STATISTICAL PRESS RELEASE

The Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2019/20 Statistical Bulletin, has been published today

~ Thursday 26 September 2019

Provisional planning statistics for the first quarter of 2019/20 are now available. These data provide an overall view of planning activity. Alongside this there is a summary of council performance across the three statutory targets for major development applications, local development applications and enforcement cases as laid out in the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

The publication is available on the Department for Infrastructure website at: www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/planning-activity-statistics

KEY POINTS

The key points from the Northern Ireland Planning Statistics First Quarter 2019/20 Statistical Bulletin are:

- There were 3,403 planning applications received during the first quarter of 2019/20, up by over 7% on the previous quarter and 5% on the same period a year earlier. This comprised 3,370 local and 33 major applications.
• In the first quarter of 2019/20, 3,009 planning applications were decided; a decrease of over 2% from the previous quarter, and similar to the figure reported for the same period a year earlier. During this period decisions were issued on 2,971 local, 37 major and one regionally significant planning application.

• In the first three months of 2019/20 it took, on average, 13.8 weeks to process local applications to decision or withdrawal. This was within the 15 week target and represented an improvement of 1.4 weeks from the same period a year earlier. Eight of the 11 councils were within the 15 week target at the end of the first quarter of 2019/20.

• The average processing time for major applications during the first three months of 2019/20 was 55.8 weeks across all councils. This represents an improvement of 11.8 weeks from the first quarter of 2018/19 but is still considerably higher than the 30 week target.

• Across councils, four in every five (81%) enforcement cases were concluded within 39 weeks during the first three months of 2019/20. This is 11 percentage points higher than the statutory target of 70% and a small increase on the figure reported for the same period a year earlier (80%). Individually, 10 of the 11 councils were within the 39 week target at the end of the first quarter of 2019/20.
Notes for Editors


1. This is the latest in a regular series of statistical bulletins related to Development Management (Planning) functions. The Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 sets out the legislative framework for development management and provides that, from 1 April 2015, councils now largely have responsibility for this planning function. This statistical bulletin reports on activity and performance for the first quarter of 2019/20 (1st April 2019 – 30th June 2019).

2. A new classification hierarchy for planning applications came into effect on 1st April 2014 in advance of the transfer of planning functions to local government from 1st April 2015. The development categories are – major and local development applications, processed primarily by councils, and regionally significant development applications, processed within the Department for Infrastructure. Note that the ‘major development’ category is based on a completely different definition to the previous ‘major’ category so figures relating to this category should not be compared with those from earlier bulletins (i.e. pre-2014/15).

3. There are three legislative performance targets covered in the report related to the processing of local development decisions within an average of 15 weeks; major development decisions within an average of 30 weeks; and processing 70% of enforcement cases to target conclusion within 39 weeks.

4. The final records of all applications from 1st April 2019 – 30th June 2019 were transferred in July 2019 from a live database and inspected for consistency in coding before figures were prepared for publication. These figures are regarded as ‘provisional’ and will be subject to further scheduled revisions as further updates are made to records in the live database environment. Finalised annual figures for 2019/20 will be released June / July 2020.

Quarterly data are provided in more detailed accompanying Excel tables together with comparable data from the previous financial year, where possible.

**Official Statistics**

This is an Official Statistics publication and therefore follows the Code of Practice for Statistics. You can find further information about the Code of Practice at: https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice/

**Additional Information**

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