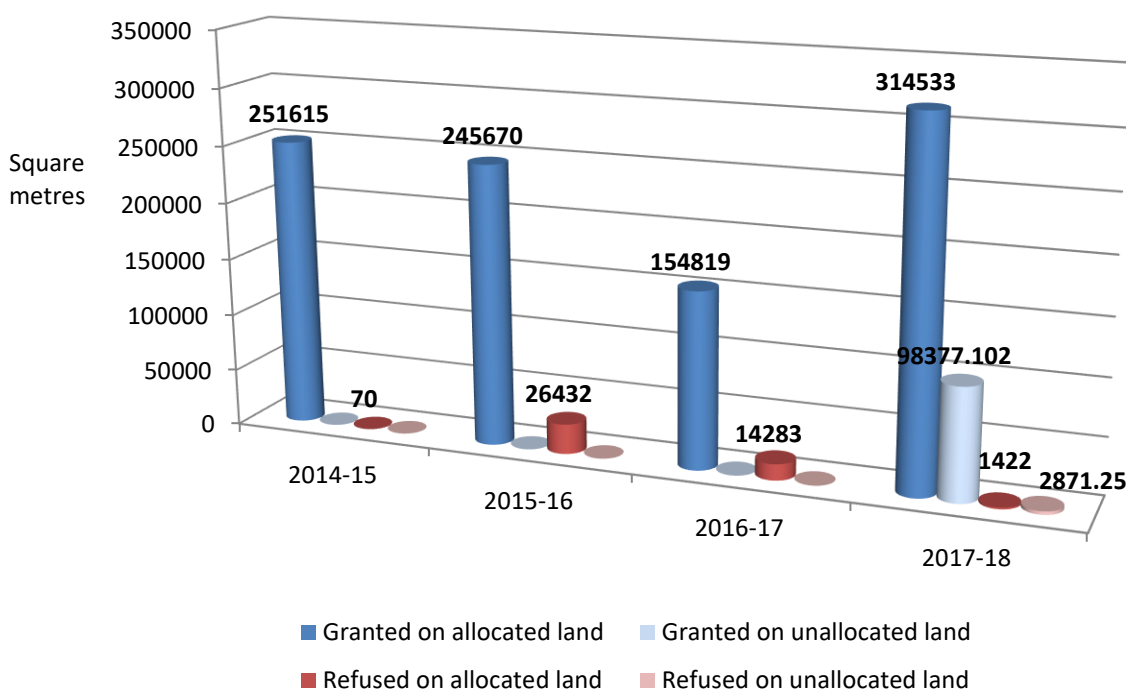
The following local planning authority did not provide data within the reporting period:

- City and County of Swansea

We continue to work towards full coverage of these important datasets, which demonstrate how the planning system can help us move towards a more sustainable Wales.

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

**412,910 sqm approved,
4,293 sqm refused**



The planning system should encourage and support development which contributes to economic prosperity and regeneration. Development should be steered to the most appropriate locations and not be constrained by a shortage of land. This indicator provides information on the contribution the planning system is making to delivering traditional economic (or employment) development. This is the first year data has been collected for developments on both allocated and un-allocated employment sites.

Over the 2017/18 period, 314,533 square metres (sqm) of floorspace was granted planning permission on allocated employment sites whilst a further 167,510sqm was granted on unallocated sites. The figure for allocated sites is a 103% increase on last year's returns, when 154,819sqm of new floorspace was granted planning permission. This is a turn around in new floorspace granted on allocated sites, which had been showing signs of decline between 2014/15 and 2016/17.

Floorspace Granted Planning Permission on Allocated Employment Sites

This year, the business sector contributed 23% of the employment floorspace granted; as a proportion of total floorspace granted this has dropped from 52% in 2016/17 to 23%. However, in terms of actual floorspace granted, this is only slightly less at 74,986sqm compared with 81,915sqm in 2016/17. Results from the last two years indicate some stability in the business market in relation to previous years where, for example, in 2014/15 69,068sqm (or 27% of total employment development) was granted. However, 2015/16

experienced a significant fall in floorspace when only 14,390sqm (6% of total employment development) was granted.

General industry is the smallest contributor to the total this year at 15%; this is an increase on last year's figure of 9%. However, in terms of actual floorspace granted, this year has seen a 315% increase from 15,416sqm to 48,707sqm. This year floorspace granted is approximately half that experienced in 2014/15 and 2015/16, which totalled 92,264sqm and 93,748sqm respectively.

Storage and distribution was the second largest contributor to floorspace this year, making up 26% of the total, or 82,384sqm. This is a 125% increase over 2016/17 at 36,485sqm.

The largest contributor this year is multiple uses where 108,456sqm has been granted. In 2016/17 multiple uses totalled only 21,008sqm, indicating a 5 fold increase in the last 12 months. However, with the exception of last year, the general trend for multiple uses has been upward with 62,520sqm and 76,908sqm in 2014/15 and 2015/16 respectively.

Floorspace Refused Planning Permission on Allocated Employment Sites

A total of 1422sqm of employment floorspace was refused planning permission this year compared to 14,283sqm in 2016/17, a drop of 90%. This equates to only 0.5% of floorspace being refused. Over the 3 years between 2014/15 and 2016/17 refused floorspace was 0.1%, 8%, and 9%. General industry made up the largest market segment for refusals this year at 75% or 1075sqm, followed by business and storage and distribution, no multiple uses were refused. Last year business made up the majority of refusals at 92% or 13,153sqm, whilst in 2015/16 all refusals fell under storage and distribution (of the 26,432sqm refused, 26,000sqm was located in Neath Port Talbot). There have been no observable patterns in refusals over the last 4 years, other than multiple uses which have had no refusals over the period.

Floorspace Granted Planning Permission on Un-allocated Employment Sites

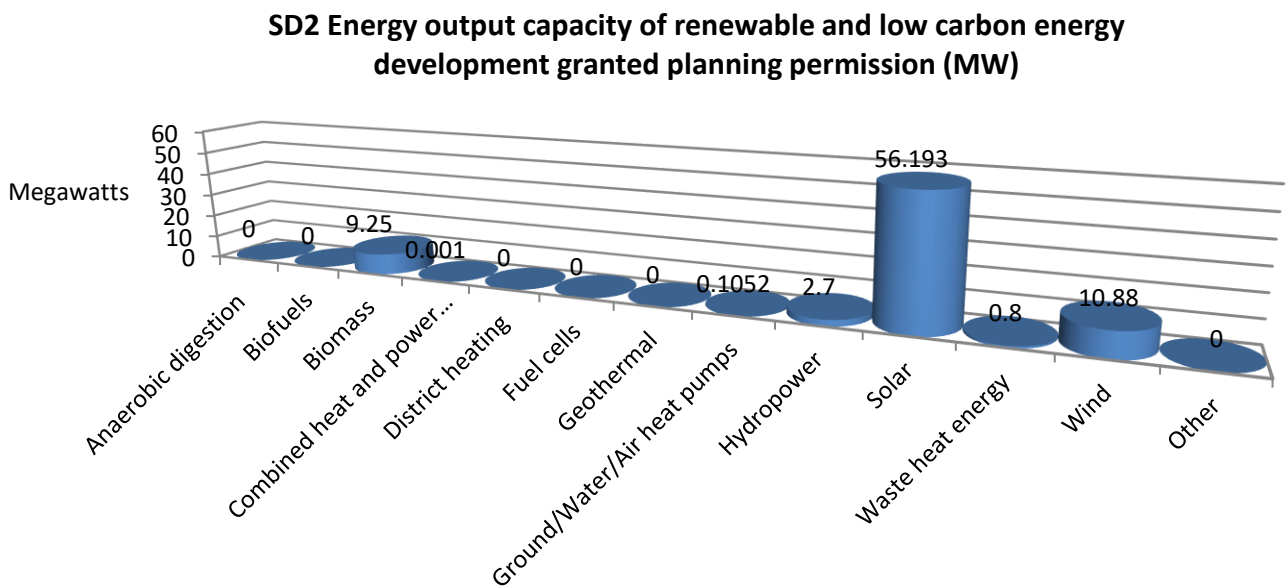
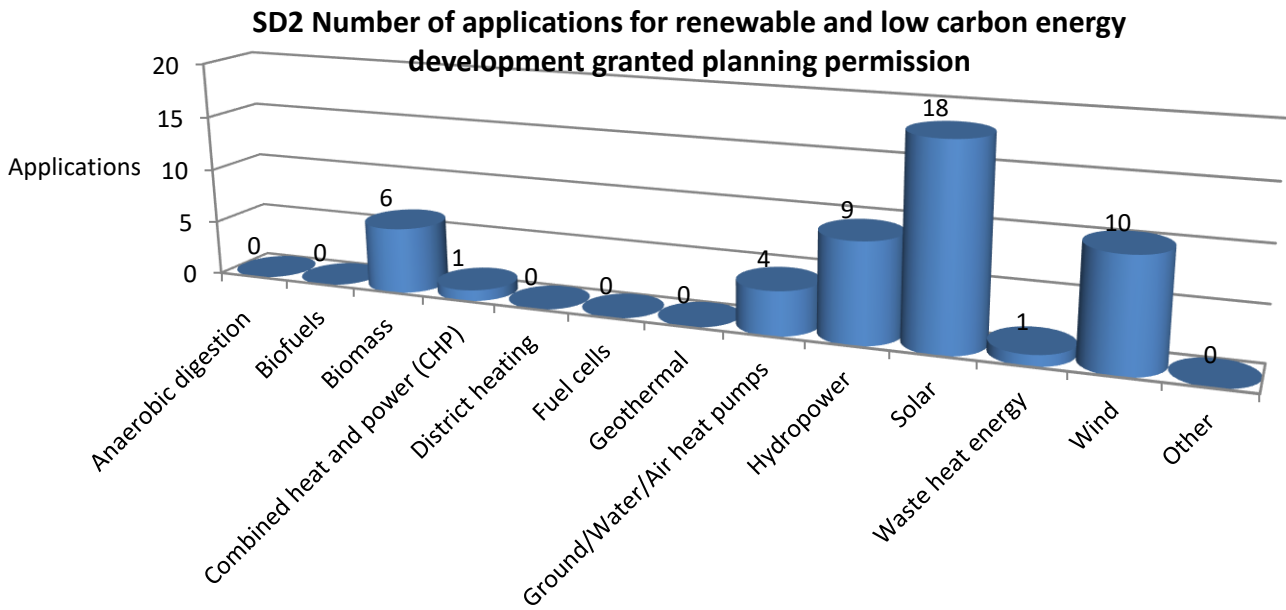
Multiple uses made up the largest proportion of employment floorspace granted over 2017/18 at 39% or 65,536sqm. Multiple uses was followed by storage and distribution at 29% (48,001sqm), general industry 17% (28,037sqm) and business 15% (25,936sqm). Floorspace granted permission on un-allocated sites made up 34% of all employment floorspace granted.

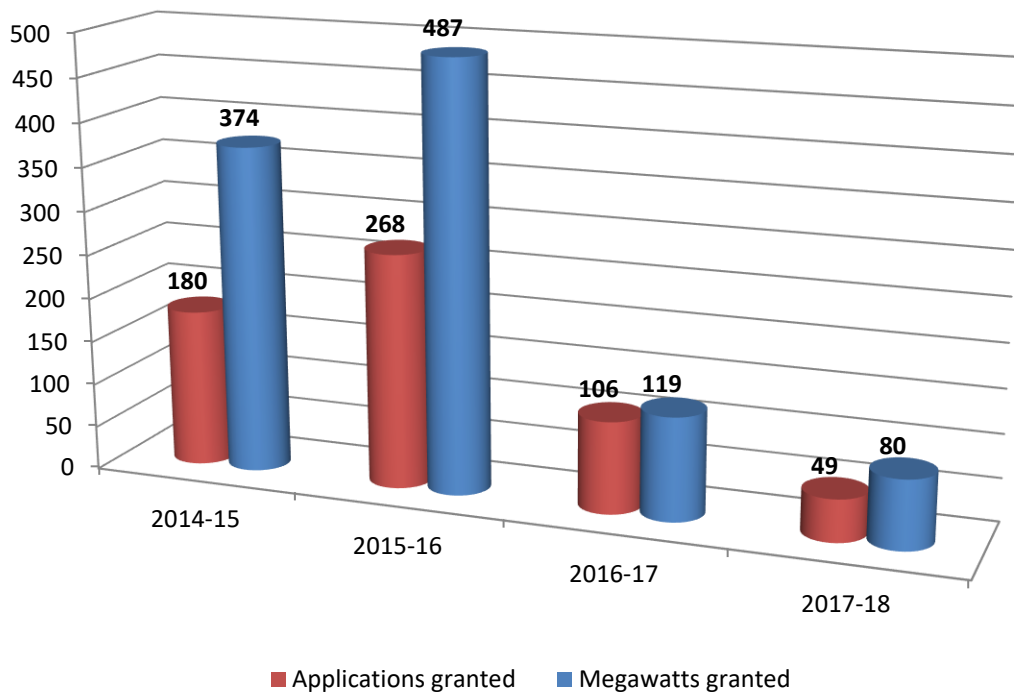
Floorspace Refused Planning Permission on Un-allocated Employment Sites

A total of 3171sqm of employment floorspace was refused planning permission in the period 2017-18. General industry made up the largest proportion of this figure at 76% or 2405sqm. General industry was followed by multiple uses 9% (300sqm), storage and distribution 7% (237sqm), and then business 7% (229sqm). Floorspace refused permission on un-allocated sites made up 69% of all employment floorspace refused.

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

**49 applications,
112 Megawatts**





The planning system can facilitate renewable and low carbon energy generation. This indicator tells us the contribution the planning system is making to delivering renewable and low carbon energy generation and moving towards a low carbon economy.

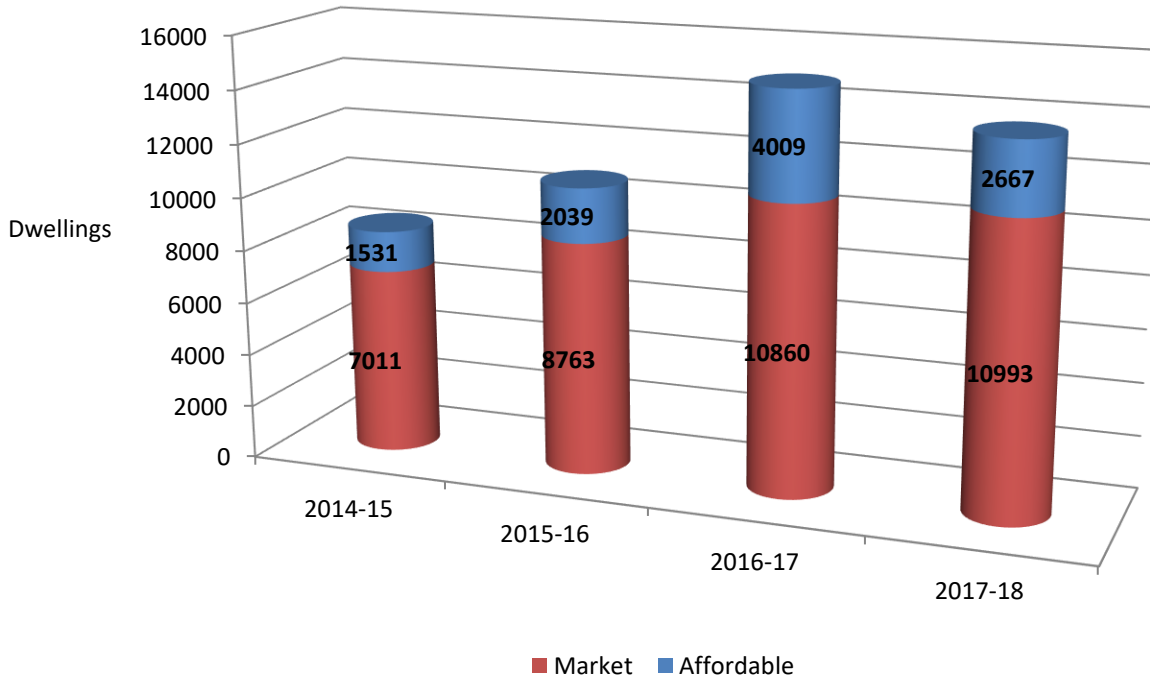
The data shows the planning system is facilitating a mix of renewable and low carbon energy development. However, since 2015/16 there has been a significant reduction in the number of approvals and the energy generating capacity of those schemes. The drop in permissions is likely to be as a result of UK Government cuts to the renewable energy subsidy regime. In 2015/16, there was a peak in permissions, which was likely to have been as a result of developers seeking to obtain planning permission prior to the subsidy changes coming into force. The data for 2016/17 and 2017/18 shows there has been a subsequent drop since the subsidy changes.

This year, the technologies with the greatest number of approvals are solar, wind, hydropower and biomass. Solar energy schemes are contributing by far the greatest energy capacity.

Overall, the data shows there is a slowing down of renewable energy and low carbon schemes being brought forward and obtaining consent in Wales. The Welsh Government is committed to increasing renewable energy and has set a target for Wales to generate 70% of its electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030. To facilitate this we have made changes to Planning Policy Wales to further strengthen our positive planning policy on renewable and low carbon energy. We are also preparing the National Development Framework, which will be informed by research assessing the potential for on-shore wind and solar energy development in Wales.

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

**10,993 market,
2,667 affordable**

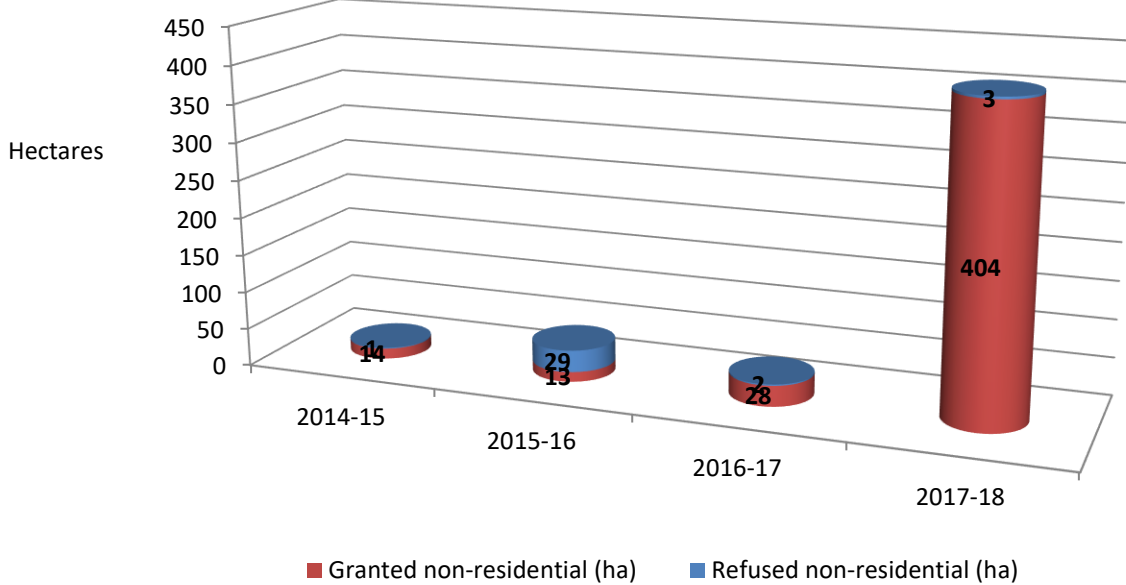
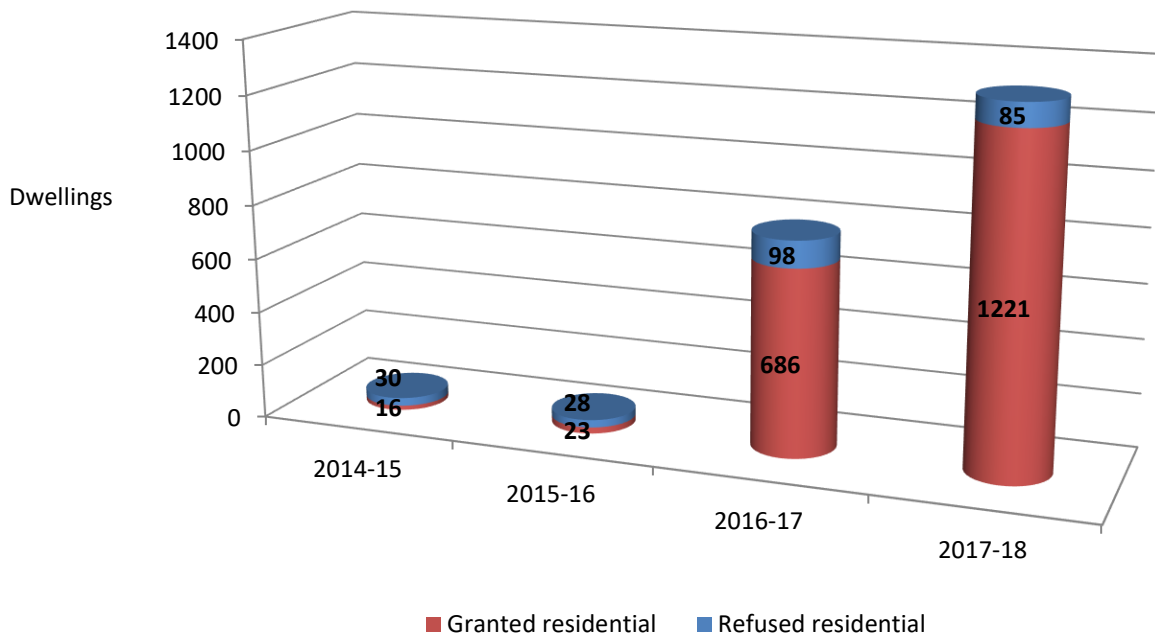


The planning system facilitates the provision of market and affordable housing to meet the local housing requirements identified by local planning authorities in their development plans. This indicator provides information on the contribution of the planning system to delivering new housing in the form of planning permissions granted for market and affordable housing. As such, this indicator is not comparable with the Welsh Government statistics on 'Affordable Housing Provision' and 'New house building', both of which primarily collect data on housing completions.

The data shows that 13,660 dwellings have been granted planning permission in 2017/18, a decrease of 1,209 compared with the data for the previous year. Although this is an overall decrease on the figure for 2016/17, there has been a small increase in the number of market homes granted planning permission (up from 10,860 to 10,993). The overall decrease is the result of fewer affordable homes (as defined in Technical Advice Note 2: Planning and Affordable Housing) being granted planning permission, down by 1,342 homes compared with the previous year. The affordable housing permissions for 2017/18 represent 20% of the total number of dwellings granted planning permission, a decrease of 7% compared with last year's data.

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

1,221 dwellings and 404 hectares approved, 85 dwellings and 3 hectares refused



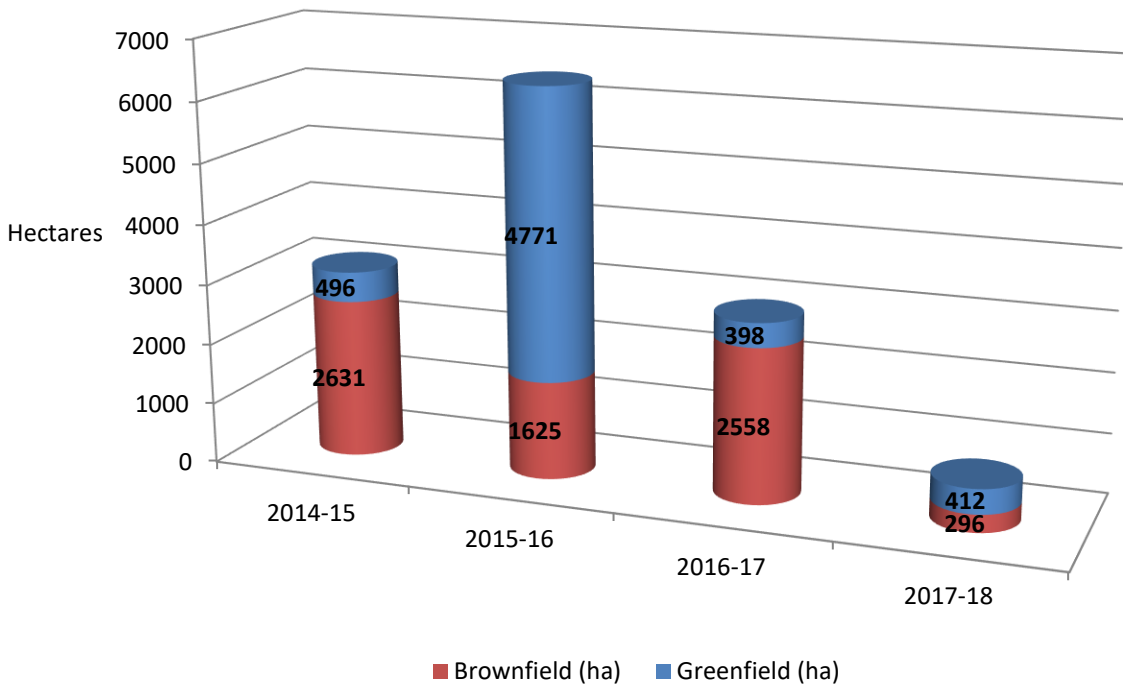
The planning system has an important role in ensuring new development is located in such a way the threat of flooding is minimised; accordingly national planning policy seeks to guide development to locations at little or no risk from flooding. This indicator provides information on how planning applications for development in flood risk areas are being managed. This year's results again show a concerning willingness by local planning authorities to grant planning permission for residential development in areas at risk of flooding.

Results in 2016/17 showed a marked increase in the number of new homes allowed in undefended areas at risk of flooding from what had been a consistently low number in the preceding years. This has continued in 2017/18 with 1221 new dwellings approved in areas at risk of flooding. Of these, 263 new homes were approved in the C2 flood zone, which are areas without significant protection from flood risk. A further 958 homes were approved in the C1 flood zone, where land benefits from a degree of protection from flood risk. The combined returns for 2016/17 and 2017/18 are a cause for concern, therefore local planning authorities will be required in future to provide more details in relation to approved applications in the C2 flood zone. A review of national planning policy on the issue is also underway.

Most types of non-residential developments are classed as less vulnerable to flooding, and national policy therefore has a more permissive approach, subject to certain tests and conditions being met. Just over 400 hectares of land was approved for non-residential development in flood zone C.

SD5. The area of land (ha) granted planning permission for new development on previously developed land and greenfield land during the year.

296 (previously developed)
412 (greenfield)



The planning system can ensure, wherever possible, previously developed land is used in preference to greenfield sites, particularly those of high agricultural or ecological value. This indicator tells us whether the planning system is directing new development to previously developed land.

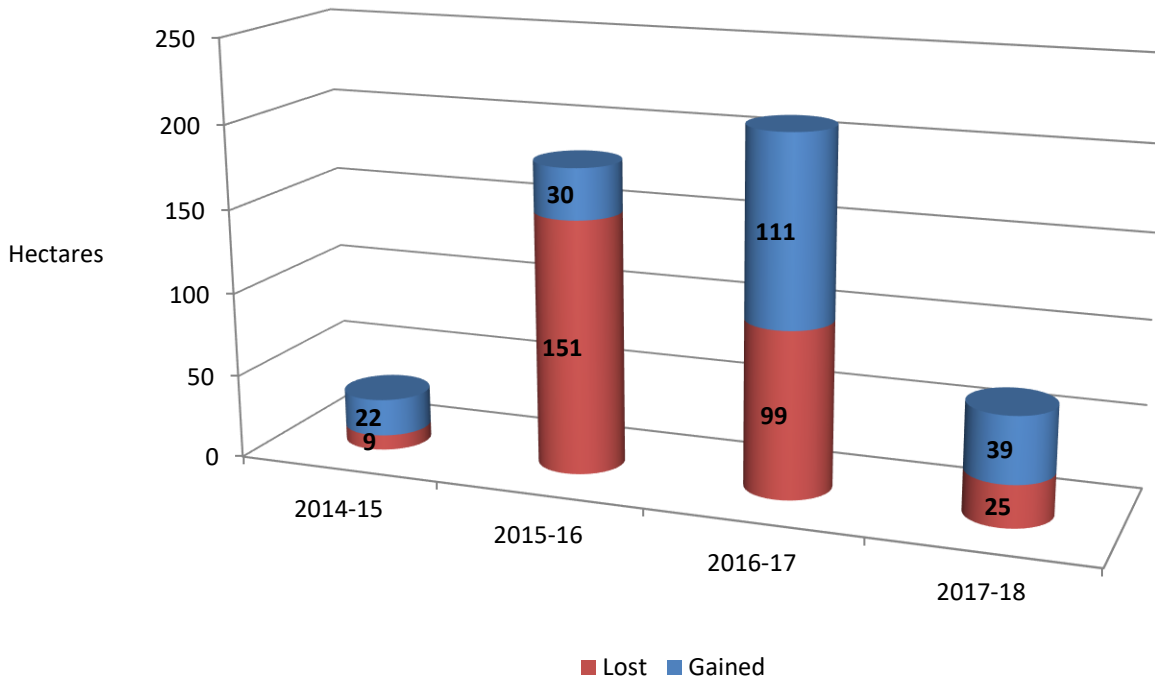
This year, from the data provided, 42% of new development was approved on previously developed land. The data also shows that the overall area of land granted planning permission is significantly lower than previous years. The data shows how the planning system is directing new development to previously developed land, but also shows that this is not always possible and development is also being allowed on greenfield land.

A site search sequence has recently been introduced to Planning Policy Wales, which requires planning authorities to consider previously developed land (and/or underutilised sites located within existing settlements) in the first instance when developing their spatial strategy. We will use the Sustainable Development Indicators to monitor the implementation of this policy.

Planning authorities have raised concern that this indicator includes developments which, by nature, need to be located on greenfield sites. In response to this, we have agreed to exclude development in relation to agriculture, forestry and equestrian activities.

SD6. The area of public open space (ha) which would be lost and gained as a result of development granted planning permission during the year.

25 ha lost
39 ha gained

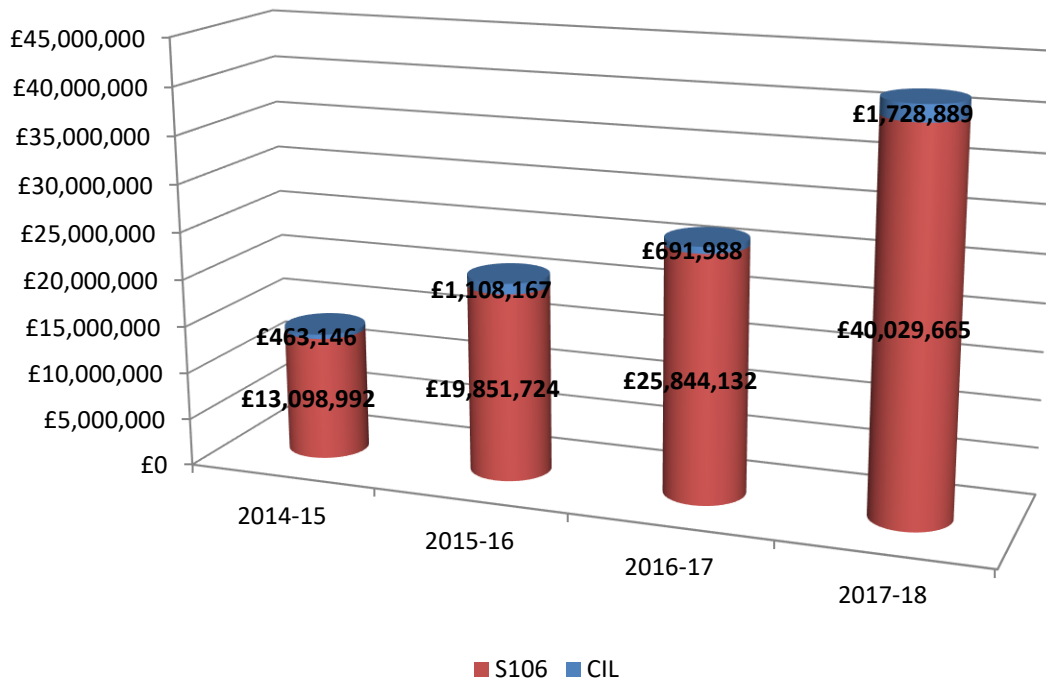


Open spaces provide recreational, amenity and environmental value as well as having a role in climate protection and adaptation to the impacts of climate change. This indicator measures how the planning system is protecting existing, and facilitating the provision of new, open spaces.

The data shows more open space gained than was lost during the year. The figures come on the back of a marked improvement in 2016/17 compared with previous years. Planning policy states open space should only be lost where it is replaced by an equivalent or better quality facility, or where there is no longer a need for the space. This is reflected in the APR responses, which highlight, where open space has been lost, it has enabled an improvement in facilities elsewhere.

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

**£40,029,665
(Section 106)
£1,728,889
(CIL)**



Financial contributions can be used to fund the provision of community infrastructure required to support sustainable development. This indicator measures the level of financial contributions agreed for the provision of community infrastructure.

The data shows the local planning authorities who have provided returns have secured a significant amount of financial contributions to fund community infrastructure, primarily through Section 106 Agreements.

In comparison to last year's data, there has been an increase of £14,185,533 in Section 106 Agreements and a £1,036,901 increase in the collection of CIL contributions. Overall, there has been an increase of £15,222,434 in financial contributions. The average collection of Section 106 contributions per local authority is £1,601,187, with Newport (£11,750,557), Vale of Glamorgan (£8,109,965) and Cardiff (£7,153,881) the highest contributors. Five authorities (Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire Coast NPA, Snowdonia NPA and Swansea) reported no collections.

Only three authorities reported CIL contributions; Caerphilly (£1,567,131), Rhondda Cynon Taf (£134,758) and Merthyr Tydfil (£27,000). Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Conwy, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen are all looking to adopt a CIL charge, however, as yet, none have been adopted and implemented.

5 – CONCLUSION

The common message emerging from Annual Performance Reports in this performance cycle is one of creative approaches to tackle public sector austerity. Nearly all LPAs, and several statutory consultees, report on innovative approaches to either streamline service delivery, or to generate alternative income streams, in response to increasing budget pressures.

There is a considerable amount of activity taking place at local government level to maintain service standards. LPA officers have worked outside of their normal areas in order to maintain these service standards, with policy and enforcement officers in several authorities taking on development management caseloads and many LPAs reporting their officers are working “above and beyond” to deliver acceptable service levels. This commitment to service delivery in the face of austerity is commended.

The Royal Town Planning Institute’s research into the “Value of Planning” demonstrates the considerable inward investment generated by a plan-led system, enabling over £2.3 million of wealth generation in the 2016-17 period. Meanwhile, LPAs continue to face severe resource constraints, and have already exhausted most opportunities to make further savings, with considerable financial pressures remaining. If planning services continue to financially depend upon funding from local government to be maintained, then these are likely to increase. As a consequence, our work with POSW and WLGA to identify cost of delivering planning services will become an important evidence base for future work on planning fees and resourcing the planning system.

Some LPAs have done well to bring development plans to adoption in this climate, although those which adopted LDPs in previous years report downsizing in their development plan teams. Reducing forward planning teams underestimates the effort required to bring a development plan into fruition, and forward thinking LPAs have maintained their development plans teams in order to provide additional work to assist in implementing the plan, such as supplementary planning guidance, master plans, development briefs and working with estates colleagues to dispose of Council assets.

Others have started work to inform the preparation of a Strategic Development Plan, the new tier of plan introduced by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015. Vale of Glamorgan CBC is the interim responsible authority for the South East Wales SDP, and Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC is also leading on housing delivery issues in relation to the Cardiff City Deal.

Creative work has been developed at local levels to standardise and harmonise administrative and casework practices. The work by the 6 North Wales LPAs to streamline and standardise practices for built and natural heritage applications, which is part funded by Welsh Government, and includes standardising interfaces with Natural Resources Wales and Cadw. This is a particularly good example of work being led by some LPAs which might benefit all in Wales, and the North Wales LPAs are thanked for their efforts in this area.

There is scope to formalise some of this good work, and we will look for opportunities to do so by making suitable revisions to national policy and guidance, such as the development management manual, or the emerging development plans manual. We will also continue to work with stakeholders to fund and promote work to drive forward good practice in local service delivery.

PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK TABLE - JANUARY TO MARCH 2018																														
Version: 5																														
Date: 22/08/2018																														
MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE	WALES AVERAGE	Blaenau Gwent	Brecon Beacons National Park	Bridgend	Caerphilly	Cardiff	Cardiff	Carmarthenshire	Ceredigion	Conwy	Denbighshire	Flintshire	Gwynedd	Isle of Anglesey	Merthyr Tydfil	Monmouthshire	Neath Port Talbot	Newport	Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park	Powys	Rhondda Cynon Taf	Snowdonia National Park	Swansea	Torfaen	Vale of Glamorgan	Wrexham
Plan making																														
Is there a current Development Plan in place that is within the plan period?	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	<12	13-17	18+	67											34												57		111	
Annual Monitoring Reports produced following LDP adoption	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	No	Yes					Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes		No	Yes		Yes		
The local planning authority's current housing land supply in years	5+		<5	3.3	1.3	4.8	4.0	2.1	3.6	4.2	2.6	3.1	1.8	0.0	5.4	5.4	1.6	4.0	5.3	6.1	5.1	1.2	7.1	1.3	3.6	0.0	3.6	6.1	0.0	
Efficiency																														
Percentage of "major" applications determined within statutory time periods				20.0	0.0	76.9	15.0	16.7	14.1	12.5	0.0	5.0	7.1	75.0	20.0	5.9	50.0	25.0	38.5	18.2	35.7	14.3	8.1	21.9	0.0	24.1	14.3	5.0	25.0	
				106 of 531	0 of 5	10 of 13	3 of 20	3 of 18	10 of 71	3 of 24	0 of 10	1 of 20	1 of 14	18 of 24	5 of 25	1 of 17	4 of 8	3 of 12	5 of 13	4 of 22	5 of 14	1 of 7	6 of 74	7 of 32	0 of 1	7 of 29	2 of 14	1 of 20	6 of 24	
Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	60+	50.1-59.9	<50	67.4	100.0	92.3	35.0	50.0	74.6	25.0	20.0	65.0	57.1	95.8	52.0	41.2	100.0	83.3	69.2	63.6	42.9	85.7	78.4	65.6	100.0	72.4	64.3	75.0	91.7	
				358 of 531	5 of 5	12 of 13	7 of 20	9 of 18	53 of 71	6 of 24	2 of 10	13 of 20	8 of 14	23 of 24	13 of 25	7 of 17	8 of 8	10 of 12	9 of 13	14 of 22	6 of 14	6 of 7	58 of 74	21 of 32	1 of 1	21 of 29	9 of 14	15 of 20	22 of 24	
Average time taken to determine "major" applications in days				240.1	109.3	92.7	221.3	134.5	169.8	466.0	224.8	176.8	209.7	138.1	114.0	524.0	149.3	188.0	573.3	195.3	113.3	162.3	410.8	428.0	178.0	268.3	162.7	164.0	273.2	
Percentage of all applications determined within statutory time periods				70.9	66.4	86.5	73.8	80.1	72.4	61.9	61.5	79.8	76.4	71.4	73.2	61.4	84.8	63.1	87.7	62.7	91.0	67.4	34.4	76.4	74.7	86.1	64.3	68.1	62.0	
				17084 of 24098	204 of 307	511 of 591	728 of 987	737 of 920	1908 of 2636	842 of 1360	491 of 799	751 of 941	700 of 916	729 of 1021	646 of 883	544 of 886	274 of 323	676 of 1071	705 of 804	563 of 898	722 of 793	345 of 512	474 of 1379	875 of 1145	348 of 466	1650 of 1916	338 of 526	799 of 1173	524 of 845	
Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required	80+	70.1-79.9	<70	88.5	97.7	98.5	88.2	88.5	90.6	71.2	71.0	90.3	89.6	83.3	82.2	86.1	100.0	91.0	96.6	89.1	91.8	84.8	88.1	90.0	78.3	98.3	86.9	92.2	91.0	
				21338 of 24098	300 of 307	582 of 591	871 of 987	814 of 920	2388 of 2636	968 of 1360	567 of 799	850 of 941	821 of 916	851 of 1021	726 of 883	763 of 886	323 of 323	975 of 1071	777 of 804	800 of 898	728 of 793	434 of 512	1215 of 1379	1030 of 1145	365 of 466	1883 of 1916	457 of 526	1081 of 1173	769 of 845	
Average time taken to determine all applications in days	<67	67-111	112+	80.7	68.8	68.3	71.8	62.8	65.8	99.8	89.0	61.8	169.7	85.8	63.5	98.5	49.8	77.3	77.8	76.5	55.5	70.8	181.3	71.5	82.0	60.0	83.1	65.0	85.2	
Percentage of Listed Building Consent applications determined within time periods required				65.4	100.0	100.0	75.0	46.2	83.6	42.9	59.1	60.4	19.4	25.8	42.3	72.7	100.0	67.0	83.3	72.4	47.8	79.2	78.0	77.8	62.2	70.0	66.7	70.0	90.0	
				551 of 842	3 of 3	54 of 54	18 of 24	6 of 13	56 of 67	21 of 49	26 of 44	32 of 53	7 of 36	8 of 31	22 of 52	24 of 33	4 of 4	59 of 88	10 of 12	21 of 29	11 of 23	19 of 24	46 of 59	7 of 9	23 of 37	14 of 20	12 of 18	21 of 30	27 of 30	
Quality																														
Percentage of applications determined under delegated powers				92.9	90.6	97.8	97.6	91.7	96.3	93.5	93.0	97.0	92.2	95.5	88.8	89.1	95.0	94.9	97.0	93.0	95.5	92.0	85.7	90.3	96.4	96.8	94.1	96.3	66.6	
Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	<5	5-9	9+	8.6	17.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1	15.9	60.7	7.1	11.3	13.0	7.1	8.2	0.0	7.3	0.0	3.2	5.6	2.4	9.6	9.0	17.6	4.8	6.5	0.0	4.3	
				146 of 1702	5 of 29	0 of 13	0 of 24	0 of 76	4 of 97	14 of 88	34 of 56	2 of 28	8 of 71	6 of 46	7 of 99	8 of 97	0 of 16	4 of 55	0 of 24	2 of 63	2 of 36	1 of 41	19 of 197	10 of 111	3 of 17	3 of 62	2 of 31	0 of 43	12 of 282	
Percentage of appeals dismissed	66+	55.1-65.9	<55	62.6	75.0	100.0	55.0	77.8	81.2	57.9	83.3	47.4	72.2	63.0	50.0	47.1	88.9	35.7	61.5	56.7	70.0	50.0	100.0	50.0	66.7	59.5	57.1	64.3	50.0	
				315 of 503	3 of 4	5 of 5	11 of 20	7 of 9	56 of 69	11 of 19	5 of 6	9 of 19	13 of 18	17 of 27	3 of 6	8 of 17	8 of 9	5 of 14	8 of 13	17 of 30	7 of 10	3 of 6	12 of 12	17 of 34	4 of 6	47 of 79	12 of 21	9 of 14	18 of 36	
Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	0	1	2+	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	
Engagement																														
Does the local planning authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee?	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Does the local planning authority have an officer on duty to provide advice to members of the public?	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
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	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partial	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
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+	70.1-79.9	<70	80.6	96.8	83.8	81.9	63.8	92.6	55.6	97.3	96.5	81.3	84.6	75.4	62.4	87.0	91.3	95.3	93.8	55.0	69.5	79.4	91.7	88.4	46.4	94.2	93.2	70.3	
Average time taken to take positive enforcement action				184.6	201.3	313.0	31.8	219.8	83.3	No Data	307.8	No Data	No Data	449.0	138.3	228.3	82.0	96.0	188.0	135.8	210.5	468.0	372.8	67.0	No Data	25.3	No Data	115.0	8.0	

