



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

All Wales Planning Annual Performance Report 2018-19



INTRODUCTION

Julie James AM – Minister for Housing and Local Government

The Welsh Government is committed to placemaking: building and creating sustainable places for people to live, work and play. To deliver on this commitment, our planning system needs to be both visionary and effective.

Edition 10 of Planning Policy Wales supports this by putting sustainability and wellbeing at the heart of national planning policy. As Local Development Plans are revised, they will also be updated so that placemaking is central to future development in Wales. Implementation of this ambitious vision relies upon a healthy and functional planning system.

Development plans must be made in accordance with agreed timescales and with effective community involvement. The same applies when they are revised. Adopted plans provide certainty, for developers and the communities they serve, as to where development should be located and why. Planning decisions must be made in a timely manner, with effective input from experts and other consultees and in accordance with adopted plan policies. Effective enforcement of planning control ensures developments benefit from this expert input and are in compliance with the aspirations of communities.

The Planning Performance Framework provides an insight into the effective operational performance of the planning system in Wales. It can help monitor and understand the impacts of legislative and policy changes as they occur. Working together with all stakeholders, in particular Local Planning Authorities and consultees, this system of continuous self-reflection and self-improvement allows the planning service to deliver the future that we – and future generations – deserve.



Julie James AM
Minister for Housing and Local Government
December 2019

1 – CONTEXT

Annual Performance Reports – Background

This is the fifth all-Wales Annual Performance Report (APR), covering the period April 2018 to March 2019, based on those APRs submitted to Welsh Government by Local Planning Authorities in October 2019. 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 2018-19 is at **Annex A**.
- Our [website](#) sets out current targets and the latest published reports on performance, 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

New powers were devolved to the Welsh Ministers by the Wales Act 2017, enabling them to grant consents for a range of developments from 01 April 2019. Subordinate legislation and processes have been introduced to enable decisions by the Welsh Ministers for:

- On- and off-shore electricity generating stations generating power up to 350MW, as well as associated electric lines up to 132KV, and with no upper limit for offshore wind
- Management of harbours and creating harbour authorities
- Marine licences; and
- Offshore marine conservation.

The Law Commission for England and Wales submitted its final report on the simplification and consolidation of Welsh planning law to the Welsh Ministers, on 30 November 2018. An interim response to the Law Commission's recommendations issued in May 2019. Work continues to provide a full response to the Law Commission's report and recommendations, which is anticipated in early 2020. This detailed response to the Law Commission's report will form the basis of future work to improve access to Welsh planning law.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 10 was published in December 2018. It embeds the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 into all aspects of planning policy, and ensures the planning system contributes to the principles of sustainable development. It introduced placemaking as our approach to planning in Wales.

Work has continued on the production of the National Development Framework (NDF) for Wales. Between July and October 2018 we consulted on the NDF issues and options paper, and considered consultation responses in the preparation of the first draft of the NDF. The draft NDF was published for consultation in August 2019. During this period a range of workshops and stakeholder engagement events were undertaken to raise awareness of the role of the NDF amongst stakeholders and communities, and to invite them to participate in its production.

We continue to support the production of Local Development Plans (LDPs) in Wales. Powys County Council (CC) adopted its LDP in April 2018. Swansea CC adopted its LDP in February 2019. 23 of 25 LPAs in Wales now have an adopted LDP, with Anglesey and Gwynedd CC preparing the only Joint LDP adopted to date. Snowdonia National Park Authority (NPA) adopted the first revision of its LDP in February 2019, with 13 of the 15 LPAs due to commence a review of their LDPs having done so.

Work has continued on preparation of the LDP Manual, incorporating lessons learned during the preparation of the first generation of LDPs. The draft manual was subject to consultation in the summer of 2019. Amendments are being made following the consultation, with a final version published in early 2020.

The increasing interconnectivity of planning with other policy and regulatory areas means that planning decisions are made in the context of an increasing number of factors and issues. This requires more work to prepare applications for decision. The fee charged to

applicants for determination of these applications has not, however, received any increase since 2015.

Early work to understand the true cost of determining applications was undertaken in partnership with the Planning Officer's Society for Wales, in 2018. This indicated that smaller applications, such as minor and householder applications, do not attract fees which reflect the cost to LPAs for determining them. In the long-term, it is our intent to move towards a more cost-neutral model for planning fees, however further work is required to clarify the costs of providing planning services. While this work is being undertaken, in the short-term, we intend to consult on proposals for a general fee increase in early 2020.

Planning decisions made by the Welsh Government

Case Type	Target				
		80% or more			
		60% - 80%			
		Less than 60%			
		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Award of Costs cases	within 84 days	100% 3 of 3	100% 4 of 4	100% 4 of 4	100% 6 of 6
Decisions whether or not to call in applications	within 21 days	95% 38 of 40	89% 25 of 28	83% 20 of 24	68% 17 of 25
Notification Direction cases	within 21 days	100% (7 of 7)	60% 3 of 5	66% 2 of 3	37.5% 3 of 8
Development Consent Orders – Non-material amendments	within 84 days			100% 2 of 2	N/A 0 of 0
Developments of National Significance	within 252 days			100% 1 of 1	100% 3 of 3
Recovered Appeals and Called In cases	within 84 days	62% 5 of 8	0% 0 of 5	50% 4 of 8	50% 4 of 8
Compulsory Purchase Order Confirmations	within 84 days	100% 3 of 3	100% 4 of 4	N/A 0 of 0	N/A 0 of 0
EIA Screening requests	within 21 days	86% 19 of 22	88% 8 of 9	100% 6 of 6	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	91% 30 of 33
Transport and Works Act applications	within 112 days	N/A 0 of 0	N/A 0 of 0	100% 1 of 1	N/A 0 of 0
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	98% 49 of 50

Fig 1 – Welsh Government Caseload Performance Statistics

The Planning Directorate determined 139 cases of which 118 were issued within its target date, representing an average percentage rate of 84.9%. The timeliness for determining these cases broadly meets the set targets, and has improved since last year.

The performance on decisions relating to call-in requests and applications referred to the Welsh Ministers under the Notification Direction has, however, declined in comparison to previous years. Following an internal review of procedures in March 2019, robust new casework tracking measures have been put in place, combined with weekly meetings, in order to identify key issues as they arise and allocate resource and expertise accordingly. It is anticipated these procedural changes will result in improvement in the next reporting period.

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

Indicator	Target	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Appeals decided by written representations (part 1, & part 3 of 2017 Regulations)	85% in 8 weeks		97.8%	91.67%	92.5%
	90% in 8 weeks (from Nov 2018)				98.8%
Appeals decided by written representations (part 4)	85% in 15 weeks			98.85%	92.5%
	85% in 14 weeks (from Nov 2018)				81.2%
Appeals decided by hearings	85% in 22 weeks	91.9%	92.6%	100%	
	85% in 21 weeks (from Nov 2017)			87.50%	93.5%
Appeals decided by inquiries	85% in 30 weeks	100%	72.7%	100%	
	85% in 29 weeks (from Nov 2017)			100%	0%
Enforcement appeals decided by written representations	85% in 28 weeks	100%	100%	100%	91.7%
	85% in 27 weeks (from Nov 2018)				N/A
Enforcement appeals decided by hearings and inquiries	85% in 41 weeks	88.9%	84.6%	95.65%	100%

Fig 2 – Planning Inspectorate Wales Caseload Performance Statistics

Planning law and policy in Wales has and continues to, diverge at an accelerated rate from planning law and policy in England. For this reason, the Minister for Housing and Local Government has instructed officials to start work on a separate dedicated appeals service for Wales.

The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) is working closely with Welsh Government Officials to devise the most effective way forward for the new organisation which will be in place by the end of the current Assembly term. In the mean-time, planning appeal services will continue to be delivered in Wales by the PINS Wales team.

Stakeholder engagement

PINS Wales hosted several small stakeholder events for LPA officers and agents in the reporting period, to develop a greater understanding of issues faced by customers and to ensure the service meets customer needs. Inspectors presented on all aspects of enforcement, including notices, practicalities and pitfalls.

As an outcome from the sessions, the reasons for each condition attached to a permission is now included alongside the condition on decisions, rather than in the body of the Inspector's reasoning.

The Head of PINS Wales spoke at conferences and held sessions with LPA Planning Committee Members, giving insight to an Inspector's approach to considering and making decisions. These events included the RTPI Cymru Enforcement Conference, and sessions with Rhondda Cynon Taff and Wrexham County Borough Councils, and Ynys Mon County Council.

Customer feedback

PINS Wales reports that feedback from customers continues to be generally positive. It has received a low number of complaints regarding administration of appeals, and the quality of Inspector decisions resulted in achieving over 99% of casework free from error. During the year, PINS Wales received feedback indicating there was a perception that interested parties were disadvantaged at public events. PINS Wales worked with Planning Aid Wales to host events for Community and Town Councils to address this.

PINS Wales continues to publish all appeal documentation to the Appeals Casework Portal (ACP) for transparency purposes, and the ministerial target date for an appeal decision is added to all appeal timetable start date letters, in order to provide some certainty of when parties to an appeal can expect an outcome,. This was also introduced in response to customer feedback.

Continuous improvement

PINS holds an annual training event for all Inspectors, and Inspectors in Wales have specifically received training in the areas of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) and Design matters.

PINS Wales has broadly met or exceeded its targets for a sustained period. It also works closely with Welsh Government to identify opportunities to speed up the planning process further. This work currently includes investigating the potential to form a panel of Inspectors to examine a local development plan and revising the format of reports to Welsh Ministers.

In recognition of this demonstrated good performance, targets set by the Welsh Ministers were revised in the third quarter of the year, to set higher standards. Several of the revised targets were, however, missed:

- **Appeals decided by inquiries.** Since the introduction of new legislation governing the appeals process, the number of inquiries which are held is low. 2 inquiry cases were determined in the year, and the decision on one of these was issued out of target. The delay arose as the inquiry was postponed due to illness.

- **Appeals decided by written representations (part 4).** Fifteen appeals, linked as one, were issued one week outside of the revised target. Administrative inconsistencies led to the issuing of the decision outside the target deadline. Steps have taken place to mitigate the risk of this happening in the future, including reinforcing internal procedural instructions and recording the lessons learnt.

During the year PINS Wales launched a website which has been developed for viewing and tracking applications for Developments of National Significance (DNS). The website was based on the template for the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) website.

PINS Wales remains the preferred appellate body for many Welsh Government Policy areas. It processes casework in environmental permitting matters, Rights of Way and Common Land casework and new appeal regimes, including SUDS appeals.

During the year PINS Wales delivered the Inspector's report and recommendation on the proposed M4 relief road to the Welsh Ministers, and held an inquiry into the Wales Rod and Line (Salmon and Sea Trout) Byelaws 2017. A letter of thanks and recognition of the open, fair and impartial way the Byelaws inquiry was handled was sent to PINS Wales by the Cabinet Secretary following the issue of her decision. Inspector's reports on three DNS applications were also submitted to Welsh Ministers for consideration.

PINS Wales is pursuing complete flexibility across all casework from Inspectors and support staff in order to increase agility and resilience. The PINS Wales Business Plan 2019/20 sets out how this will be achieved.

In 2017 the Planning Inspectorate embarked on a Transformation Programme, intended to deliver improvements across people, process and platforms. PINS Wales will benefit from the Operational Delivery Transformation (ODT) element of the programme. This will replace the current casework system and the ACP portal.

3 – PERFORMANCE OF STATUTORY CONSULTEES

This section considers the performance of statutory consultees in supporting 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 third 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

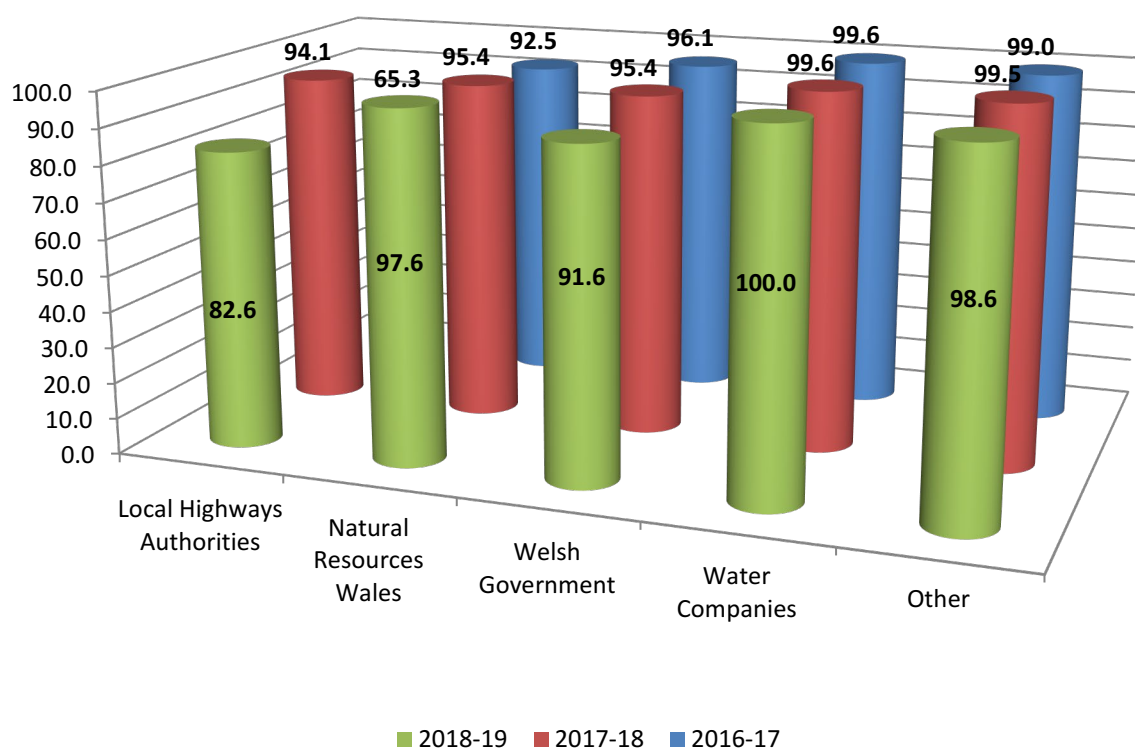


Fig 3 – Percentage of pre-application consultations responded to within time periods required, by consultee group

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 most groupings compared to the last reporting period.

As with last year, the Health and Safety Executive and Severn Trent Water both achieved 100% response rates on pre-application consultations within the reporting period. Also responding to 100% of consultations on-time in this reporting period were Dwr Cymru, Welsh Government's Agricultural Land team and the Theatres Trust.

Local Highway Authorities have not maintained the high response rate for pre-application consultations set in the previous year. Performance on responding to these consultations on-time fell from 94.1% to 82.6%. This performance overview may not be fully reflective of the overall positions in Highways Departments across Wales, however, as 13 of the 22 Highways Authorities failed to submit their annual reports on pre-application consultation performance to the Welsh Government.

CONSULTATIONS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

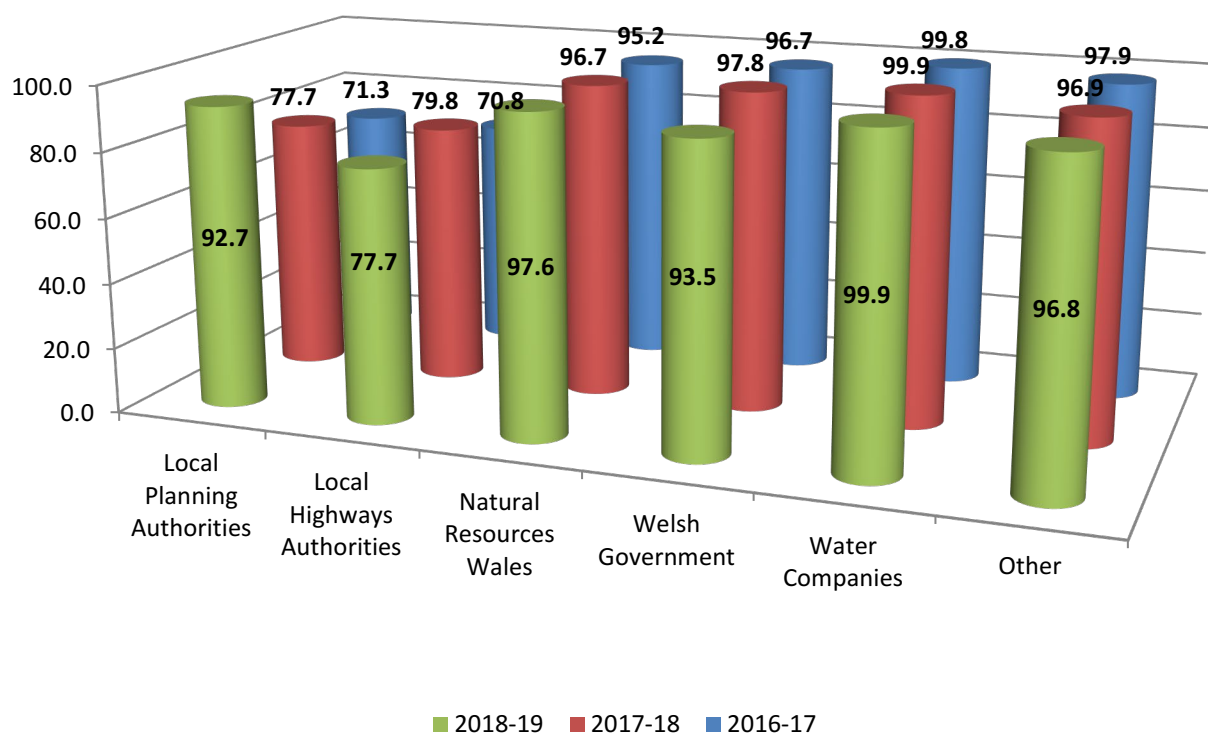


Fig 4 – Percentage of planning application consultations responded to within time periods required, by consultee group

Performance on responses to statutory consultation on planning applications has equalled, or improved, on last year's performance standards for all except Local Highways Authorities. The Health and Safety Executive, Severn Trent Water, Welsh Government Agricultural Land team and the Theatres Trust have also achieved excellent response times on planning applications with 100% responses within the statutory time periods. Dwr Cymru responded to 7,088 consultations within the reporting period, and only one of these was late.

The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 introduced a duty for statutory consultees to report upon their performance in responding to consultations on planning applications. As of November 2019, the following organisations failed to comply with this statutory duty in the period:

- Bridgend CBC Highways Department
- Caerphilly CBC Highways Department
- Carmarthenshire CC Planning and Highways Departments
- Ceredigion CC Planning Department
- Denbighshire Highways Department
- Flintshire CC Planning and Highways Departments
- Isle of Anglesey CC Highways Department
- Monmouthshire CC Highways Department
- Pembrokeshire CC Planning Department
- Snowdonia NPA Planning Department
- Swansea CC Highways Department
- Torfaen CBC Planning and Highways Departments
- Vale of Glamorgan CBC Highways Department

In order for the planning system to make effective and informed decisions on land use and placemaking, it is necessary to seek the advice of specialists and experts in the relevant fields. On the whole, those who are statutory consultees are helping to ensure these planning decisions are being made from an informed perspective and in a timely manner.

Local highways Authorities are consistently performing less well at timescales than other statutory consultees. This is disappointing in that, unlike other consultees, and with the exception of National Park Authorities, Highways Authorities are internal rather than external consultees for planning departments. Several LPAs report that lack of resourcing in other local government departments, and particularly in Highways departments, is affecting their ability to operate development management functions in a timely manner.

The purpose of the pre-application consultation procedure is to enhance and refine schemes to bring them closer to compliance with policy and community expectations prior to the submission of applications. This improves application quality and eases the processing of formal applications. Where decisions are made to withdraw pre-application advice, such as in Powys CC, this undermines the principle of the statutory duty to undertaker pre-application consultation and will lead to problems later on in the process.

As with Planning Departments, the resourcing and tasking of Highways Departments is a matter for the relevant authority. The impact of the absence of pre-application advice, or delays to determination of applications, should not be underestimated.

4 – PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES

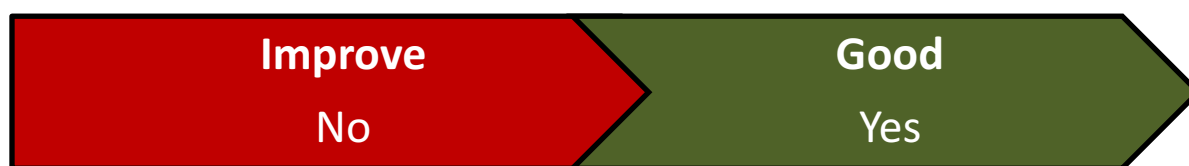
The planning system is fundamental to the implementation of local policies for the built and natural environment. The planning system is responsible for land use decisions for the places in which people live, work and play. Local planning policies and decisions serve to deliver outcomes for areas across 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 2018 to March 2019.

New indicators and targets

In July 2018, Welsh Government officials met with representatives of the Planning Officer's Society for Wales to review the Performance framework's indicators and targets, and to consider appropriate changes. As an outcome of that meeting, the following new indicators were introduced:

- **Has an LDP Revision Delivery Agreement been submitted to and agreed with the Welsh Government?**

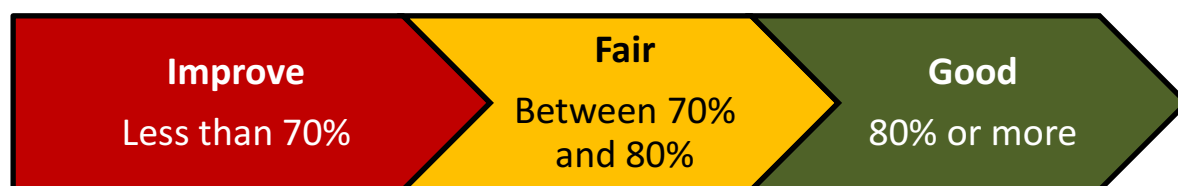


- **LDP review deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months**



The former Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs wrote to LPAs in January 2018, asking whether LPAs had considered the co-production of LDP revision, either as joint plans, or using a joint evidence base, as a means of reducing cost in the production of development plans. Responses to this consultation demonstrated a strong view amongst LPAs to pursue their own individual plan review and revisions, regardless of any potential cost saving. Given the insistence on individual LPA production, the Cabinet Secretary wrote again in March 2018, stating that she would accept no delay in the revision of LDPs as a result. These new indicators reflect the Welsh Government's expectation that LDP revisions will be conducted without delay.

- **Percentage of Listed Building Consent applications determined in time periods required**



These performance targets were discussed in principle in the previous meeting, and were applied to performance data for the 2017-18 reporting period for discussion in the July 2018 meeting. Attendees considered they were achievable and realistic targets, and where some LPAs showed room for improvement this was reflective of resources allocated to this work.

Resourcing and resilience

The planning service continues experience year-on-year budget reductions. In order to manage challenging budgets, staff vacancies are being held open, posts are being deleted following retirement and in some cases unpaid leave is being used to find in-year savings. This is impacting on the service provided, with severe pressure during periods of staff absences. LPAs are being creative in seeking alternative funding streams and particularly charging for optional services aligned with the planning process. This is achieving varying success.

Several LPAs have reported that under-resourcing in staff is leading to adverse service outcomes. These include Brecon Beacons NPA, Caerphilly, Conwy, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, Pembrokeshire and Wrexham Councils. Both Isle of Anglesey and Wrexham Councils report challenges in recruiting to vacant posts, particularly for entry-level planning professional roles. Several LPAs are now asking non-Development Management (DM) officers, such as enforcement and forward planning teams, to take on a DM caseload (Cardiff CC, Conwy CBC, Wrexham CBC). Wrexham CBC is considering using non-planners to deal with some routine casework. Torfaen CBC is operating this principle in reverse – with DM officers taking on enforcement and forward planning work.

Long-term reductions in staff numbers have given rise to identified single points of failure on service performance, for example on major applications (Pembrokeshire CC and Merthyr Tydfil CBC) and in enforcement, conservation and landscape areas (Conwy CBC). Swansea CC reports similar issues.

The time taken to respond to consultations by internal consultees has also been identified as a key issue (Carmarthenshire CC, Conwy CBC, Gwynedd CC, Merthyr CBC, Monmouthshire CC, Swansea CC). Carmarthenshire CC is developing new procedures to seek consultation input as early as possible from those stakeholders. Conwy CBC is also forming a focus group to consider the issue and make recommendations.

LPAs must be effectively resourced in order to deliver the planning services which communities expect. To this end we are working on an increase in planning fees, and will consult on proposals for a fee uplift in 2020. This should go some way to address resource shortfalls being experienced by LPAs. Planning fees can, however, only be used to recover the costs incurred for directly determining planning applications. The level of service

offered beyond the legal requirement, and the amount of funding provided for it, is ultimately a decision for each LPA.

Areas of innovation

LPAs in Wales have again demonstrated creativity amidst adversity in this reporting period, finding new and different ways to carry out their business and pursue continuous service improvement. As with previous years, these examples are highlighted as “good practice” by the respective LPAs, although what may work well for one LPA may not work so well for others. We invite LPAs to consider the following actions which have been, or are being pursued by their peers.

Alternative funding streams – As with last year, LPAs continue to investigate options to charge for providing optional “value added” work for planning service users. These include:

- Contributing work to the Council’s asset management service, for example in providing advice leading to the construction of a solar energy development on Council-owned land (Monmouthshire CC)
- Fast-track upgrades for householder applications (Monmouthshire CC, Neath Port Talbot CBC, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, Vale of Glamorgan CBC, Wrexham CBC). Wrexham CBC’s fast-track service is well-established, and has operated for many years, although it reports the success of this scheme is somewhat subdued due to the fixed cost set for pre-application advice by Welsh Government.
- Similar value-added schemes for LBC, minor applications and certificates of lawfulness, and pre-submission validation (Monmouthshire CC, Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC)
- Charging for conveyance and land charges confirmation (Neath Port Talbot CBC)
- Effective use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) to secure additional resource from developers to support work on specific schemes; Neath Port Talbot and Vale of Glamorgan CBCs report this has been highly effective. Torfaen CBC is currently exploring its first PPA.

Use of ICT services to secure efficiencies – several LPAs again report they are making upgrades to their ICT system in order to facilitate more effective working. The following LPAs are either in the process of procuring new ICT systems, or did so in the reporting period:

- Blaenau Gwent CBC
- Carmarthenshire CC
- Conwy CBC
- Flintshire CC
- Gwynedd CC
- Monmouthshire CC
- Neath Port Talbot CBC
- Newport CC
- Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
- Torfaen CBC
- Wrexham CBC

Neath Port Talbot CBC reports that it has engaged extensively with colleagues in Swansea CC, who operate the same system, in order to ensure the new ICT system is used most efficiently and performance information is effectively obtained from it.

It is not clear to what extent other LPAs purchasing new ICT system have engaged with each other, or sought advice from LPAs which have recently procured in the past. Welsh Government recommends that LPAs procure jointly where possible, to ensure a consortium approach can be used with purchasing power to negotiate ICT upgrades, and ensure the relevant ICT system can be modified to reflect the unique needs of the Welsh planning system.

Direct collaboration – LPAs continue to explore the most effective ways to maximise use of limited resource or specialist expertise, by working together. The North Wales (Flintshire CC) and West Wales (Carmarthenshire CC) minerals and waste services continue to provide expertise in their fields on a regional basis, both to support the preparation of LDPs and to facilitate the determination and enforcement of planning decisions.

Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd CCs continues to maintain a Joint Planning Policy Unit to implement the LDP on behalf of both LPAs and have both agreed an extension to this successful joint working arrangement. Pembrokeshire Coast NPA has access to Pembrokeshire CC's legal services and ecology specialist, and the two LPAs are developing a joint evidence base for LDP revision, and production of SPG. Blaenau Gwent CBC, Torfaen CBC and Monmouthshire CC are also collaborating on a joint evidence base for their LDP revision. Monmouthshire CC has also secured a Service Level Agreement with Torfaen CBC for the provision of heritage expertise. The National Park Authorities have also engaged in a "skills swap", exchanging expertise on ecology and arboriculture. Meanwhile, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Councils share a common core ICT service.

The North Wales Policy Officers Group, which consists of all six North Wales LPAs, continues to advance its work on standardisation of local practices and procedures for built heritage and natural environment applications.

Performance analysis and continuous improvement – Several LPAs have taken action in order to improve their delivery against the Planning Performance Framework's indicators and targets. These include:

- Blaenau Gwent CBC is reviewing its committee procedures given its high number of decisions made contrary to Officer advice.
- Caerphilly CBC is moving forward timescales for decisions on householder applications to as close as possible after the end of the statutory consultation and publicity periods.
- Carmarthenshire CC is undertaking training with Members on the issue of decisions made contrary to officer advice, and has identified and addressed weaknesses in the accuracy of its performance reporting.
- Flintshire CC is also undertaking Member training on the issue of decisions made contrary to officer advice, and performance at appeal, given the majority of appeals upheld in the reporting period were due to refusals contrary to officer advice.
- Gwynedd CC reports a new scheme of delegation has significantly reduced the number of applications going to Committee, thereby speeding up decision making.
- Isle of Anglesey CC is undertaking a planning function review in 2020 to improve its performance and resilience. This includes a project management team to improve its performance on enforcement indicators.

- Merthyr Tydfil CBC is also recommending changes to Committee procedures, as 50% of applications determined by Committee in the reporting period were deferred for a site visit, negatively affecting timeliness of decisions.
- Monmouthshire CC is also undertaking a system review of its enforcement function following dissatisfying performance in the reporting period.
- Neath Port Talbot CBC is reviewing its stance on long-standing stalled applications, particularly where applicants are failing to provide information required to determine those applications.
- Pembrokeshire CC is using its agents' forum to address issues with the quality of submissions.
- Torfaen CBC intends to use more effective techniques to manage long-standing applications.
- Wrexham CBC is also looking to review its delegation scheme to reduce the significant number of applications being determined by Committee, which is disproportionately more than all other LPAs. It is also seeking to address Committee decisions contrary to officer advice, as these are leading to sub-optimal performance at appeal. This will include introduction of SPG, as well as training for Members, including discussing appeal costs.

Other work to pursue continuous improvement in planning services includes:

- Cardiff CC is using effective analysis and implementation of Annual Performance Report findings, particularly for work planning. The Council also uses fee income to inform monthly finance meetings to consider income target setting.
- Gwynedd CC also intends to undertake a general service review of DM functions, to ensure that the service is efficient and effective.
- Brecon Beacons NPA has adopted the Hay on Wye and Crickhowell Place Plans as SPG, and is working with communities to introduce plans for Talgarth, Brecon, Llansyddid, Llangattock and Llangynydir.
- Conwy CBC is also undertaking work on a Place Plan for Abergele.
- Monmouthshire CC is introducing new procedures to invite local Members and key Planning Committee stakeholders to formal pre-application meetings with applicants.
- Gwynedd CC has adopted an enforcement strategy.
- Neath Port Talbot CBC is compiling a staff skills and training matrix, in order to improve flexibility and resilience.

OVERVIEW OF WALES AVERAGE PERFORMANCE AGAINST ALL INDICATORS

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Plan making								
1. Is there a current Development Plan in place which is within the plan period?	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	<12	13-17	18+	47	39	58	67	73
3. Has an LDP Revision Delivery Agreement been submitted to and agreed with the Welsh Government?	Yes		No					Yes
4. LDP review deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	<3		4+					1
5. Annual Monitoring Reports produced following LDP adoption	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6. Number of Local Planning Authorities with a housing land supply of 5 years or more				7	8	6	7	6
Efficiency								
7. Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	60+	60.1-59.9	<50	24	35.3	59	67.4	67.8
8. Average time taken to determine "major" applications, in days				206	212.7	250.2	240.1	231.8
9. Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required	80+	70.1-79.9	<70	72.7	76.6	86.7	88.5	88.1
10. Average time taken to determine all applications, in days	<67	67-111	112+	76.4	77.2	75.9	80.7	77.2
11. Percentage of Listed Building Consent applications determined within time periods required	80+	70.1-79.9	<70	40.8	38.1	63.3	65.4	74.7

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE
Quality			
12. Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	<5	5-8.9	9+
13. Percentage of appeals dismissed	66+	55.1-65.9	<55
14. Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	0	1	2
Engagement			
15. Does the Local Planning Authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee?	Yes		No
16. Does the Local Planning Authority have an officer on duty to provide advice to members of the public?	Yes		No
17. 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			
18. 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
19. Average time taken to take positive enforcement action, in days			

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
10.1	9.0	10.9	8.6	9.2
65.6	66.5	60.9	62.6	67.7
0	0	0	0	0
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
65.8	79.4	85.0	80.6	76.9
			184.6	166.7

SECTION 1 – PLAN MAKING

Indicator 01 - is there a current Development Plan in place which is within the plan period?

Yes (23 out of 25 LPAs)

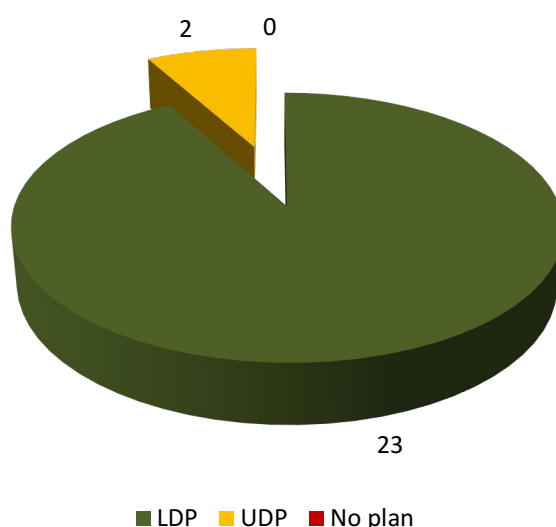


Fig 5 – Local Planning Authorities with an adopted development plan in March 2019

Figure 5 shows that 23 of 25 Local Planning Authorities had an adopted LDP. This gives Wales an up-to-date plan coverage of 92%. There are two LPAs which have an extant Unitary Development Plan.

Wrexham County Borough Council (CBC) submitted its LDP for public examination in November 2018. Flintshire County Council's (CC) Deposit LDP is scheduled for public consultation in the autumn 2019, with submission for public examination anticipated in the summer of 2020.

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 2019.

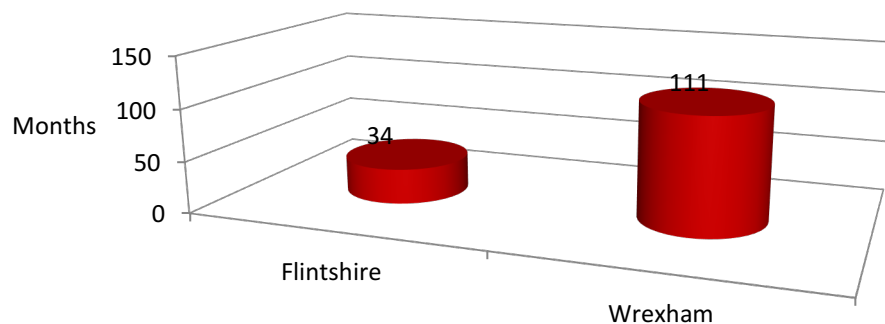


Fig 6 – Delay in LDP preparation, in months

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.

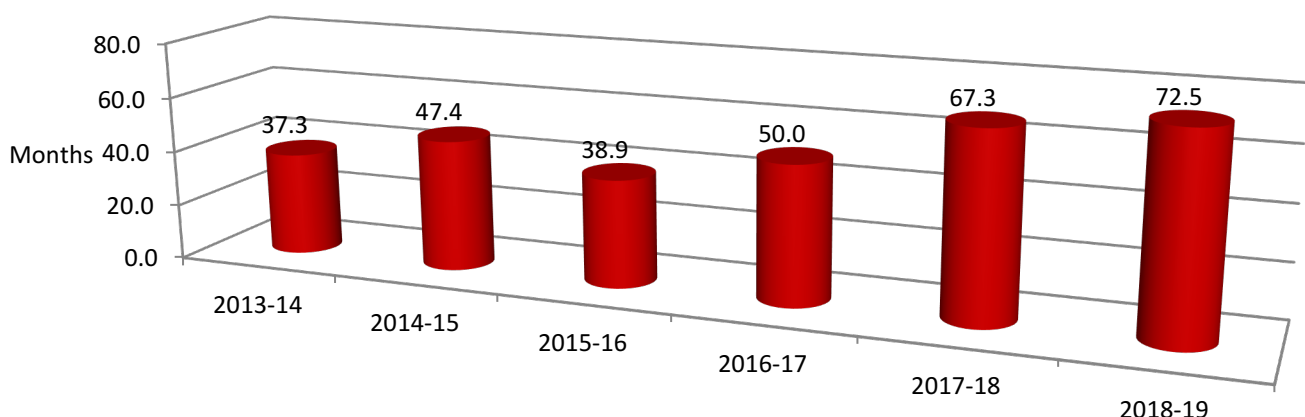


Fig 7 – Year-on-year comparison of average delay in LDP preparation, in months

As with last year's all-Wales APR, Fig 7 shows another annual increase in the average delay in LDP preparation. Only two LPAs are yet to adopt their LDP, each of which is significantly delayed. In the case of Wrexham CBC, the initial delivery agreement relates to

the Council's first Local Development Plan, which was withdrawn following examination in 2012. The Council submitted its second draft deposit LDP for public examination in November 2018.

Indicator 03 - has an LDP Revision Delivery Agreement been submitted to and agreed with the Welsh Government?

Yes (8 out of 15 LPAs)

This is the first of two indicators introduced following a statement by the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural affairs, in March 2018. LPAs expressed a desire to pursue independent progress on LDPs rather than working collaboratively on joint plans. In response the former Cabinet Secretary stated she expected these plans to be reviewed in a timely manner.

8 of 15 LPAs commenced their LDP revisions within 12 months of triggering Regulation 41 of the LDP Regulations, which requires mandatory revision of the plan after 4 years. 4 further LPAs commenced revision between 12 and 16 months after triggering Regulation 41. 4 further LPAs took longer than 18 months to do so, and two of those (Caerphilly and Rhondda Cynon Taf CBCs) have still not commenced revision.

In order for LDPs to be an effective and reliable guide to development, they must be based on a sound evidence base and align with national policy. In the case of Caerphilly and RCT, these plans are now outdated. In particular they are not reflective of the statutory duty of the planning system, as introduced by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Neither are they in alignment with the policy expression of that duty, as set out in Planning Policy Wales. The outdated nature of the plan can leave decisions by those LPAs vulnerable at appeal.

Indicator 04 - LDP review deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months

1

In the Cabinet Secretary's letter of March 2018, she made clear that LDPs should be reviewed without delay. For those LPAs commencing review of their LDPs, all achieved a "good" performance standard of being within 3 months of their original Delivery Agreement timescales for LDP review. The only exceptions are those LPAs which have failed to commence a review – Rhondda Cynon Taf and Caerphilly CBCs.

Indicator 05 - Annual Monitoring Reports produced following LDP adoption

Yes (18 out of 18 LPAs)

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 following adoption (LDP Regulations, Regulation 41).

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, all LPAs submitted their Annual Monitoring Reports to the Welsh Government by the 31 October 2018 deadline.

Indicator 06 - 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 2019 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, they should consider the reasons for the shortfall and whether to identify measures to address this 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 \(TAN 1\)](#).

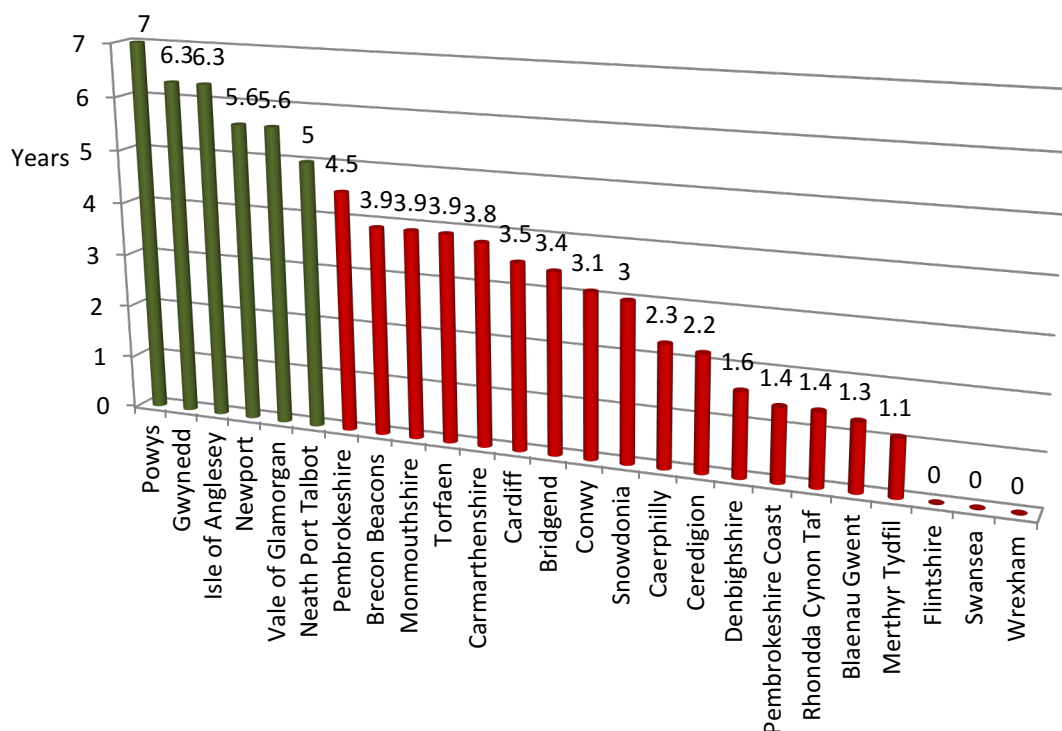


Fig 8 –Local Planning Authorities with a housing land supply of 5 years or more (as at 31 March 2019)

Figure 8 above shows the housing land supply of each local planning authority as at 31 March 2019. 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, three local planning authorities demonstrate a housing land supply of zero years.

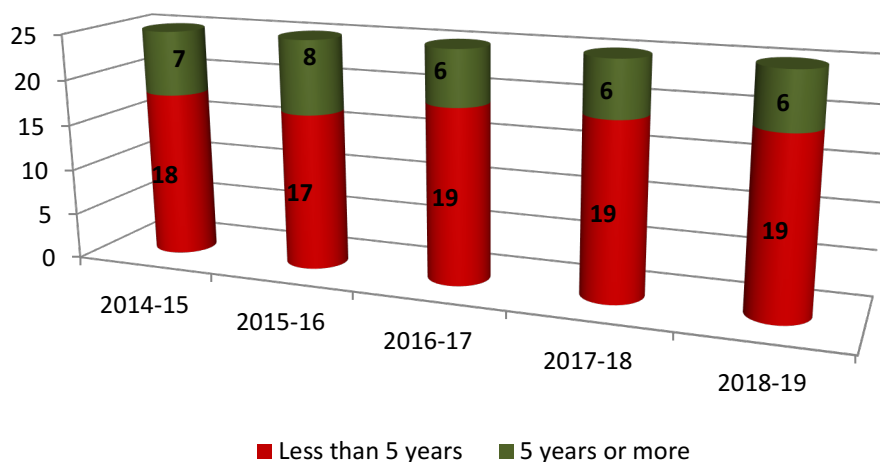


Fig 9 – Number of Local Planning Authorities with a 5 year supply of housing land

Figure 9 above shows the number of Local Planning Authorities with a 5-year housing land supply has again remained the same as in the two previous years.

Figure 9 above shows the number of local planning authorities with a 5-year housing land supply has again remained the same as in the two previous years.

Land supply as reported in JHLASs has declined for many local planning authorities, including some with recently adopted LDPs. Reasons for delays in sites coming forward for development include viability issues, 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.

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, in May 2018 the Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs dis-applied paragraph 6.2 of TAN 1 following consultation. This removed 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. Paragraph 6.2 of TAN 1 was dis-applied whilst a review of housing delivery through the planning system was undertaken.

Two further consultations on the delivery of housing have been undertaken in 2019 - a ‘call for evidence’ and, in response, proposed revisions to Planning Policy Wales. The second of these consultations proposes the removal of the five-year housing land supply policy and the associated JHLAS process and its replacement by the monitoring of housing completions against the housing delivery trajectory set out in LDPs, through the Annual Monitoring Reports. The aim of this proposed approach is to ensure that housing delivery and its associated monitoring, including the response to under-delivery, is an integral part of the process of LDP monitoring and review. It is intended that the outcome of this second consultation will be published early in 2020.

In addition, the revised edition of Planning Policy Wales published in December 2018 requires 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 07 - Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required

67.8%

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".

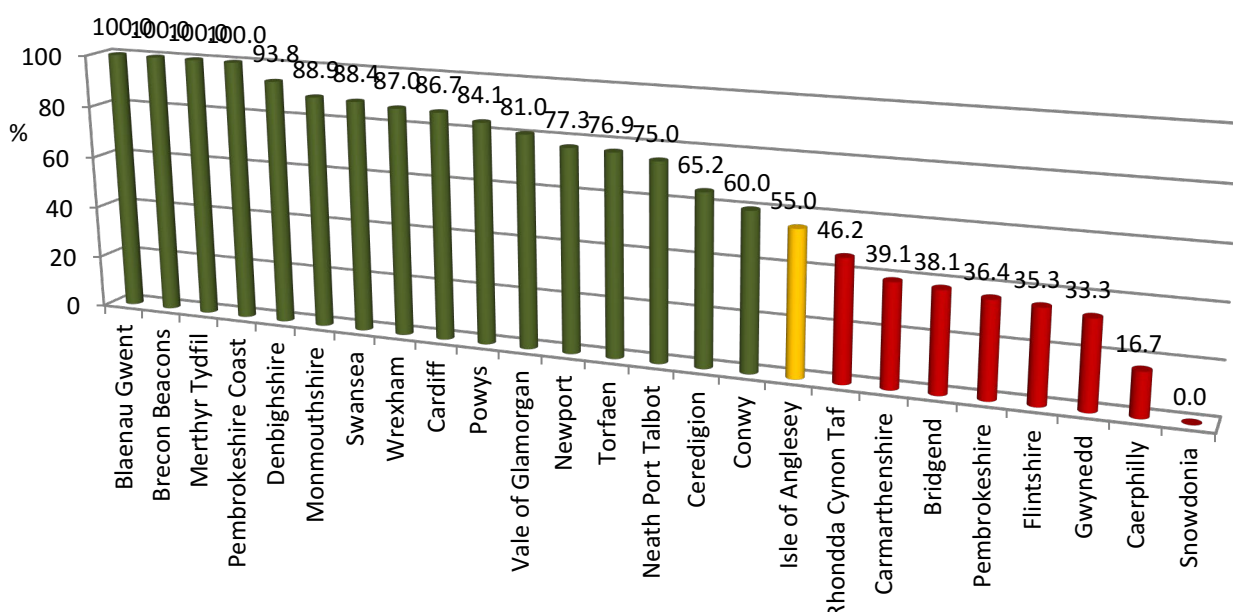


Fig 10 – Comparison of Local Planning Authority performance for determination of major planning applications

Figure 10 shows the individual performance of each LPA against this indicator. Individual LPA performance has again significantly improved compared to the previous year. 16 of 25 LPAs performing within the "good" banding. 8 of 25 LPAs are within the "improve" banding, which is however an increase compared to the previous year.

Four LPAs have determined 100% of major applications "on time" – this is attributed to effective management of major application casework, including use of agreed extensions to determination times.

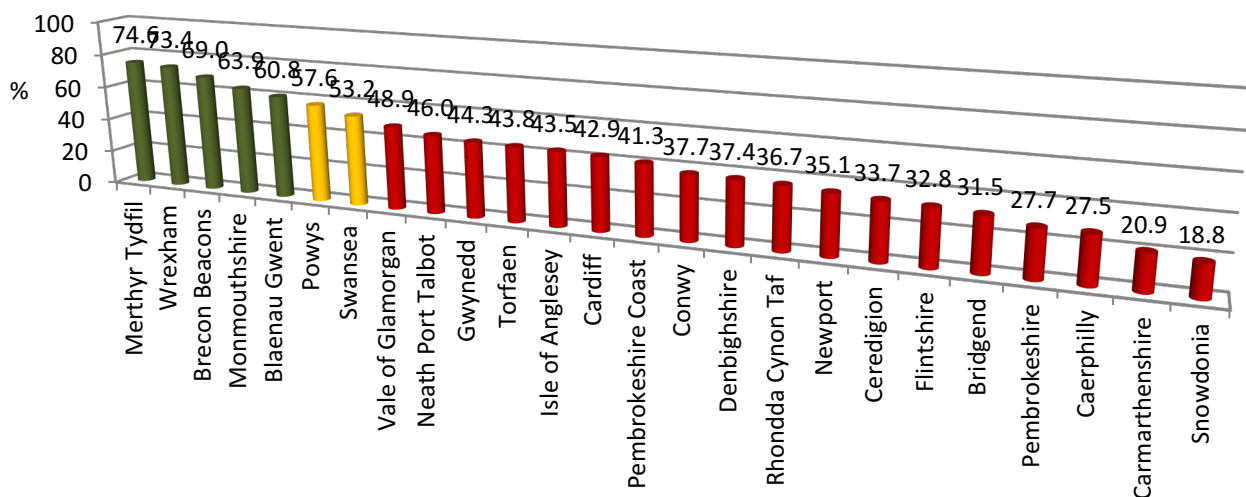


Fig 11 – Comparison of average performance for determination of major planning applications over 6 years

Figure 11 shows the performance of LPAs against this indicator from April 2013 to March 2019. The chart illustrates an increase in performance against previous years, with many of those LPAs identified in the “improved” banding achieving a “good” performance standard in 2018-19.

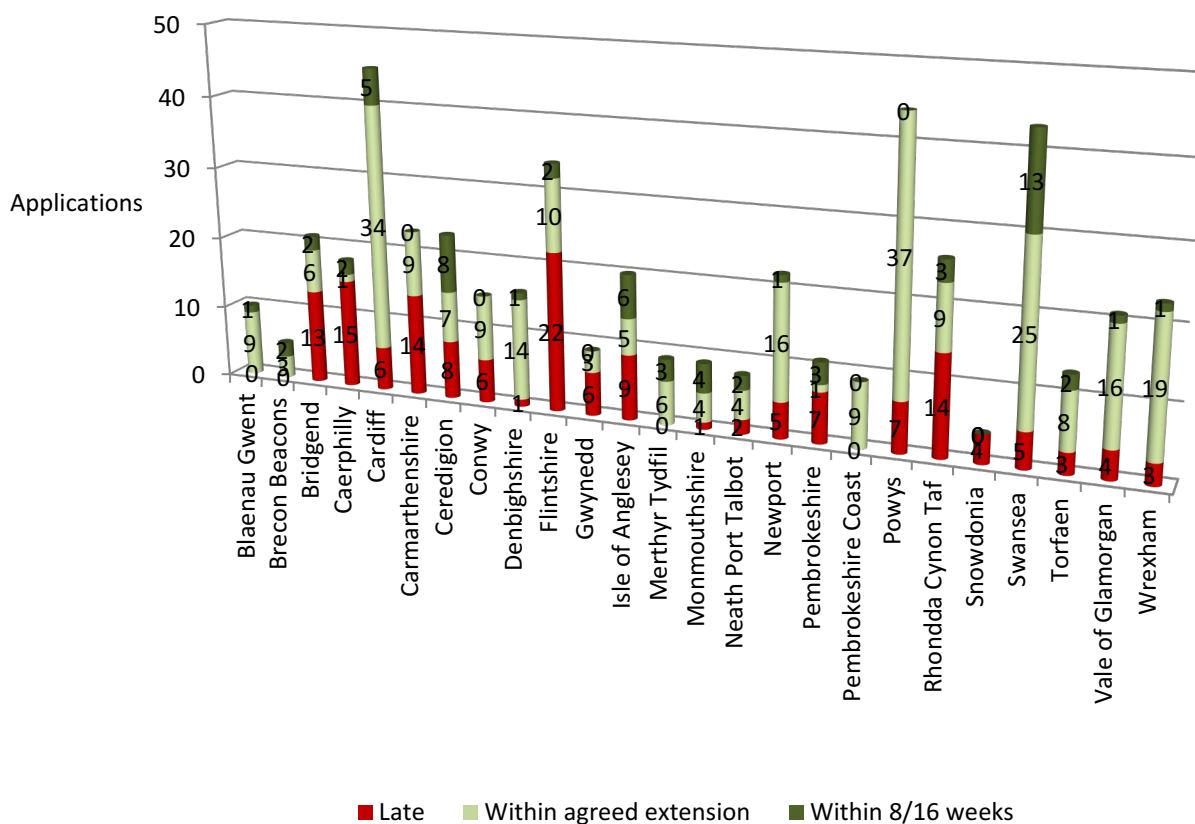


Fig 12 – Comparison of number of major applications determined on time and within agreed extensions

In this year's report, major application workload is spread more evenly across LPAs. Cardiff, Swansea and Powys CCs each experienced a high major application workload, although Flintshire CC also handled a higher than average major application workload.

Swansea CC in particular demonstrates that a high performance standard against this indicator can be achieved despite a high major application workload; as well as determining 88.4% of all major applications "on time", the Council also determined the highest number of applications within statutory 8 or 16 week determination periods. Swansea CC cites the developer forums and the use of a development team approach as contributors to its successful performance in this area.

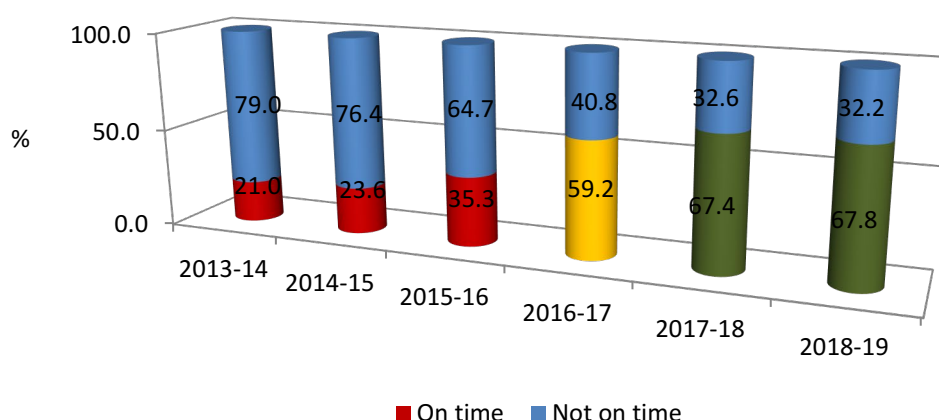


Fig 13 – Year-on-year comparison of percentage of major planning applications determined “on time”

Figure 13 shows all-Wales performance against this indicator, with performance colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good”. 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.

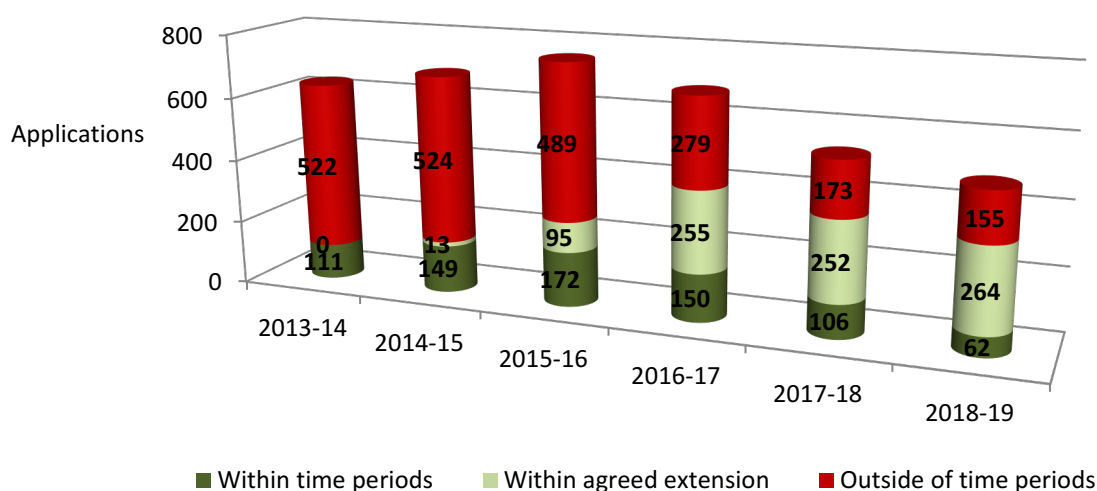


Fig 14 – All major applications determined, by time period for determination

Figure 14 above shows the number of major applications has fallen for the fourth year in succession, from 756 applications in 2015-16, to 481 in 2018-19. In this period the percentage of applications determined “on time” has significantly increased, due to use of agreed extensions to time periods for determination. The proportion of applications determined within statutory time periods has fallen from 22.8% in 2015-16 to the current 12.9%. This equates to roughly one third the number of applications determined within statutory time periods, compared to the 2015-16 reporting period.

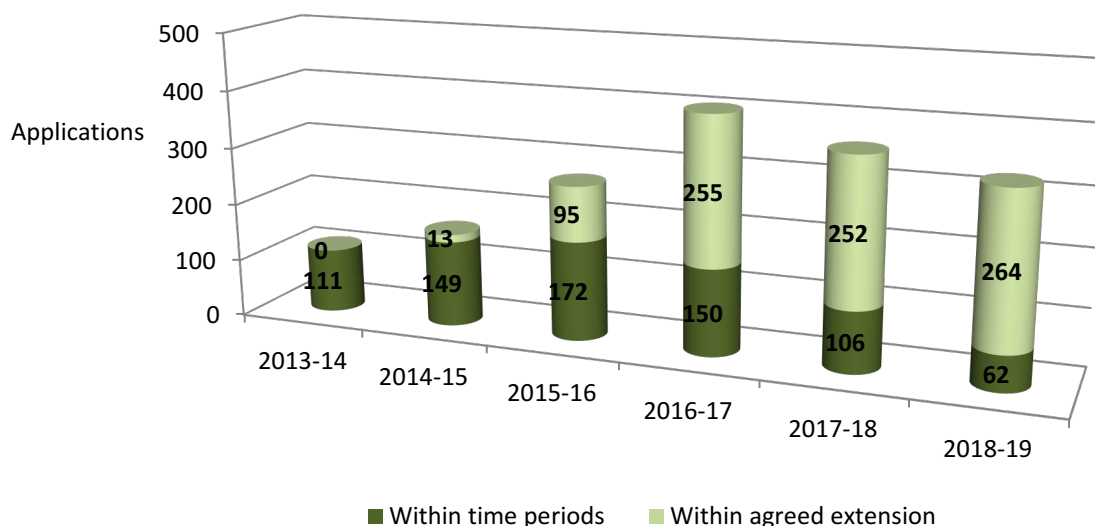


Fig 15 – Proportion of major applications determined “on time” which are subject to an agreed extension of time

Figure 15 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. Anecdotal evidence suggests applicants would prefer to agree to extensions of time for planning applications than risk refusal, although it remains open to them to appeal on the grounds of non-determination.

Indicator 08 - Average time taken to determine "major" applications in days

231.8 days

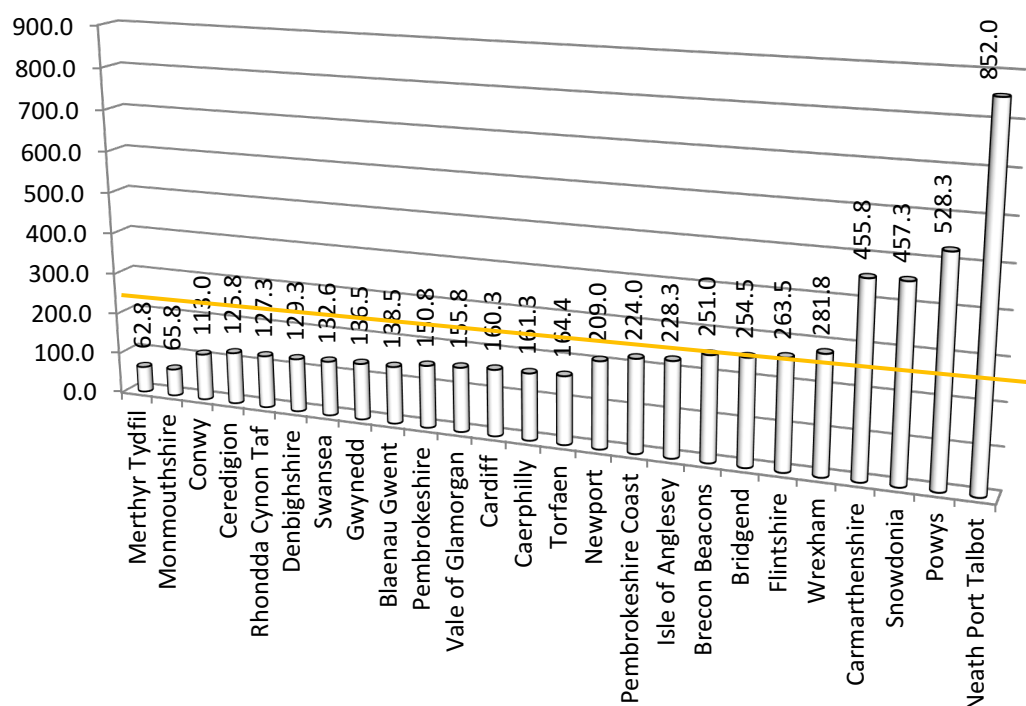


Fig 16 – Comparison of average time taken to determine major planning applications

Figure 16 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 or mineral extraction developments which can raise complex environmental and amenity issues. This variation in complexity 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.

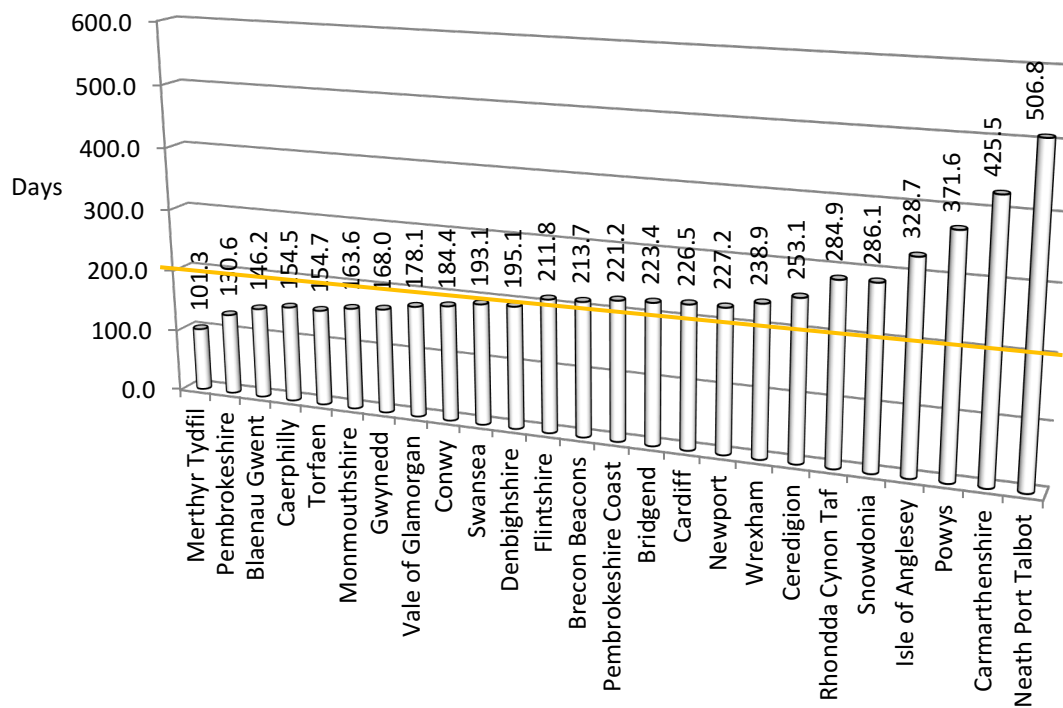


Fig 17 – Comparison of average time taken to determine major planning applications over 5 years

Figure 17 illustrates LPA performance against this indicator over a 5-year period, from April 2014 to March 2019. It is noted that Merthyr Tydfil, one of the LPAs with the smallest officer teams in Wales, is able to achieve consistently high performance against this indicator. The Council's APR indicates that major applications are dealt with personally by the Council's sole Principal Planning Officer. The Council also attributes its success in this area to comprehensive, meaningful and effective pre-application discussions, including on Section 106 Agreements, as well as the ability to build effective working relationships with applicants and agents.

At the other end of the Spectrum, Neath Port Talbot CBC frequently considers major applications of a heavy industrial nature, raising significant issues relating to environmental impact. The technical and sensitive nature of these applications necessitates careful consideration. The Council reports it has sought to engage with developers to bring these complex cases to a position where a decision can be made, and in some cases, developers are unable to provide further information required in a reasonable time frame and reluctant to withdraw those applications whilst information can be assembled.

It is accepted that this enabling approach to applications is part of the development of a constructive working relationship cited as being helpful by higher performing LPAs.

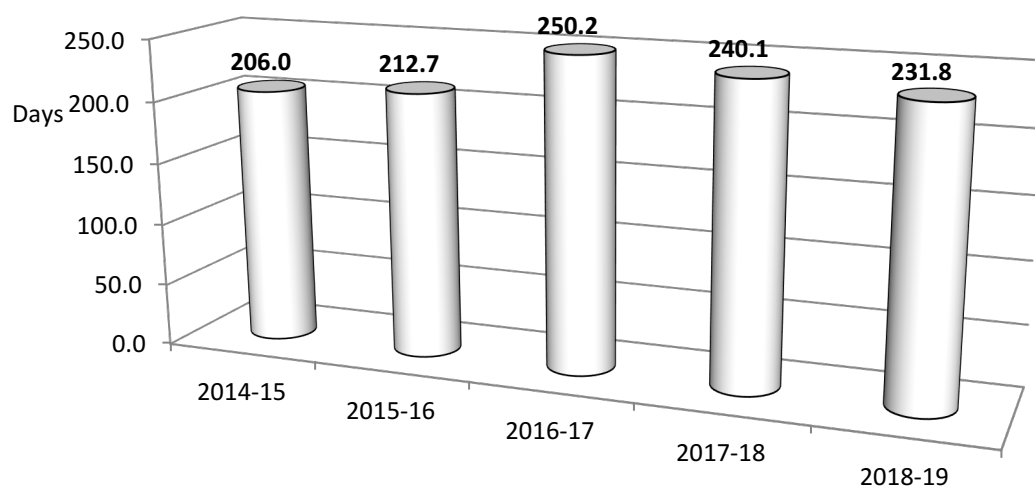


Fig 18 – Year-on-year comparison of average time taken to determine major planning applications, in days

All-Wales performance against this indicator has again marginally improved over the last 12 months. The number of LPAs with average time above 200 days has again reduced, and a significant outlier (Neath Port Talbot CBC) has a noted impact on the all-Wales performance standard.

The average time taken to determine major applications in Wales continues to indicate the determination of major applications within 8 weeks is unachievable in many cases, with even the highest performing authorities averaging a determination time longer than this period. The impact of pre-application procedures has not resulted in significant performance change in this area.

Indicator 09 - Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required

88.1%

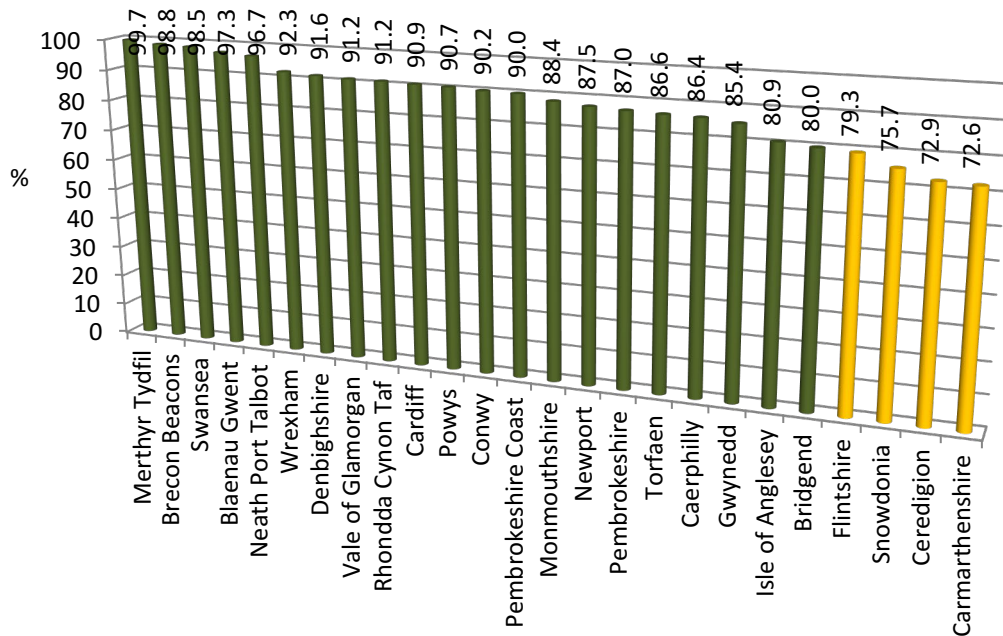


Fig 19 – Comparison of Local Planning Authority performance for determination of all planning applications

Figure 19 shows LPA performance against this indicator in the 2018-19 reporting period. Merthyr Tydfil CBC and Brecon Beacons NPA continue to demonstrate consistently high performance against this indicator. Notably, Swansea CC has also achieved very high performance standards for determining applications “on time”, demonstrating that LPAs with a heavy application workload can also achieve the same standards as the LPAs with fewer cases. Similarly, Wrexham CBC has achieved high performance against this indicator, despite a high workload per officer and a relatively small team.

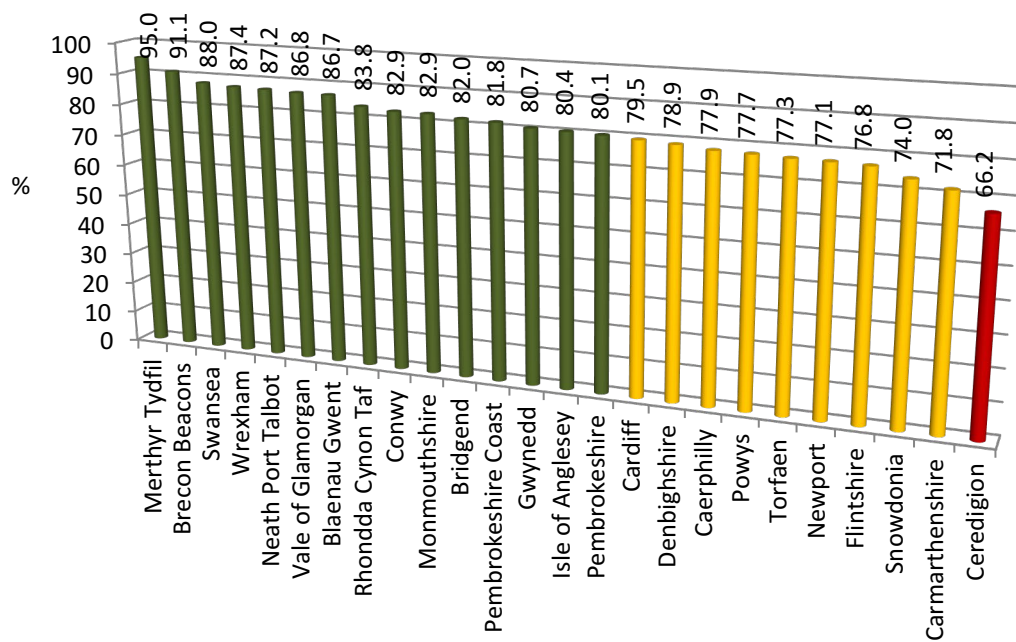


Fig 20 – Comparison of Local Planning Authority performance for determination of all planning applications over 6 years

Figure 20 illustrates LPA performance against this indicator over a 6-year period, from April 2013 to March 2019. The four LPAs named above demonstrate consistently high performance against this indicator over the 5-year analysis period.

Merthyr Tydfil CBC attributes its successful performance to a motivated and empowered officer team, as well as regular process reviews in order to ensure service efficiency.

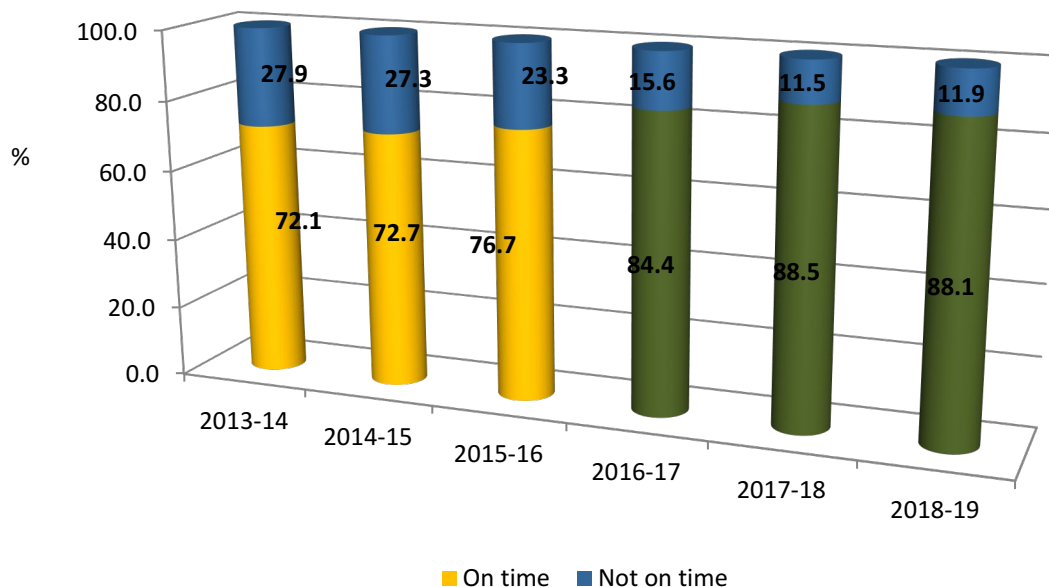


Fig 21 – Year-on-year comparison of percentage of all planning applications determined “on time”

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” .

Individual LPA performance against this standard continues to improve. All LPAs achieved either a “good” or “fair” performance standard against this indicator, another improvement on the previous year.

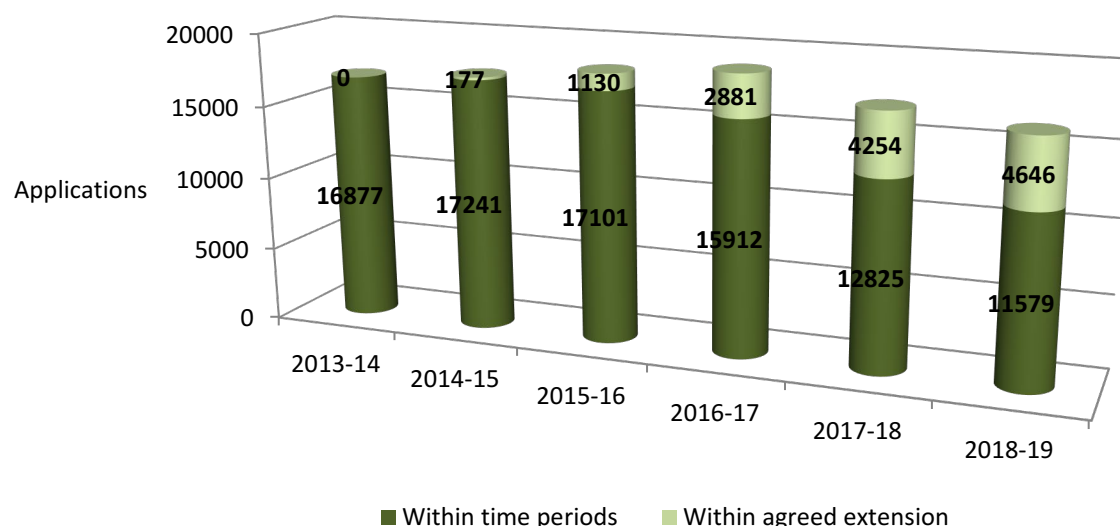


Fig 22 – Use of agreed extensions in determining all planning applications

Figure 22 shows the number and proportion of all applications being determined in accordance with an agreed extension of time. Whilst more applications may be determined “on time” than ever before, Fig 21 illustrates that the actual number of applications determined within statutory time periods has fallen consistently since 2014-15. The percentage determined within those statutory time periods has also fallen, from nearly 69.6% in 2014-15 to 56.8% in 2018-19.

This indicates LPAs are increasingly challenged to determine applications within the time periods set out in planning legislation. Where LPAs comment upon this issue, they refer to “working with” applicants to address shortfalls in applications rather than refusing. Changes in legislation introduced following the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 were designed to exclude the possibility of significant changes to applications once submitted.

It is unexpected to see the number of applications determined within statutory time periods, following those changes, has decreased rather than increased. The number and proportion of all applications subject to an agreed extension of time indicates LPAs may be making more ready use of the principle of agreed extensions for determination periods, and as a consequence assigning a lower priority to meeting statutory determination times. Further investigation is required in this area.

Indicator 10 - Average time taken to determine all applications in days

80.7 days

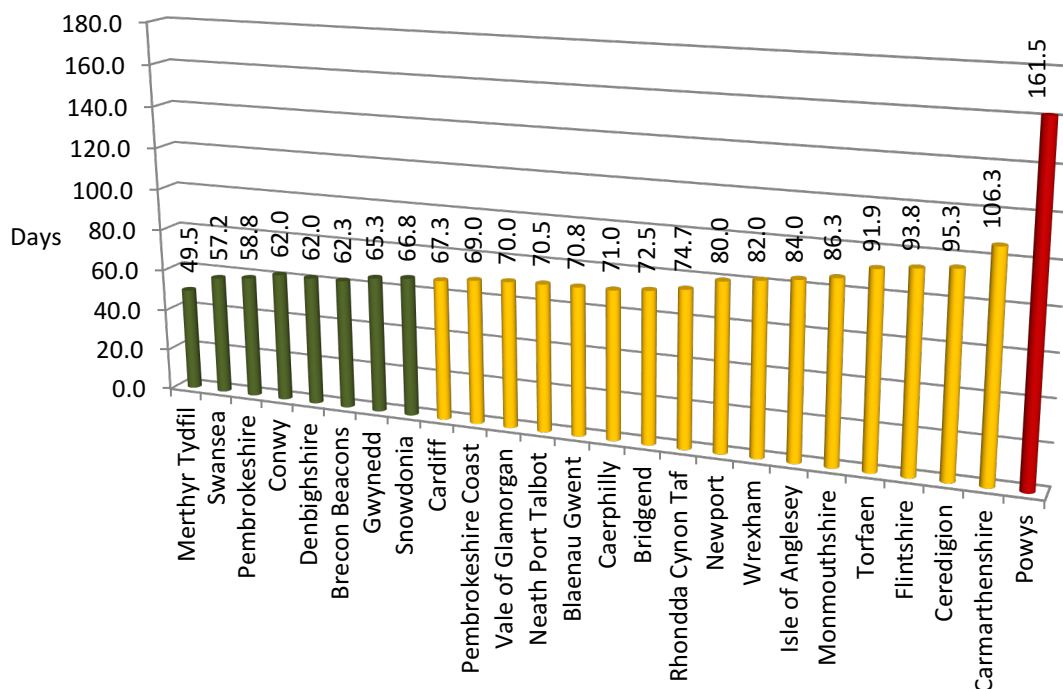


Fig 23 – Comparison of average time taken to determine all planning applications

Figure 23 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”. On the whole, performance of Local Planning Authorities against this indicator falls within reasonable expectations, with the exception of one extreme outlier.

Powys County Council is the LPA with the longest average time to determine applications, with 161.5 days. This is a slight improvement on its performance of 181.3 days in the previous reporting period, however the Council still takes considerably longer than all other LPAs to determine planning applications – and over three times as long as Merthyr Tydfil CBC, the highest performing LPA.

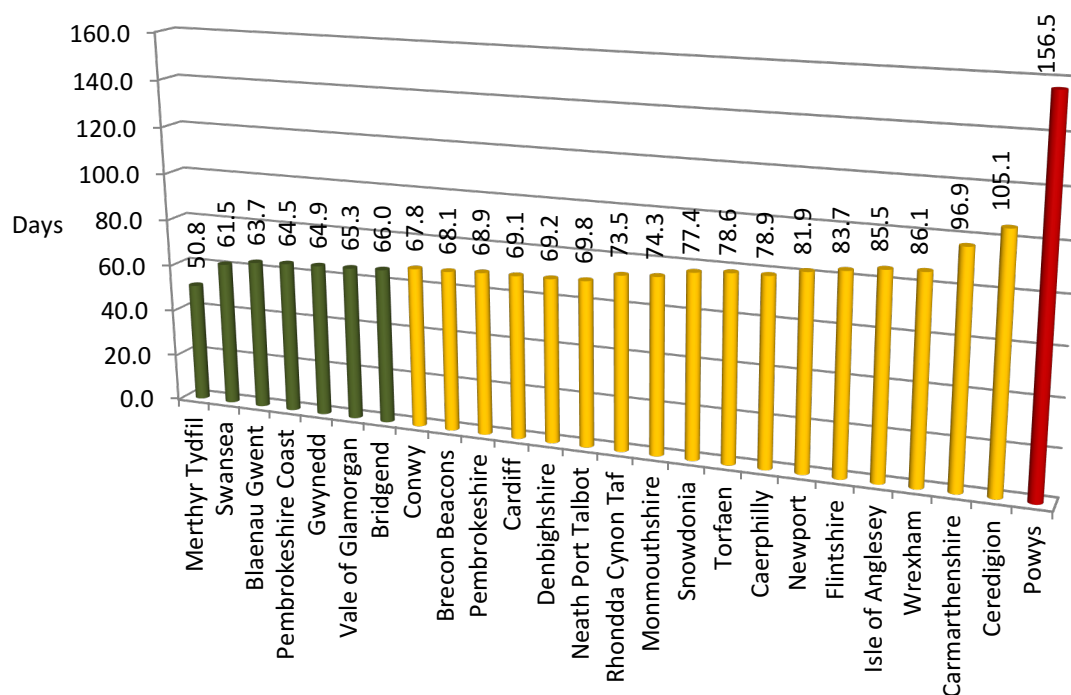


Fig 24 – Comparison of average time taken to determine all planning applications over 5 years

Figure 24 illustrates LPA performance against this indicator over a 5-year period, from April 2014 to March 2019. As with the 12-month performance reporting period, Merthyr Tydfil CBC and Swansea CC are performance forerunners. This also illustrates that Powys CC's underperformance for average time to determine applications consistent throughout the reporting period.

The Council cites the complexity of dealing with a large number of applications for intensive poultry units, the need to work with NRW to consider complex issues arising from them, and the resource-intensive nature of this work, in its APR. This is identified as a critical area for improvement. We will monitor performance in this area closely, in anticipation of improvement.

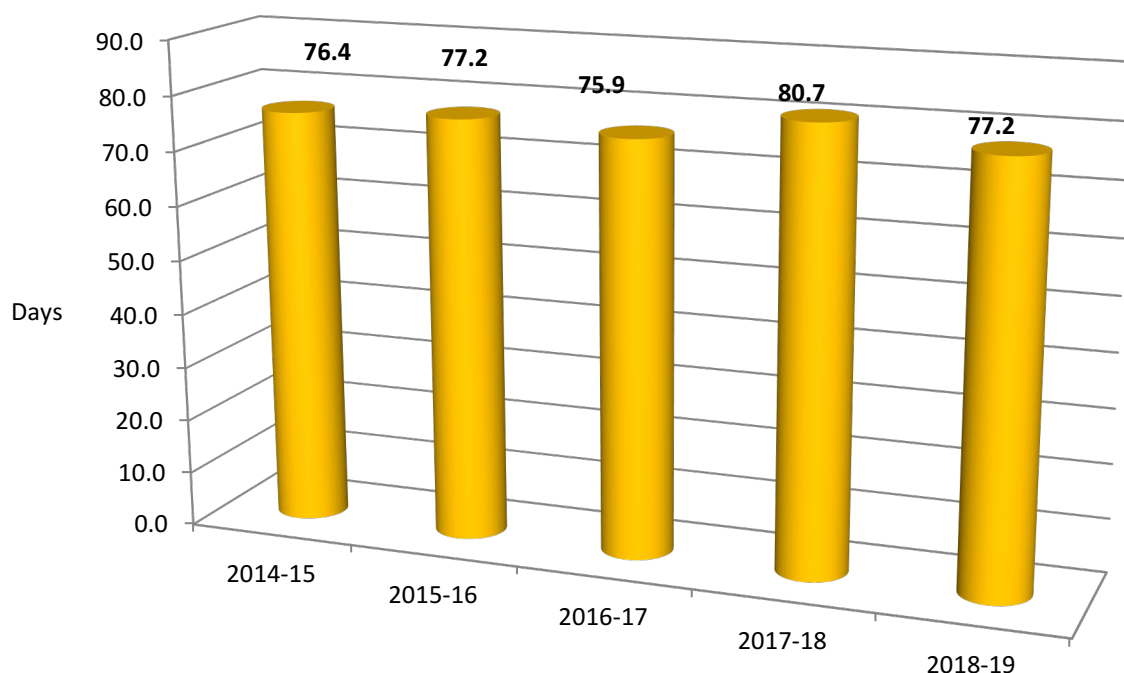


Fig 25 – Year-on-year comparison of average time taken to determine all planning applications, in days

Figure 25 illustrates year-on-year performance on an all-Wales basis. Performance is colour-coded although annual performance falls within the amber (or “fair”) banding for all five reporting years. Performance in this area is consistent when viewed from an all-Wales perspective, with a minor performance improvement in the most recent reporting period.

Although the overall trend for performance against this indicator across Wales is stable, this is not reflective of legislative changes introduced to streamline and simplify the planning application process. Greater use is being made for agreed extensions of time for all planning applications. Legislation has also been introduced enabling applicants to claim refunds of planning fees if applications are not determined within a reasonable time frame.

The legislative framework exists for applicants to seek redress when LPAs are taking an undue amount of time to determine applications, however these powers are not being widely called upon, and there has not been a significant increase in the number of applications subject to an appeal on the grounds of non-determination. This suggests applicants are happier to let applications take longer than to call upon their right to seek a refund or go to appeal.

Indicator 11 - Percentage of Listed Building Consent applications determined within time periods required

74.7%

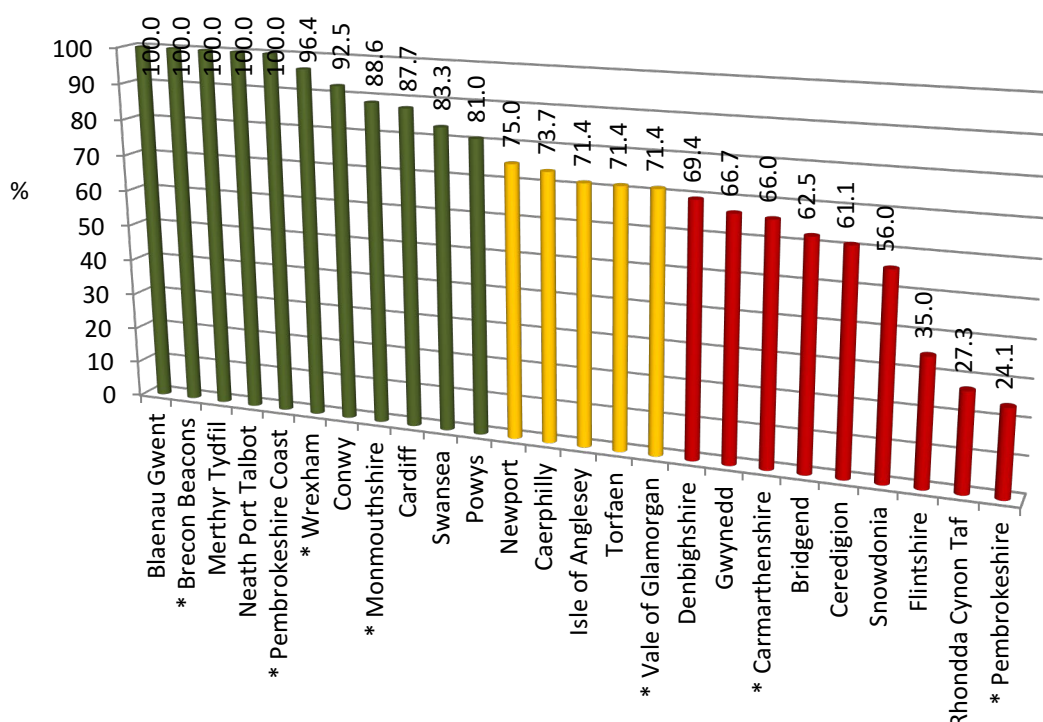


Fig 26 – Comparison of Local Planning Authority performance for determination of Listed Building Consent applications

* LPA has delegated authority to determine LBC applications

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

- Those LPAs with delegated authority from Cadw (identified with an asterisk in fig 25 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 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 any delays in Cadw’s processing of applications are beyond the influence of the LPA.

Performance targets for this indicator were agreed with the Planning Officers Society for Wales in July 2018 and are reported upon for the first time in this APR.

Figure 26 illustrates that in general, LPAs with delegated authority to determine LBCs feature more prominently at the higher end of the performance spectrum. On the whole, however, there is no direct correlation between timeliness for determining LBC applications and delegated authority from Cadw to determine LBC applications.

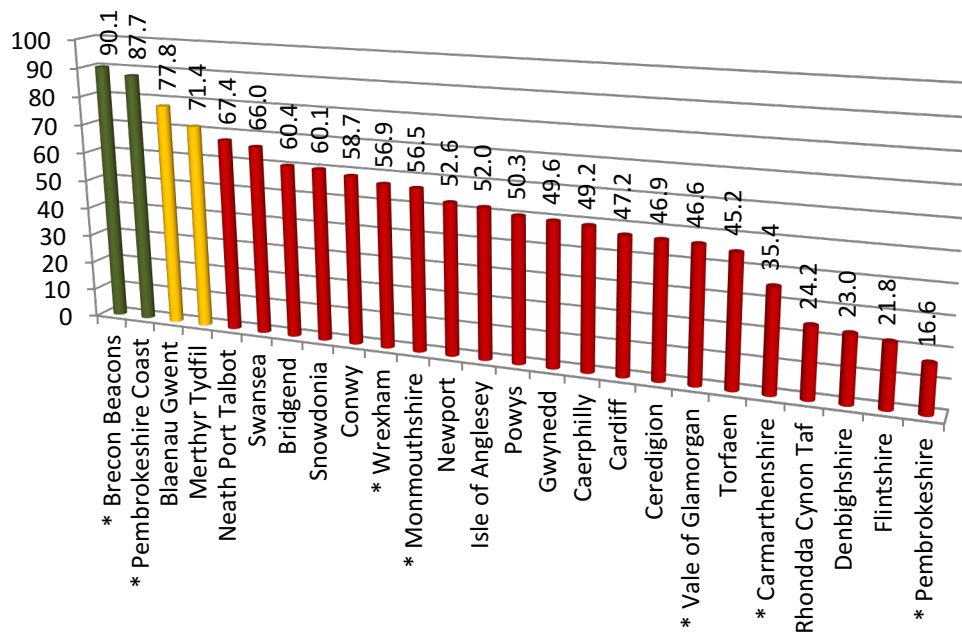


Fig 27 – Comparison of Local Planning Authority performance for determination of Listed Building Consent applications over 6 years

* LPA has delegated authority to determine LBC applications

Figure 27 illustrates the performance of LPAs against this indicator from April 2013 to March 2019. Again, this illustrates that performance improvements have been achieved by LPAs in the reporting period, compared against overall performance during the existence of the Planning Performance Framework. Wrexham, Conwy, Monmouthshire, Cardiff, Swansea and Powys Councils have all demonstrated “good” performance against this indicator, whereas they are shown as being within the “improved” banding over the full span of the above chart. This service improvement is commendable.

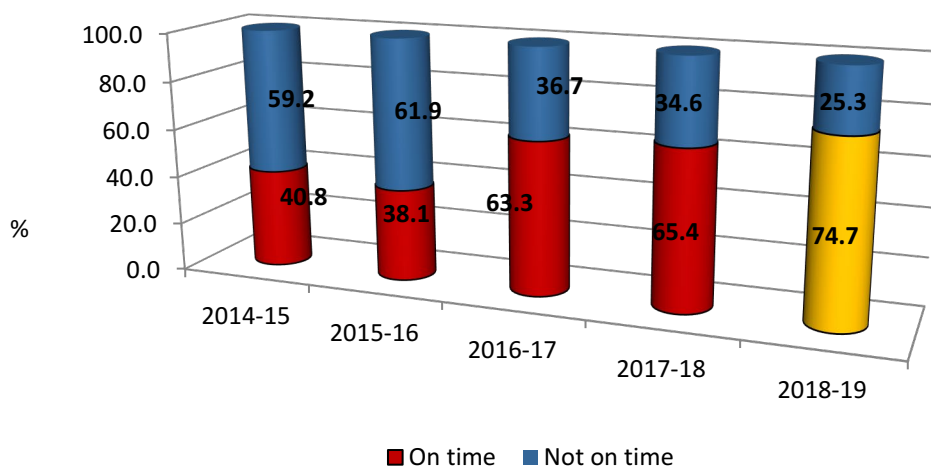


Fig 28 – Year-on-year comparison of percentage of all Listed Building Consent applications determined “on time”

Performance on LBC applications across Wales has gradually improved since 2014. This is notable when several LPAs report diminishing access to specialist expertise.

SECTION 3 - QUALITY

Indicator 12 - Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice

9.2%

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 that, as delegation schemes are put in place, the number of member decisions made contrary to officer advice is likely to increase. Any such decision must be based on sound planning reasons.

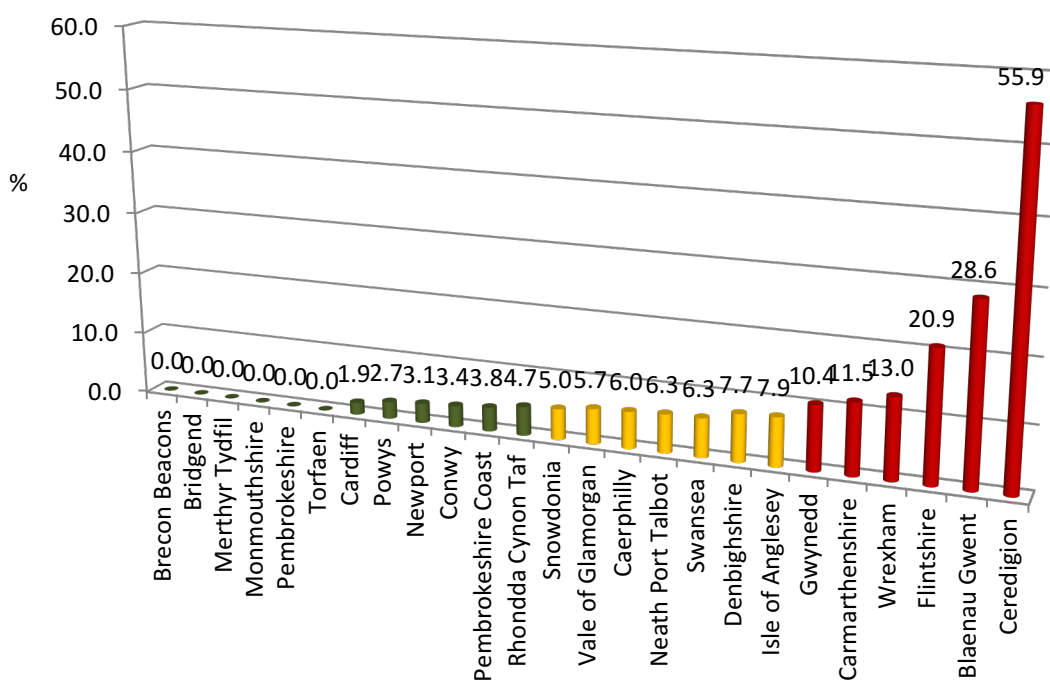


Fig 29 – Percentage of planning applications determined contrary to officer advice

Figure 29 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” .

As with previous years, one LPA’s performance is so poor that it significantly skews the all-Wales average for this performance indicator. Ceredigion County Council consistently determines a very high proportion of applications contrary to officer advice. There are either tensions in the relationship between Members and officers, or Members are displaying insufficient regard for the plan-led system, or both. This is counterproductive and creates uncertainty within the planning system, which communities and developers rely upon to create confidence in the shape and location of future development and leads to low levels of public confidence in the planning service locally.

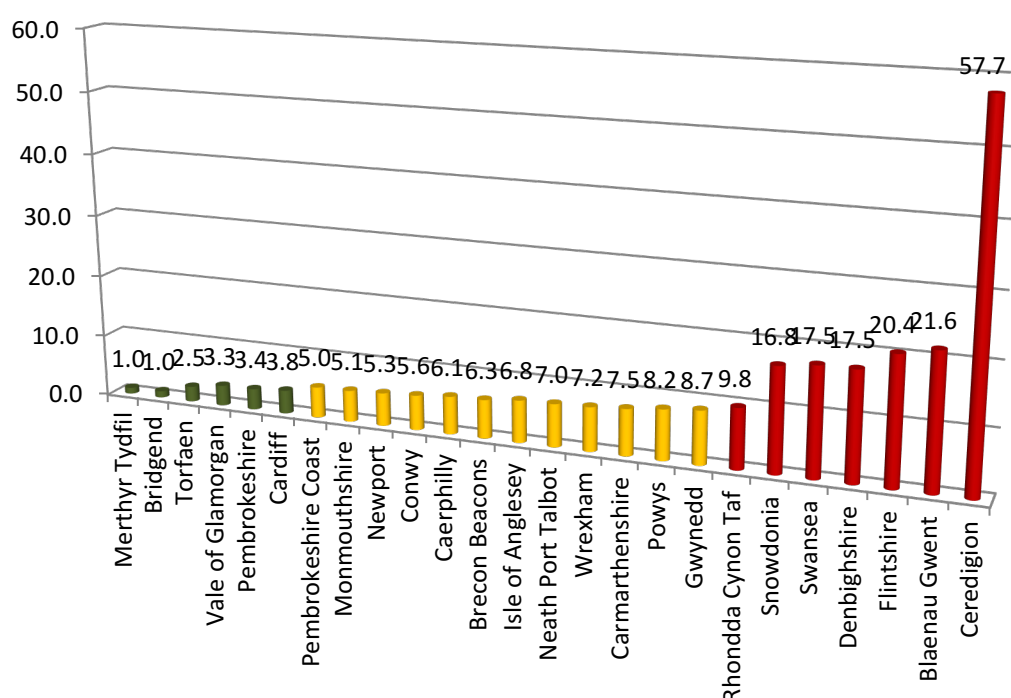


Fig 30 – Percentage of planning applications determined contrary to officer advice over 5 years

The proportion of applications determined by committee can make performance fluctuate in this indicator, although there is no relationship between the number of applications take to Committee and the percentage of overturns. For example, Wrexham CBC determined the highest number of applications at Committee, at 146 – 17% of all applications determined by the Council – and yet still achieved a “fair” performance banding.

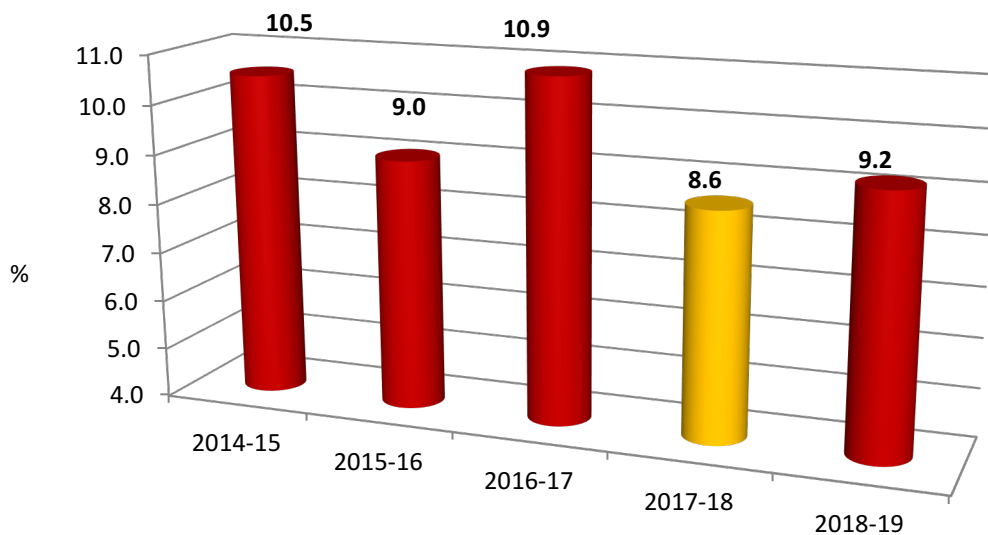


Fig 31 – Year-on-year comparison of percentage of Member decisions made contrary to officer advice

Figure 31 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”. 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 fewer, more contentious, applications are determined by Committees then those applications are more likely to be determined contrary to officer recommendation.

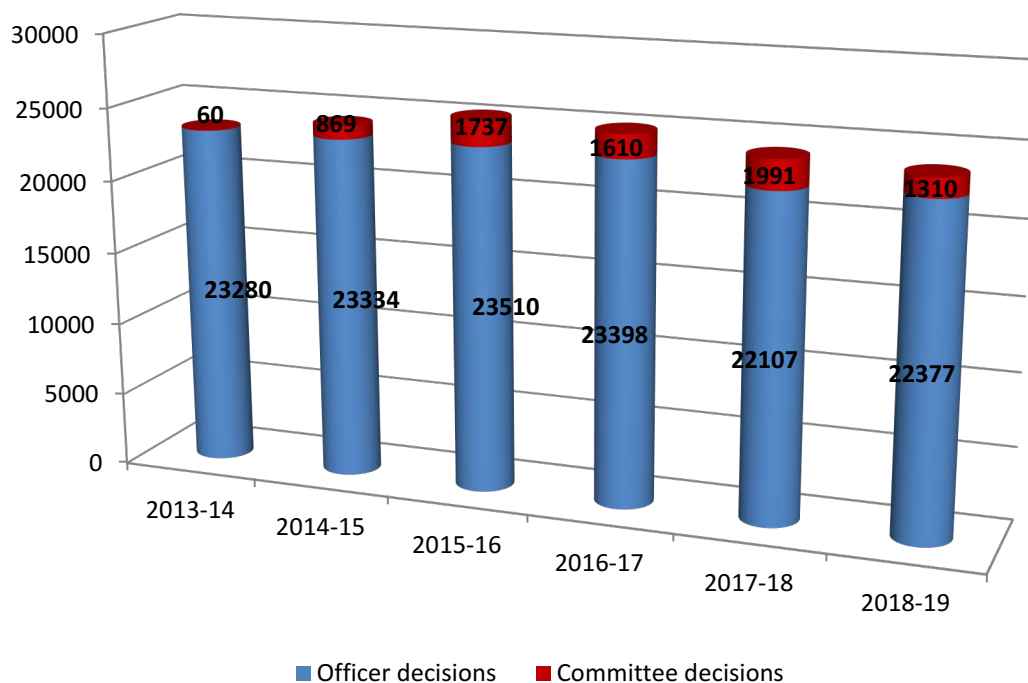


Fig 32 – Number of decisions made at Planning Committee

Figure 32 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.

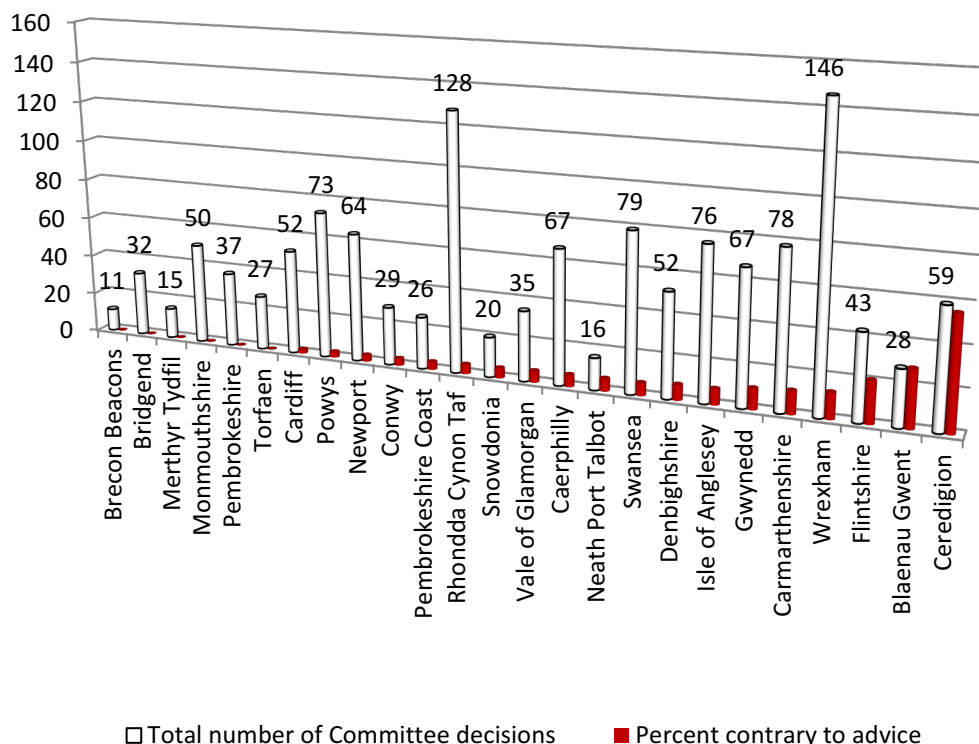


Fig 33 – Number of planning applications determined contrary to officer advice compared against total number of Committee decisions

Figure 33 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.

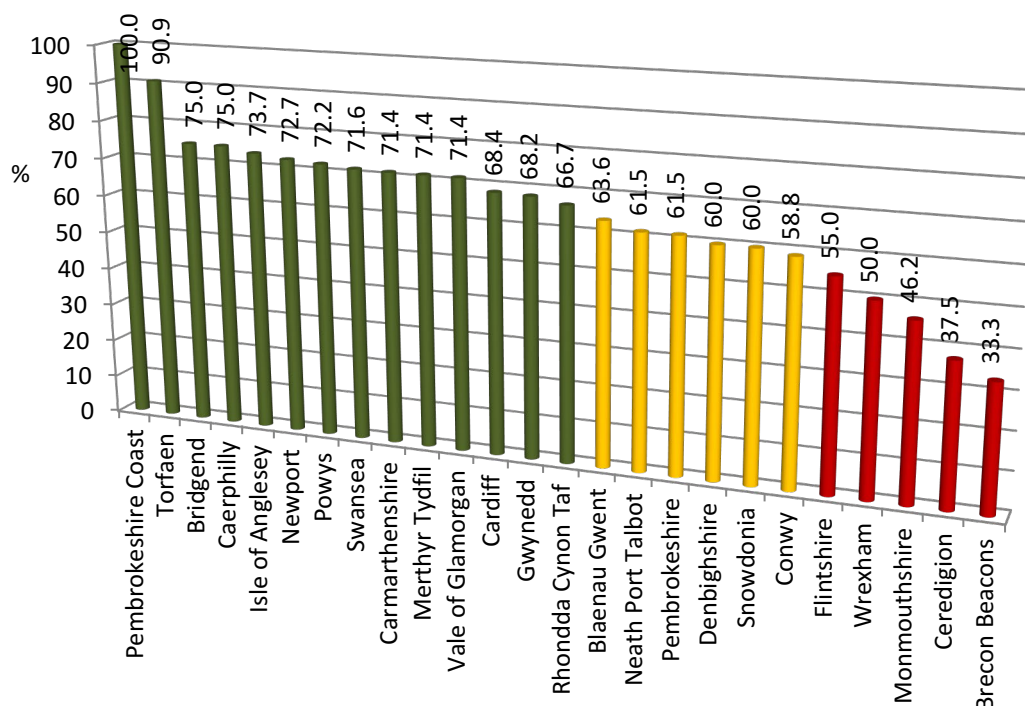


Fig 34 – Percentage of planning appeals dismissed

The chart at Figure 34 shows the comparative performance at appeal of each LPA, with performance colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good”. The average across Wales for the reporting period has returned to the “good” performance banding, with a figure of 67.5%. As with previous years, it is accepted a small sample size may significantly skew the performance reported by some smaller LPAs, in any individual reporting period.

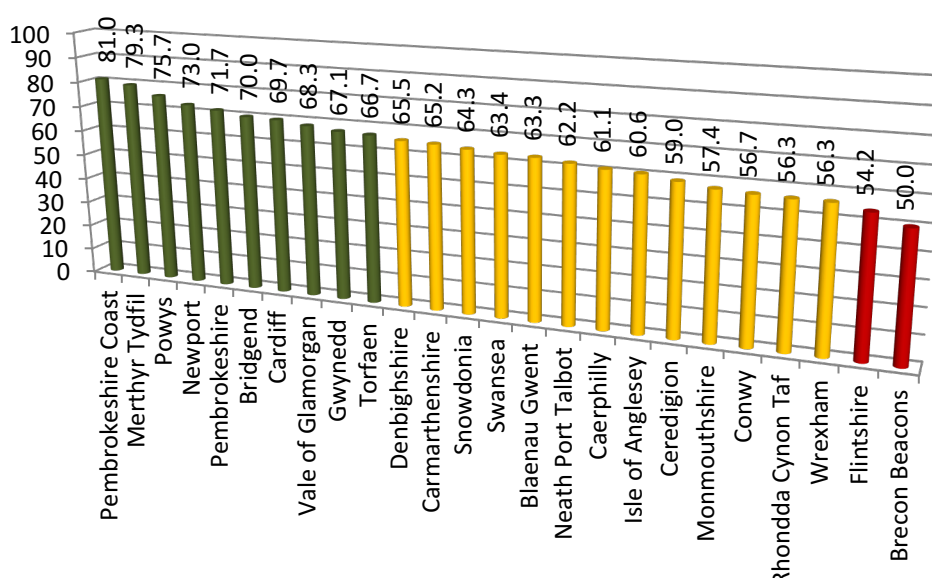


Fig 35 – Percentage of planning appeals dismissed over 4 years

The chart at Figure 35 illustrates the performance of planning decisions at appeal, by LPA, from April 2015 to March 2019. This enables a more robust analysis of performance by LPAs with smaller application workloads. For example, Brecon Beacons NPA's performance at appeal can now be judged over 16 appeals, rather than the 3 determined in the 2018-19 reporting period. In the main, those LPAs performing successfully against this indicator have an adopted and up-to-date LDP, and determine applications in accordance with those policies. Those LPAs which demonstrate scope for improvement either do not have an up-to-date LDP, or are not determining applications in accordance with the relevant policies, or both.

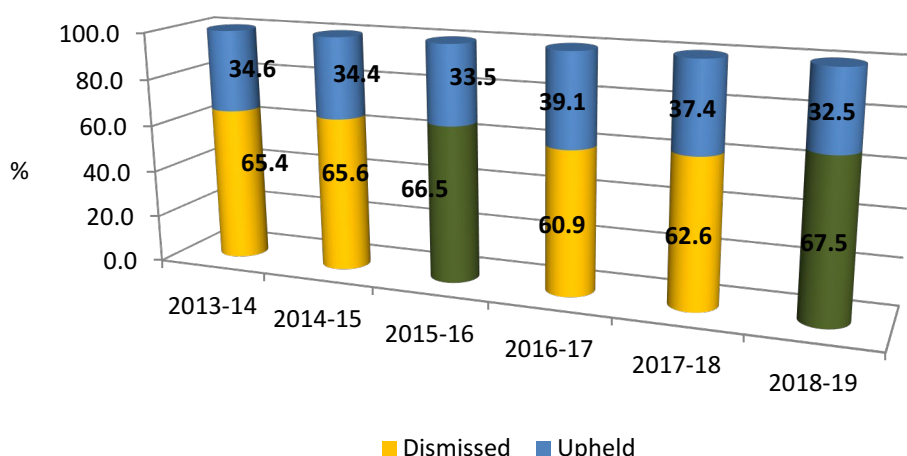


Fig 36 – Year-on-year comparison of percentage of planning appeals dismissed

Figure 36 shows all-Wales performance for this indicator, which is colour-coded to red for "improve", amber for "fair" and green for "good". It shows in total, 360 of 532 appeals (67.5%) were dismissed in 2018/19, which continues the gradual performance improvement against this indicator displayed over the previous two years. This may be attributable to the increasing number of adopted LDPs.

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.

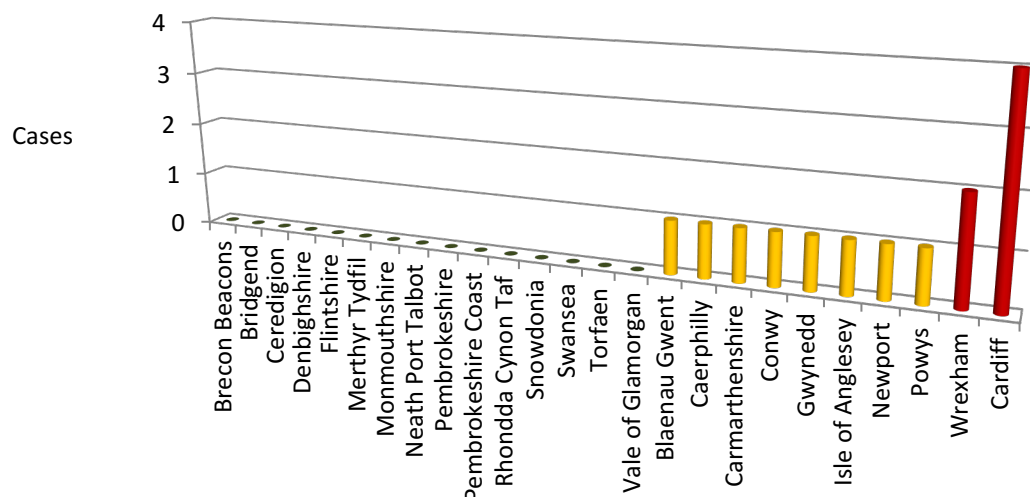


Fig 37 – Number of cases where costs have been awarded against the Local Planning Authority at appeal

Fig 37 above illustrates costs were awarded against LPAs in 10 cases. Two authorities were subject to award of costs in two or more cases, which makes those authorities fall within the “improve” banding. In the case of Cardiff CC, costs were awarded against the LPA four times in the reporting period.

This is an unusually high number of awards of costs, and is not necessarily a reflection of the size of the LPA’s workload; for example, there were 57 appeals against Cardiff CC in the reporting period, compared to Swansea CC, where 95 of the Council’s decisions were subject to appeal in the same reporting period, and no costs were awarded. Cardiff CC attributes this high number of costs cases to the challenge of addressing pressure for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in the city.

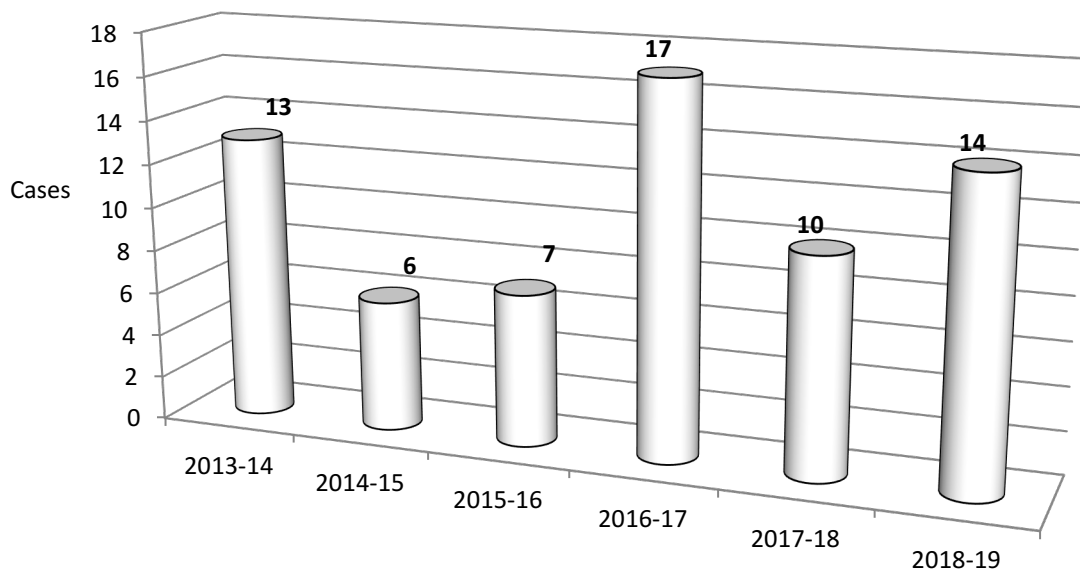


Fig 38 – Year-on-year comparison of number of cases where costs have been awarded against the Local Planning Authority at appeal

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. LPAs have demonstrated improvement in performance against this indicator where Committees have reviewed appeal decisions and the associated outcomes, as learning points.

SECTION 4 – ENGAGEMENT

Indicator 15 - Does the local planning authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee?

Yes
(24 out of 25
LPAs)

The Welsh Government's 2012 research "Public Attitudes to the Planning System" identified that whilst there was on balance, confidence in the planning system, members of the public felt they did not have the ability to effectively participate in the decision making process. The report also states local citizens' influence on planning was thought to be limited at best.

A series of changes have been introduced to the planning system in Wales since the research report was published, including the statutory duty to undertake pre-application community engagement on major development proposals. The ability to speak at Committee meetings to determine planning applications is also highly effective at involving citizens in decisions which affect them.

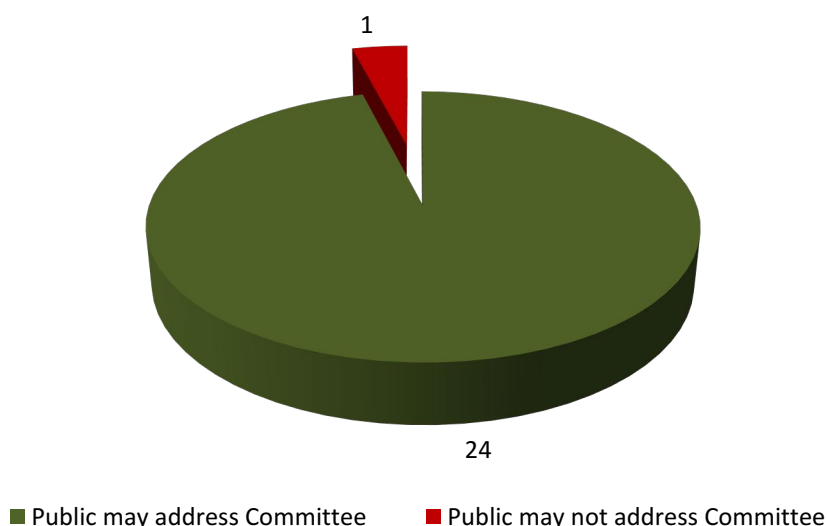


Fig 39 – number of Local Planning Authorities permitting members of the public to address Planning Committee

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 reports it is not in a position to change its Standing Orders for Committee procedures at the current time.

Indicator 16 - Does the local planning authority have an officer on duty to provide advice to members of the public?

Yes
(22 out of 25
LPAs)

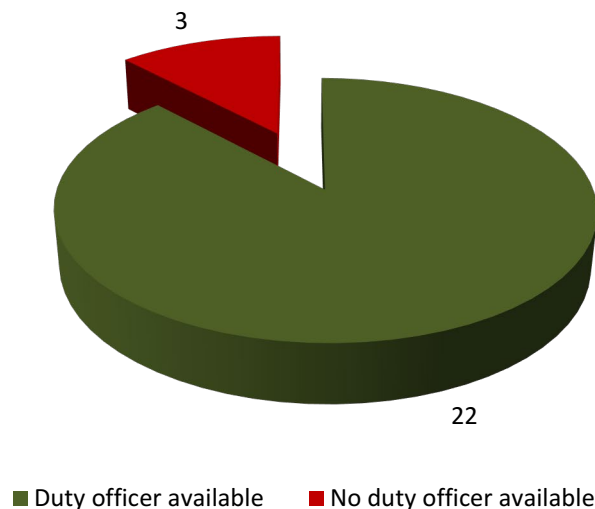


Fig 40 – Year-on-year comparison of number of authorities which provide a “duty officer” service

Figure 40 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. Bridgend CBC and Ceredigion CC both failed to produce an Annual Performance Report and it is assumed there is no change from their position since the previous reporting period.

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.

Indicator 17 - 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.

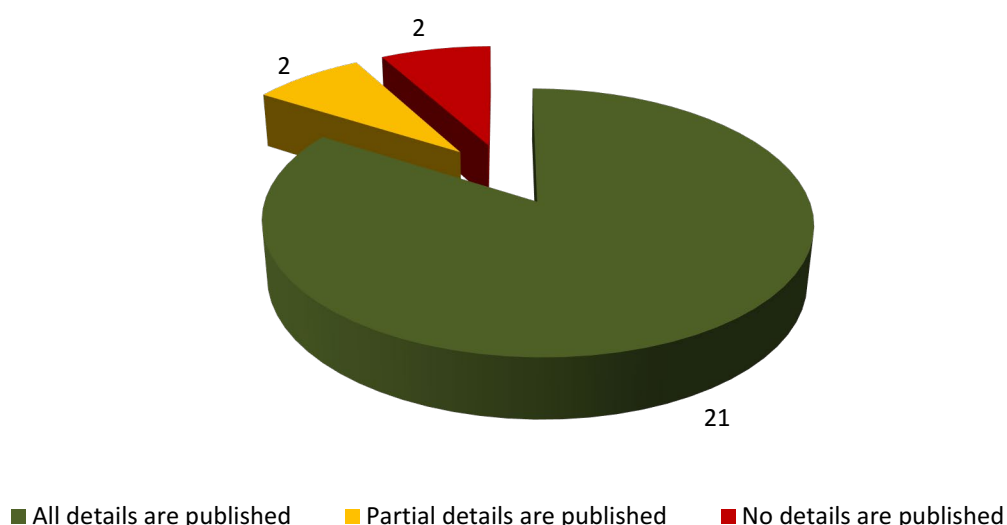


Fig 41 – number of Local Planning Authorities offering full, partial, or no planning application details on their web site

Figure 41 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.

Although this demonstrates no change for performance against these standards in the reporting periods, three of the four LPAs demonstrating this is an area for improvement have all achieved positive action. For example, Isle of Anglesey CC successfully launched an online system enabling the public to review applications, in August 2019, shortly after the close of the reporting period. In next year's report, Isle of Anglesey CC will be identified in the "good" performance banding.

Blaenau Gwent CBC is also in preparatory stages for the launch of a similar web service in the near future. Pembrokeshire Coast NPA also reports improvements to the level of information made available on the Park Authority's website, which will be reflected in next year's report.

SECTION 5 – ENFORCEMENT

Indicator 18 - Percentage of enforcement cases investigated within 84 days

76.9%

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.

LPAs must manage the expectations of third parties in the pursuit of enforcement activity. Enforcement powers should only be used when the LPA considers it is expedient to do so, in the wider public interest. The first two steps, then, in the enforcement chain, are deciding whether a breach has occurred, and if so, deciding whether enforcement action is expedient. Once these decisions have been made, a complainant should be informed of the outcome.

This indicator is used to consider the effectiveness of LPAs in reaching this stage of enforcement activity.

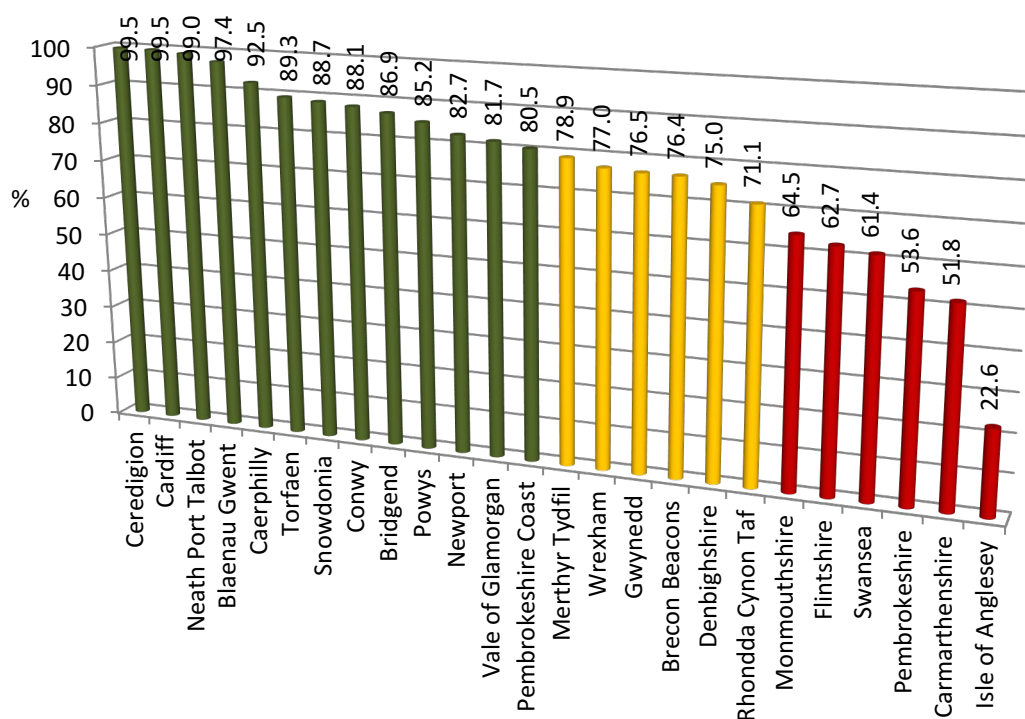


Fig 42 – percentage of enforcement complaints investigated within 84 days

Figure 42 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”. 13 LPAs meet the “good” performance banding. There are significant outliers in performance against this indicator.

Once again this year, Blaenau Gwent CBC has achieved excellent performance for enforcement investigations despite the comparatively small size of the Council's planning team. Cardiff CC also demonstrates that large authority with a heavy caseload can still review alleged breaches of planning control quickly and effectively.

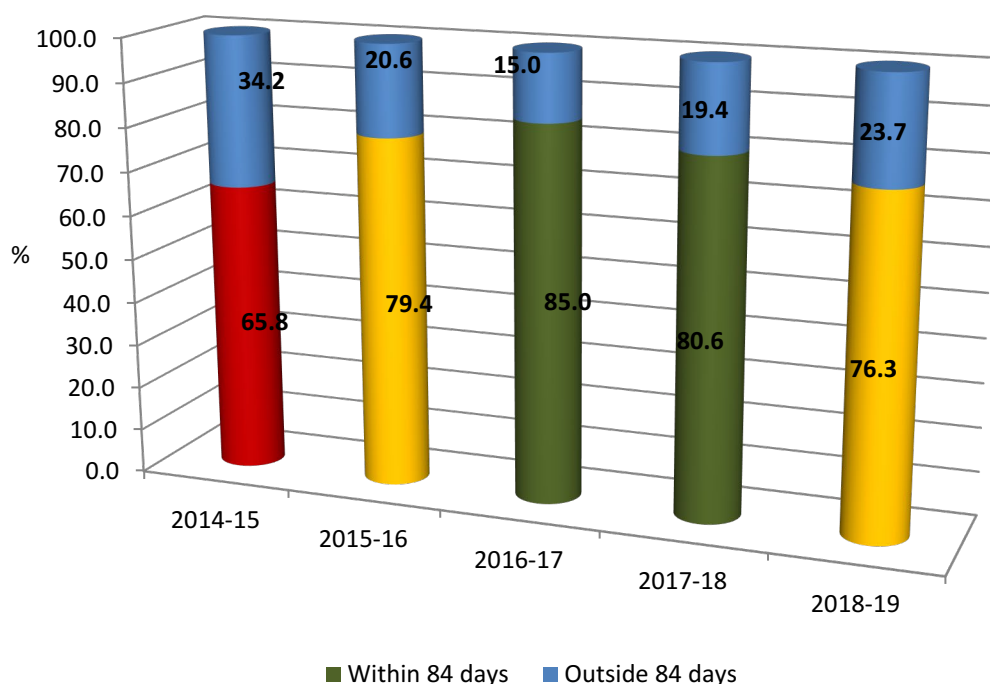


Fig 43 – Year-on-year comparison of the percentage of enforcement cases investigated within 84 days

Figure 43 shows all-Wales performance against this indicator, which is colour-coded to red for “improve”, amber for “fair” and green for “good”. 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 clear the backlog.

Indicator 19 - 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 18. 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.

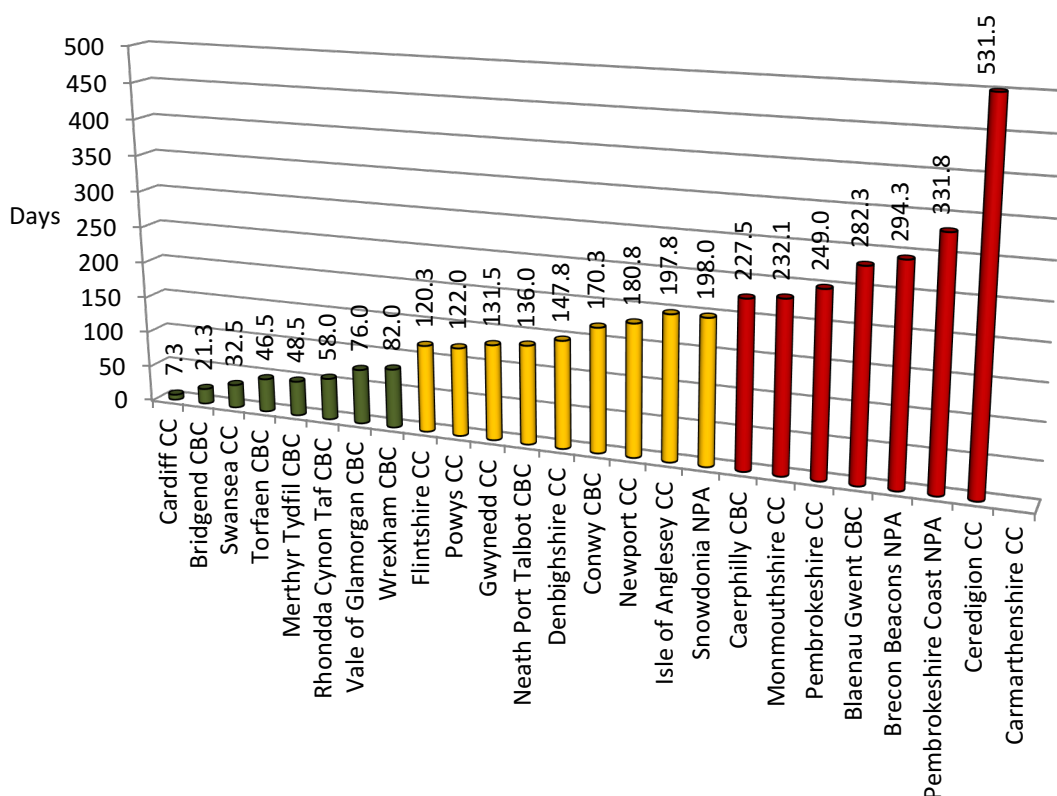


Fig 44 – Average time taken to resolve enforcement cases

Figure 44 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. One LPA failed to provide performance data during the reporting period.

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 trends 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

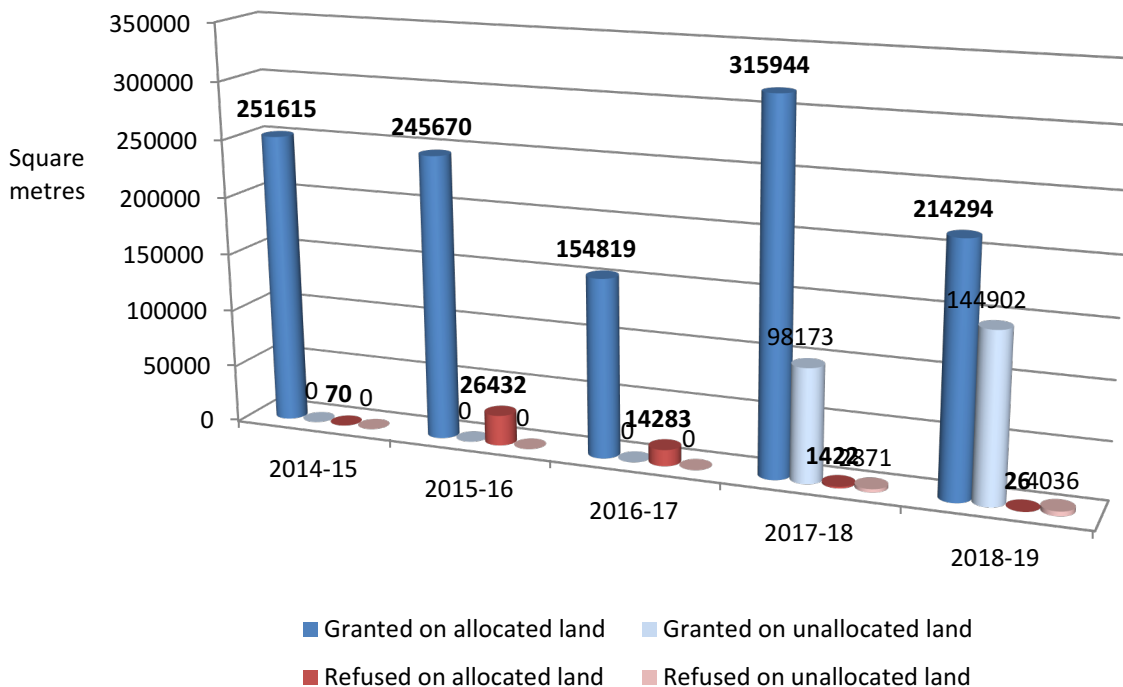
The following local planning authority did not provide data within the reporting period:

- 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

**359,196 sqm approved,
4,062 sqm refused**



This indicator provides information on the contribution the planning system is making to delivering traditional economic (or employment) development falling within the B1, B2 and B8 use classes.

The planning system supports economic development which contributes to prosperity and regeneration. To help achieve this aim Planning Policy Wales requires Planning Authorities to work strategically and cooperatively, and to steer development to the most sustainable and efficient locations. The need for new economic development should not be constrained by a shortage of land.

Over the period 2018-19 a total of 359,197 square metres of new employment floorspace was granted planning permission and 4,062 sqm was refused. Most of the refusals, 4,036sqm, were on unallocated sites, only 26sqm was refused on allocated sites.

Of the floorspace total, 214,295 sqm was permitted on allocated employment sites, whilst a further 144,902 sqm was granted on unallocated sites. On allocated sites this was a reduction in new floorspace of 38% compared with last year (314,533sqm), and is more in keeping with figures for 2014-15 and 2016-17. On unallocated sites there was a more modest reduction of 14% compared with last year. Prior to 2017-18 direct comparisons between years can only be made for allocated sites because development on unallocated sites was not recorded. There is no particular pattern emerging in terms of totals permitted or refused over the last 5 years.

Floorspace Granted Planning Permission on Allocated Employment Sites

Business Sector

This year, the business sector contributed 33% of the employment floorspace granted, this is up from 23% in 2017-18. However, in terms of actual total floorspace granted, 2018-19 was similar to 2017-18 at 72,014sqm compared with 74,986sqm. The authority with the largest contribution to this total was Cardiff County Council at 50,657sqm or 70% of Wales' total. Results from the last two years indicate some stability in the business market in relation to previous years where, for example, in 2014-15 a total of 69,068sqm (or 27% of employment development) was granted. However, 2015-16 experienced a significant fall in floorspace when only 14,390sqm (6% of total employment development) was granted. In the 6 years since 2013-14 Cardiff has granted 93,897sqm (29%) of business floorspace followed by Powys at 62,435sqm (19%) and Blaenau Gwent at 50,805sqm (16%). Together these three authorities have contributed 64% of all business floorspace during this period.

General Industry

General industry is the smallest contributor to the total granted this year at 20%; this is an increase on last year's figure of 15%. However, in terms of actual floorspace granted, this year has seen a decrease from 48,707sqm to 43,842sqm. This year and last year floorspace granted is approximately half that experienced in 2014-15 and 2015-16, which totalled 92,264sqm and 93,748sqm respectively. However, the inclusion of unallocated sites increases the total by 18,842sqm to 62,684sqm. The authority permitting the most general industrial floorspace in 2018-19 on allocated land was Powys County Council with 12,902sqm (29%). The majority of the remainder was spread between Caerphilly, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Vale of Glamorgan and Wrexham.

In the 6 years since 2013-14 Denbighshire has granted 89,640sqm (29%) of business floorspace, followed by Powys at 46,941sqm (15%) and Bridgend at 34,986sqm (11%). Together these three authorities have contributed 55% of all general industry floorspace during this period. The top six authorities accounted for 80% of all general industry floorspace.

Storage and Distribution

Storage and distribution was the third largest contributor this year with 45,091sqm granted permission or 21% of the total. The authority contributing the largest proportion was Caerphilly at 19,840sqm (44%) followed by Wrexham 6,375sqm (14%) and Cardiff at 4503sqm (10%). In 2017-18 storage and distribution totalled 86,779sqm or 27% of all allocated floorspace, almost double 2018-19 figure. However, a significant proportion of this 2017-18 total, 61,560sqm (71%), came from Neath Port Talbot alone.

In the 6 years since 2013-14 Newport has granted 61,560sqm (21%) of storage and distribution floorspace, followed by Powys at 53,574sqm (19%) and Gwynedd at 34,947sqm (12%). Together these three authorities have contributed 52% of all storage and distribution floorspace during this period, the top five authorities accounted for 71% of storage and distribution floorspace.

Multiple Uses

The multiple uses sector was the second largest contributor to floorspace granted this year, with 53,348sqm or 24% of the total. This is a reduction of 29,036sqm (35%) from the 2017-18 total of 82,384sqm. With the exception of 2016-17 where multiple uses totalled only 21,008sqm the general trend for multiple uses has been upward with 62,520sqm, 76,908sqm, and 82,384sqm in 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2017-18 respectively. Monmouthshire County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Council were the two local authorities contributing the most multiple use floorspace with 17,280sqm (32%) 12,862sqm (24%) respectively.

In the 6 years since 2013-14 Bridgend has granted 116,311sqm (36%) of multiple use floorspace, followed by Powys at 39,649sqm (12%) and Torfaen at 23,201sqm (7%). Together these three authorities have contributed 55% of all multiple use floorspace during this period, the top five authorities accounted for 69% of multiple use floorspace.

Floorspace Refused Planning Permission on Allocated Employment Sites

A total of 26sqm of employment floorspace was refused planning permission this year compared to 1422 in 2017-18 and 14,283sqm in 2016-17. Over the 3 years between 2014-15 and 2016-17 refused floorspace was 0.1%, 8%, and 9%. There have been no observable patterns in refusals over the last 5 years, other than multiple uses which have had no refusals over the period.

Floorspace Granted Planning Permission on Un-allocated Employment Sites

Floorspace granted permission on un-allocated sites made up 40% of all employment floorspace granted (144,902sqm) compared with 34% over the previous period. Storage and distribution uses made up the largest proportion of this with 38% (56,169sqm). This was followed by the business sector with 27% (39,853sqm), multiple uses with 21% (30,038sqm) and general industry with 13% (18,842sqm).

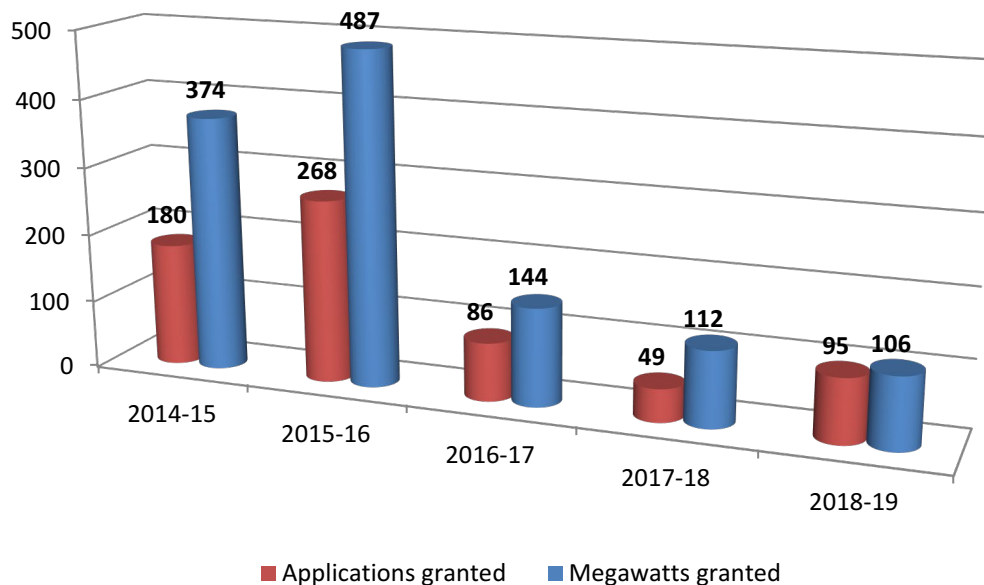
The authorities which permitted the most unallocated floorspace in the storage and distribution sector were Newport County Council with 39% (22,300sqm) and Cardiff County Council with 22% (12,606sqm). In the business sector Rhondda Cynon Taf permitted 47% (18,918sqm) of the total, followed by Conwy at 28% (11,554sqm). For multiple uses Rhondda Cynon Taf permitted 47% (14,222sqm) whilst for general industry Pembrokeshire permitted 49% (9393sqm).

Floorspace Refused Planning Permission on Un-allocated Employment Sites

Floorspace refused permission on un-allocated sites made up 99%% of all employment floorspace refused. A total of 4,036sqm was refused over the period 2018-19, compared to 3171sqm in 2017-18. Multiple uses made up the largest proportion of this figure at 2401sqm or 59%. This was followed by business with 1164sqm (28%), and general industry with 471sqm. No storage or distribution was refused despite it being the largest sector permitted on unallocated land.

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

95 applications,
106 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 that 95 planning applications for renewable energy schemes were granted planning permission in 2018/19, with a potential generating capacity of 106 Megawatts (MW). This is similar to the previous year, but with a higher number of smaller schemes approved. The technologies with the greatest number of schemes granted planning permission were solar (28 approvals) and hydropower (40 approvals). In terms of generating capacity, the technologies contributing the most were solar (59MW), wind (22MW) and biomass (14MW).

There has been a slowing down of renewable energy and low carbon schemes being brought forward and obtaining consent in Wales since 2015/16. The drop in permissions is the 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 2018/19 continues the trend of a subsequent drop since the subsidy was removed.

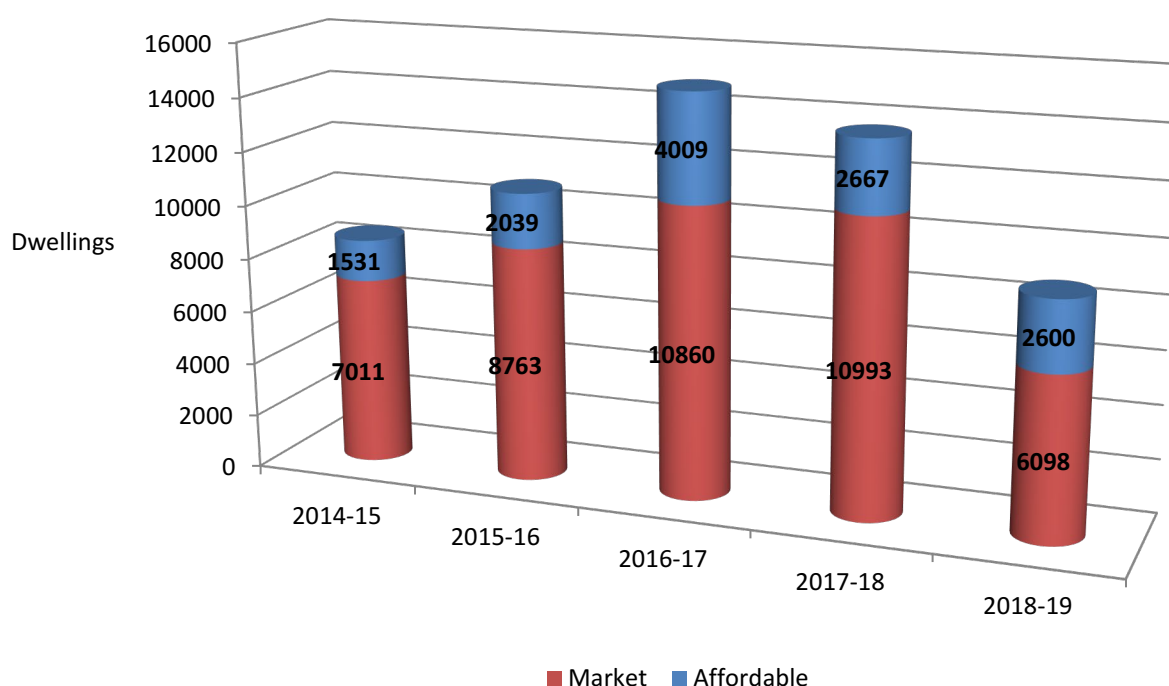
The Welsh Government is committed to tackling climate change and has accepted the UK Committee on Climate Change's (UKCCC) recommendation for a 95% reduction in Wales and intend to legislate to this effect in 2020. This represents Wales' fair contribution to the UK's commitment under the Paris Agreement and demonstrates our commitment to tackling the Climate Emergency. We have also declared our ambition to reach net-zero by 2050 and will work with the UKCCC and other stakeholders to understand how this could be

achieved. The Welsh Government has also a target to generate 70% of our electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2030.

To support the delivery of our climate change and renewable energy commitments, we have made changes to Planning Policy Wales to further strengthen our positive planning policy on renewable and low carbon energy. We are also proposing to take this forward in the National Development Framework, which we consulted on between August and November 2019 and is due to be published in September 2020.

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

6,098 market,
2,600 affordable

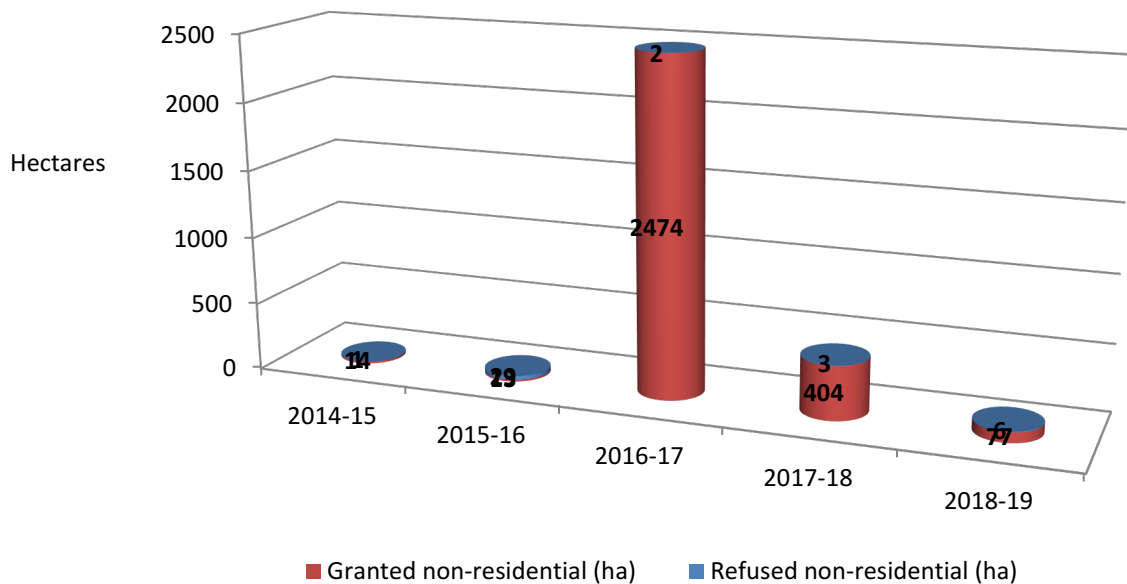
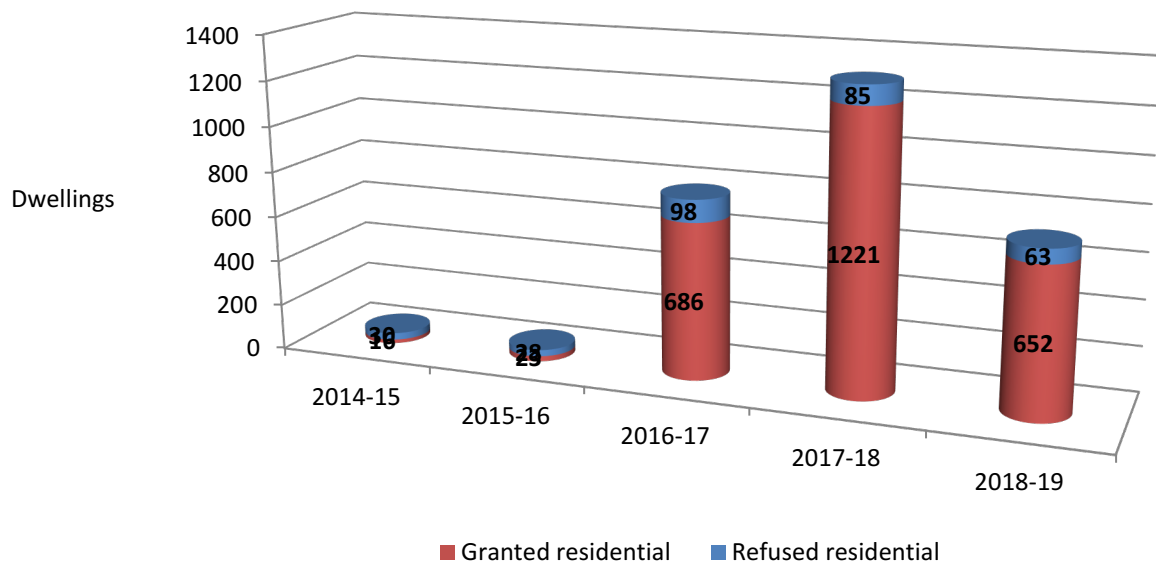


The planning system facilitates the provision of market and affordable housing to meet the local housing requirements identified by local planning authorities in their development plans. This indicator provides information on the contribution of the planning system to delivering new homes in the form 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 8,698 dwellings were granted planning permission in 2018/19, a decrease of 4,962 compared with the previous year. This was mainly due to a reduction in the number of permissions granted for market homes (down by 4,895 from 10,993 in 2017/18 to 6,098 in 2018/19). Slightly fewer affordable homes were granted planning permission in 2018/19 than in 2017/18 (2,600 compared with 2,667), representing almost 30% (29.9%) of the total number of permissions for dwellings.

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

652 dwellings and 77 hectares approved, 63 dwellings and 6 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.

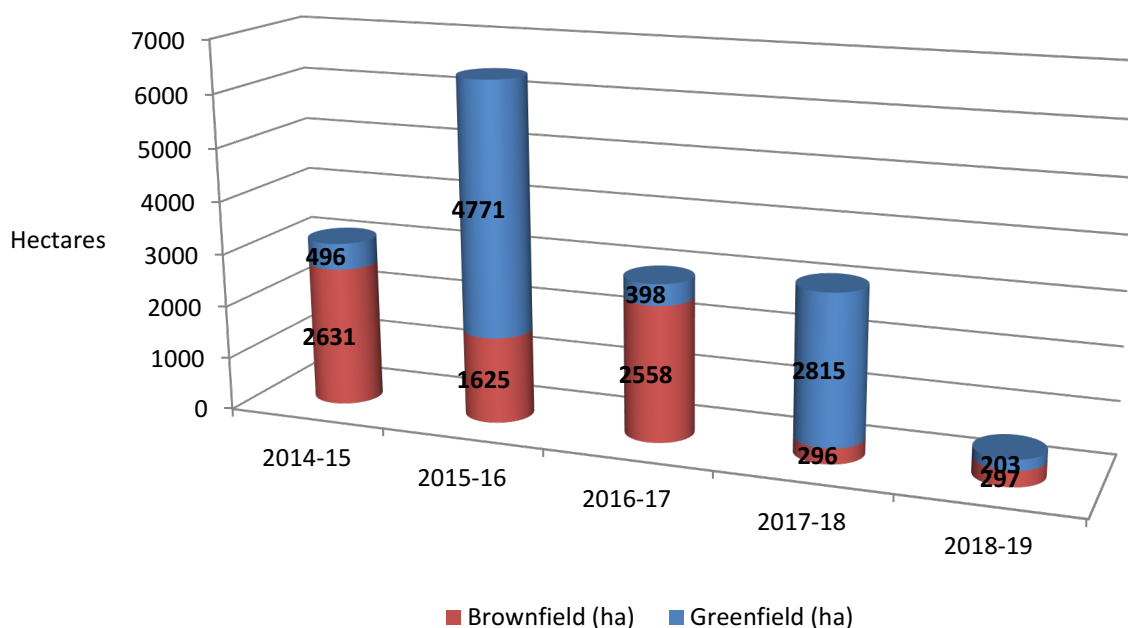
The returns for 2018-19 show 652 homes were granted planning permission in flood risk areas (flood zone C as defined on the TAN 15 Development Advice Map). Of these, 167 were allowed in areas not benefitting from flood defence (flood zone C2) while 485 homes were allowed in areas benefitting from flood defence infrastructure (zone C1). These figures are a significant improvement on the previous year's figures and are also better than the returns for 2016-17.

The amount of development land granted permission for non-residential development was 77 hectares, split relatively evenly across zone C1 (35.2ha) and zone C2 (42.0ha). This is a return to modest levels of potential development in flood risk areas, following two years which saw large amounts of development land in flood risk areas granted permission – 2,476ha in 2016/17 and 407ha in 2017/18.

We are proposing to update TAN 15 and introduce an amended notification direction in 2020. This is partly in response to the high number of homes permitted in flood risk areas since 2015. We expect these proposed changes will impact positively on returns when the changes are implemented.

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

**297 (previously developed)
203 (greenfield)**



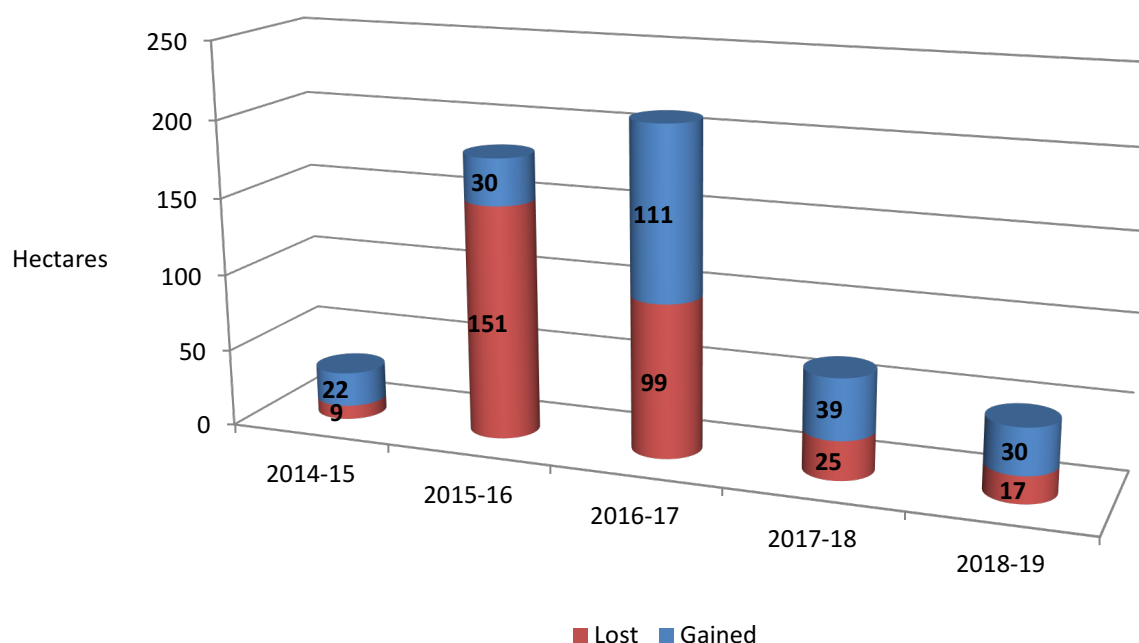
The planning system can ensure, wherever possible, previously developed land is used in preference to greenfield sites, particularly those of high agricultural or ecological value. This indicator tells us whether the planning system is directing new development to previously developed land.

The data shows that 59% of new development was approved on previously developed land in 2018/19. This is an increase from 42% the previous year, which is as a result of less development being approved on greenfield land. This is a positive change and reflects how the planning system is seeking to direct new development to previously developed land

The latest version of Planning Policy Wales strengthened this policy position, by introducing a site search sequence that 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 monitor the implementation of this policy through the Sustainable Development Indicators.

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.

**17 ha lost
30 ha gained**



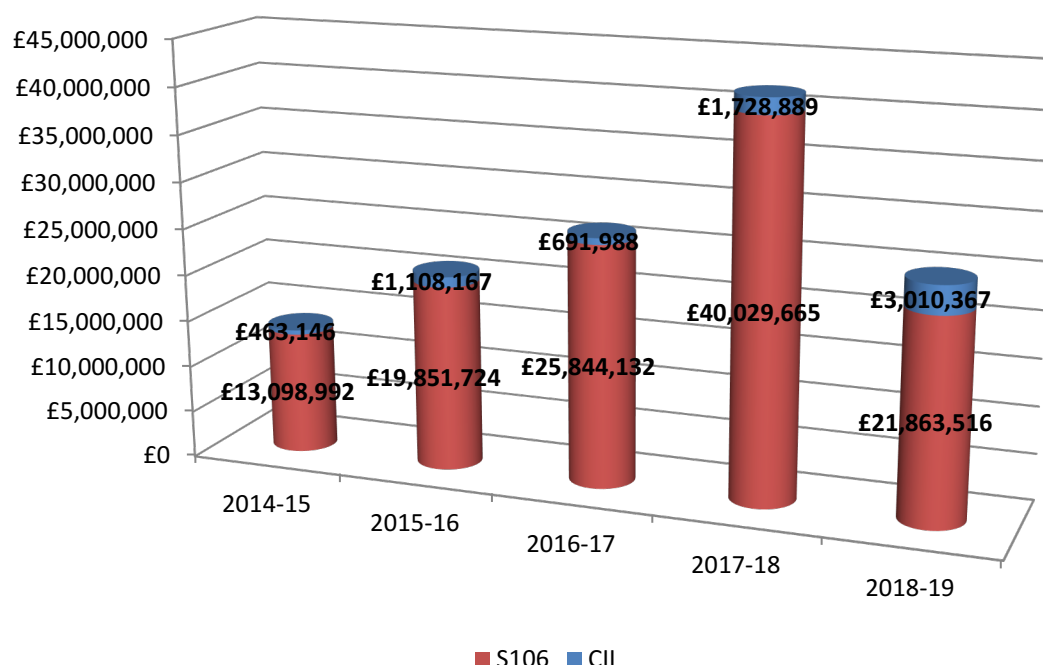
Open spaces provide recreational, amenity and environmental value as well as having a role in climate protection and adaptation to the impacts of climate change. This indicator measures how the planning system is protecting existing, and facilitating the provision of new, open spaces.

The amount of open space gained and lost in 2018/19 was noticeably lower than in previous years. In 2018/19 a total of 29.7 hectares of new open space was created. By comparison, 39ha were gained in 2017/18 and 111ha were gained in 2016/17.

There were 17.3 hectares of open space lost in 2018/19. Only in four local authority areas was more than 1 hectare of open space lost. This year's figure is the lowest since 2014/15. A net gain of 12 hectares is broadly similar to the overall picture in recent years, with the exception of 2015/16 when more than 120 hectares of open space were lost.

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

**£21,863,516
(Section 106)
£3,010,367
(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.

In comparison to last year's data, there has been a considerable drop in financial contributions agreed from new development through Section 106 agreements. There has been a decrease of approximately 45% (£18,166,149.03). However, there has been an increase in the collection of CIL contributions of approximately 75% (£1,281,478.10). Overall, there has been a decrease in financial contributions of approximately 40% (£16,884,670.91). This is largely due to the fall in the area of land granted planning permission over the previous two reporting years (See SD5).

The average collection of Section 106 contributions per local planning authority is £874,540.64, with Cardiff (£6,101,746.30), Bridgend (£4,317,206.43), Vale of Glamorgan (£3,483,167.20) and Monmouthshire (£3,009,810.89) the highest contributors, accounting for over 75% total collections. Of those who reported, Blaenau Gwent, Carmarthenshire, Merthyr Tydfil and Snowdonia reported no collections.

Of the three local planning authorities who have adopted a CIL charging structure, they reported £2,559,794.63 (Caerphilly), £429,486.49 (Rhondda Cynon Taf) and £21,086 (Merthyr Tydfil) in collections. CIL accounted for 12% of total collections.

5 – CONCLUSION

As with previous years, there is a common message amongst the Annual Performance reports of LPAs and statutory consultees, of perseverance amidst austerity. LPAs continue to find ways to deliver service to historic standards despite ever-increasing budget constraints and also an increasing level of expectation from service users, and the community as a whole, for the planning system to deliver solutions to the Nation's greatest challenges.

Resourcing of Local Planning Authorities in particular is an ongoing challenge. The majority of LPAs have reported funding challenges in this reporting period, and although innovative approaches to resourcing local planning teams is being pursued, what efficiencies can be made have already been achieved over several years of public sector austerity. The ability to hold service levels even, and in some cases to improve them, is a testament to the dedication and professionalism of those working within the planning system in Wales.

The Welsh Local Government Association's (WLGA's) submission to the National Assembly Finance Committee on the draft 2018/19 budget, reported that local government funding to planning services had fallen by over 50% between the 2009/10 and the 2017/18 financial years. WLGA also stated in the report:

“... For smaller budgets such as planning and regulatory services cuts have been catastrophic and these are the services that play a vital role in regeneration and keeping communities safe.”

Whilst planning fees pay an important financial contribution to the viability of local planning services, service levels must be maintained to deliver this critically important local government function to create homes and businesses, and to incentivise local investment.

The planning profession appears to be experiencing a decline in popularity as a career choice, possibly as a result of this year-on-year disinvestment, particularly at local government level. Whilst delivering expert services on a regional level has proven highly effective with minerals and waste services in both North and West Wales, there is further to go in other specialisms, to capitalise on that expertise and to make most efficient use of resource.

Meanwhile, several reports refer to challenges with succession planning, and recruiting into junior roles, or in specialist skills areas, with reports of experienced officers retiring, and little opportunity to undertake succession planning or upskilling of colleagues.

RTPI Cymru, the Wales branch of the Royal Town Planning Institute, has undertaken a membership study which independently confirms the town planning workforce is ageing. The study identified that the average age of RTPI Members in Wales, by sector, in November 2019. For public sector planners, the average age is 45, whilst for the private sector it is 41. The average age of independent consultants in Wales is 60.

Similarly, pressures on budgets requires staff to increase their individual efficiency outputs, reducing time available to develop personal skillsets or pursue professional development. Several LPAs report reductions in staff training opportunities, with a number relying upon those provided at no cost, such as by Welsh Government, the Planning Inspectorate or other stakeholders. This further impedes succession planning.

In June 2019, the Auditor General for Wales (AGW) published a report into the effectiveness of Local Planning authorities in Wales. This report was based on evidence gathered between 2017 and early 2019, and direct stakeholder engagement undertaken by Wales Audit Office officials, including with Welsh Government.

The AGW report identifies many of the challenges to the planning system already reported upon by LPAs and by the Welsh Government in previous Annual Performance Reports. This includes resource constraints in local planning teams, the quality and consistency of Member decisions when made against officer advice, and critically, the need to evidence that planning outcomes are contributing to the wellbeing of future generations. There are also some tough messages for LPAs on the perception of their planning services from service users.

The AGW report makes a series of recommendations, mainly for LPAs to implement, although some are for Welsh Government to consider. We look forward to working with LPAs and other stakeholders to take forward the recommendations, to ensure the planning service is as effective and resilient as possible.

Some of those work streams are already in stream – for example, work has been underway to review the planning fee regime in Wales, in partnership with the Planning Officer's Society for Wales, since 2018. We recognise that in order for the service to meet the needs of service users and communities that it must be appropriately resourced, and a major contributor to this is the level of planning application fees. We intend to move towards a more cost-neutral model, and we will be consulting on proposals for an interim planning fee increase, in early 2020.

We have also revised Planning Policy Wales. Edition 10, released in December 2018, enables LPAs to directly implement the wellbeing goals which PPW seeks to implement, into LDPs and planning decisions. As LDPs reach 4 years since adoption, and are revised, they will incorporate this approach, and in so doing, will be able to trace the “golden thread” from the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, through to planning decisions made on the basis of national and local policies designed to implement the Act. This approach will become strengthened further as we work towards a new National Development Framework for Wales, which will set out national strategic spatial land use policies.

PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK TABLE - APRIL 2018 TO MARCH 2019																														
Version: 3																														
Date: 15/07/2019																														
MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE	WALES AVERAGE/ TOTAL	Blaenau Gwent	Brecon Beacons National Park	Bridgend	Caerphilly	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	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	<12	13-17	18+	73										34															111	
Time taken to commence formal revision of an LDP following the triggering of Regulation 41, in months	<12	13-17	18+	17	23	10	10	61		-5	15	7	12				16	2		10	16	23		55	13		7			
Has an LDP Revision Delivery Agreement been submitted to and agreed with the Welsh Government?	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes		No	Yes		Yes			
LDP review deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	<3		4+	1		1				0	1	1	3				0				1	0				-1				
Annual Monitoring Reports produced following LDP adoption	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes			
The local planning authority's current housing land supply in years	5+		<5	6	1.3	3.9	3.4	2.3	3.5	3.8	2.2	3.1	1.6	0.0	6.3	6.3	1.1	3.9	5.0	5.6	4.5	1.4	7.0	1.4	3.0	0.0	3.9	5.6	0.0	
Efficiency																														
Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	60+	50.1-59.9	<50	67.8 326 of 481	100.0 10 of 10	100.0 5 of 5	38.1 8 of 21	16.7 3 of 18	86.7 39 of 45	39.1 9 of 23	65.2 15 of 23	60.0 9 of 15	93.8 15 of 16	35.3 12 of 34	33.3 3 of 9	55.0 11 of 20	100.0 9 of 9	88.9 8 of 9	75.0 6 of 8	77.3 17 of 22	36.4 4 of 11	100.0 9 of 9	84.1 37 of 44	46.2 12 of 26	0.0 0 of 4	88.4 38 of 43	76.9 10 of 13	81.0 17 of 21	87.0 20 of 23	
Average time taken to determine "major" applications in days				231.8	138.5	251.0	254.5	161.3	160.3	455.8	125.8	113.0	129.3	263.5	136.5	228.3	62.8	65.8	852.0	209.0	150.8	224.0	528.3	127.3	457.3	132.6	164.4	155.8	281.8	
Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required	80+	70.1-79.9	<70	88.1 20871 of 23687	97.3 286 of 294	98.8 575 of 582	80.0 702 of 878	86.4 748 of 866	90.9 2309 of 2541	72.6 886 of 1221	72.9 652 of 894	90.2 798 of 885	91.6 844 of 921	79.3 809 of 1020	85.4 809 of 947	80.9 651 of 805	99.7 329 of 330	88.4 973 of 1101	96.7 734 of 759	87.5 819 of 936	87.0 777 of 893	90.0 450 of 500	90.7 1091 of 1203	91.2 1052 of 1154	75.7 331 of 437	98.5 1873 of 1901	86.6 472 of 545	91.2 1114 of 1221	92.3 787 of 853	
Average time taken to determine all applications in days	<67	67-111	112+	77.2	70.8	62.3	72.5	71.0	67.3	106.3	95.3	62.0	62.0	93.8	65.3	84.0	49.5	86.3	70.5	80.0	58.8	69.0	161.5	74.7	66.8	57.2	91.9	70.0	82.0	
Percentage of Listed Building Consent applications determined within time periods required	80+	70.1-79.9	<70	74.7 582 of 779	100.0 1 of 1	100.0 43 of 43	62.5 10 of 16	73.7 14 of 19	87.7 50 of 57	66.0 31 of 47	61.1 33 of 54	92.5 37 of 40	69.4 25 of 36	35.0 7 of 20	66.7 40 of 60	71.4 25 of 35	100.0 6 of 6	88.6 70 of 79	100.0 4 of 4	75.0 21 of 28	24.1 7 of 29	100.0 18 of 18	81.0 51 of 63	27.3 3 of 11	56.0 14 of 25	83.3 15 of 18	71.4 5 of 7	71.4 25 of 35	96.4 27 of 28	
Quality																														
Percentage of applications determined under delegated powers				94.5	90.5	98.1	96.4	92.3	98.0	93.6	93.4	96.7	94.4	95.8	92.9	90.6	95.5	95.5	97.9	93.2	95.9	94.8	93.9	88.9	95.4	95.8	95.0	97.1	82.9	
Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	<5	5-9	9+	9.2 121 of 1310	28.6 8 of 28	0.0 0 of 11	0.0 0 of 32	6.0 4 of 67	1.9 1 of 52	11.5 9 of 78	55.9 33 of 59	3.4 1 of 29	7.7 4 of 52	20.9 9 of 43	10.4 7 of 67	7.9 6 of 76	0.0 0 of 15	0.0 0 of 50	6.3 1 of 16	3.1 2 of 64	0.0 0 of 37	3.8 1 of 26	2.7 2 of 73	4.7 6 of 128	5.0 1 of 20	6.3 5 of 79	0.0 0 of 27	5.7 2 of 35	13.0 19 of 146	
Percentage of appeals dismissed	66+	55.1-65.9	<55	67.7 360 of 532	63.6 7 of 11	33.3 1 of 3	75.0 18 of 24	75.0 12 of 16	68.4 39 of 57	71.4 15 of 21	50.0 4 of 8	58.8 10 of 17	60.0 6 of 10	55.0 11 of 20	68.2 15 of 22	73.7 14 of 19	71.4 5 of 7	46.2 6 of 13	61.5 8 of 13	72.7 24 of 33	61.5 8 of 13	100.0 6 of 6	72.2 13 of 18	66.7 24 of 36	60.0 3 of 5	71.6 68 of 95	90.9 10 of 11	71.4 20 of 28	50.0 13 of 26	
Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	0	1	2+	0	1	0	0	1	4	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
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	No	Yes	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	76.9	97.4	76.4	86.9	92.5	99.5	51.8	99.5	88.1	75.0	62.7	76.5	22.6	78.9	64.5	99.0	82.7	53.6	80.5	85.2	71.1	88.7	72.0	89.3	81.7	77.0	
Average time taken to take positive enforcement action	<100	101-200	200+	166.7	282.3	294.3	21.3	227.5	7.3	No Data	531.5	170.3	147.8	120.3	131.5	197.8	48.5	232.1	136.0	180.8	249.0	331.8	122.0	58.0	198.0	73.0	46.5	76.0	82.0	