

# **Newport Local Planning Authority (LPA)**

## **PLANNING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR) – 2015-2016**

### **PREFACE**

#### ***Introduction by the Cabinet Member responsible for the planning service***

I am pleased to introduce the very first Annual Performance Report for Newport City Council's Development Services. The economic downturn has had a challenging impact on Newport in recent times, but growth and regeneration are key requirements to aid recovery and a strong planning service is absolutely essential to achieving this. The planners have been fundamental in encouraging significant investment in the City Centre with the near completion of the multi-million pound Friars Walk and major regeneration projects well underway at Glan Llyn, Jubilee Park and Loftus Garden Village to name just a few.

This is an exciting time for Newport, which is truly a city on the rise. The planning service has played a substantial role in Newport's recovery and will continue to do so by supporting development and economic growth in sustainable locations.

***Cllr John Richards – Newport City Council Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Investment***

### **CONTEXT**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

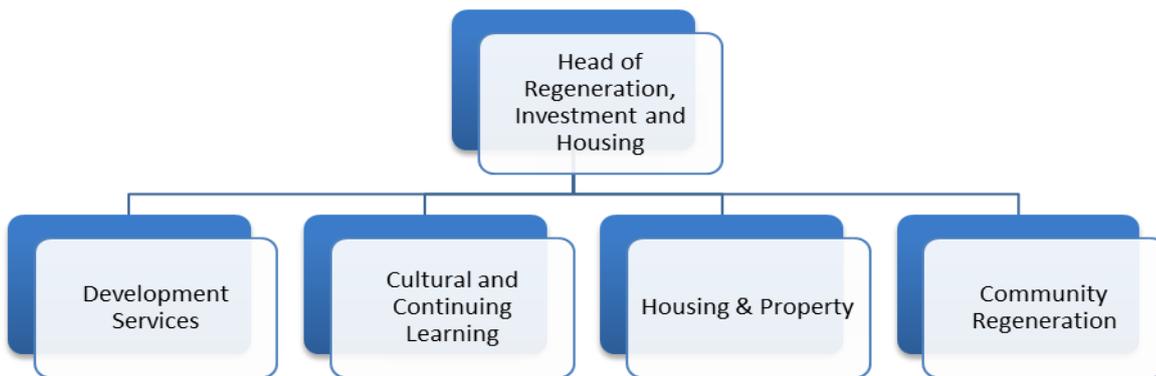
Housing delivery rates in Newport are currently on track with the LDP projections.

## PLANNING SERVICE

### *Setting within wider organisation*

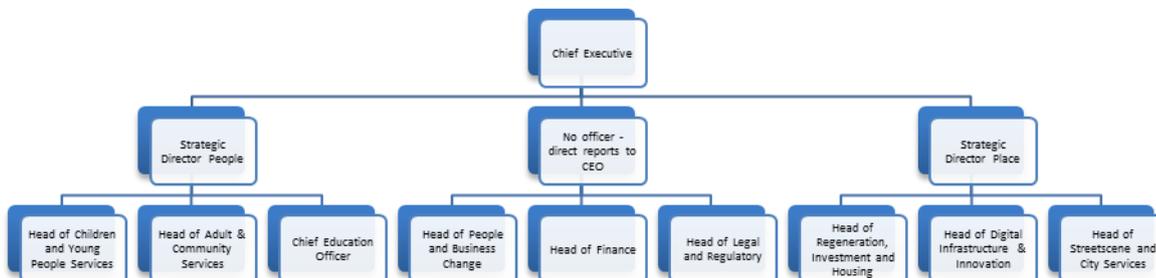
The statutory planning function in Newport sits within the Development Services section. The Development Services section is one of four business units within the Regeneration, Investment and Housing service; namely Development Services, Cultural and Continuing Learning, Housing and Property, and Community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

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



There are two Strategic Directors that report to the Chief Executive; Strategic Director for People and Strategic Director for Place. The Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing is one of 9 Heads of Services across the Council and one of three that report to the Strategic Director for Place. This structure is shown in table 2 below.

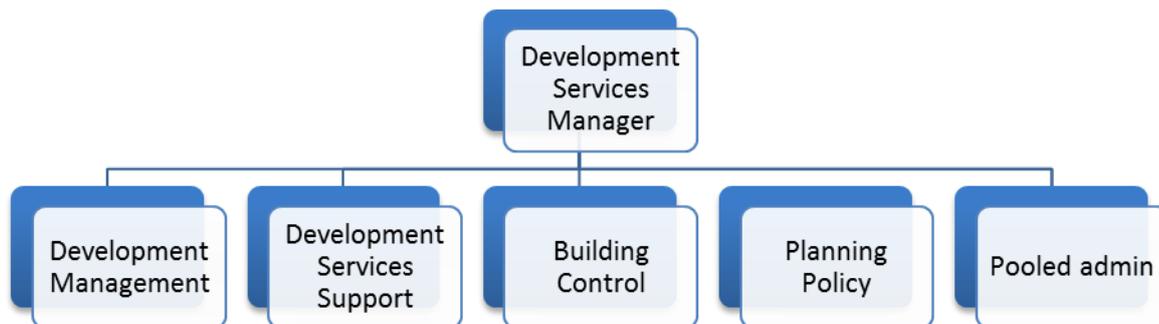
**Table 2 – Council structure**



Development Services comprises Development Management, Development Services Support (technical services), Pooled admin, Planning Policy and Building Control. The section has a total of 41.9 Full Time

Equivalent (FTE) staff, of which Development Management has 15.3, Building Control has 6, Planning Policy 7.6 and Development Services Support and Pooled Admin has 12 FTE staff. This structure is shown in table 3 below.

**Table 3 – Development Services**



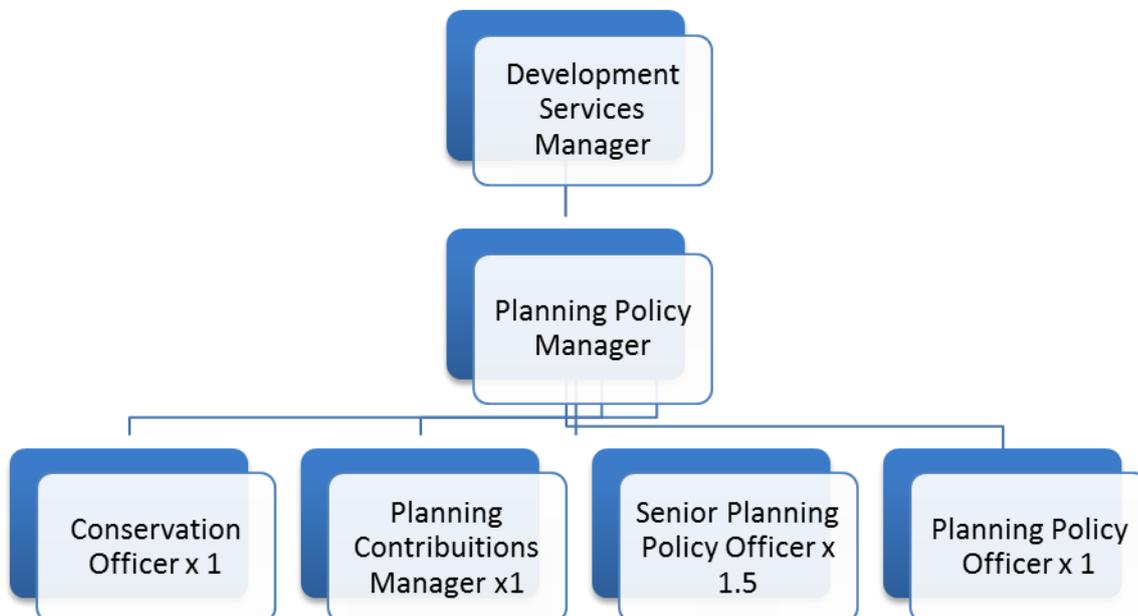
Development Management is responsible for processing planning applications, appeals and exercising the planning enforcement function. It is split into two area teams headed up by two Area Managers that report to the Development Services Manager. Within each area team, there is 1 Principal Planning Officer,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

**Table 4 – Development Management**



Planning Policy is headed up by a Planning Policy Manager whom also reports to the Development Services Manager. Planning Policy are responsible for the formulation and review of the Council’s Development Plan and other local planning policy, historical building conservation, Section 106 agreements and the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy. Reporting to the Planning Policy Manager are 1.5 senior policy officers, 1 policy officer, a conservation officer and the planning contributions manager. The structure is shown in table 5 below.

**Table 5 – Planning Policy**



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

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

Newport has not progressed any collaborative working with other Authorities in respect of Development Management but we do contribute to Strategic Policy and currently Chair the South East Wales Strategic Planning Group (SEWSPG). This group provides a vehicle for cross boundary collaboration between the 10 local authorities of South East Wales and the Brecon Beacons National Park. They are currently working together to take forward the strategic development plan work. We also contribute to the South East Wales Regional Working Group and South Wales Regional Aggregates Working Party which relates to cross boundary minerals and waste issues. Newport has also set up a joint venture with Norse to deliver asset management and maintenance on behalf of the Council.

***Operating budget***

The Development Management budget has decreased year on year over the last 3 years to the extent that the 2015/16 budget is approximately £80,000 less than the budget in 2013/14. The biggest budget savings have been derived through employee expenditure as well as a smaller decrease in the budget for supplies and services. In comparison, fee income has remained relatively consistent with a slight increase anticipated for 2015/2016. The Planning Policy budget increased by £30,000 between 2013 and 2015 in response to the

LDP adoption timetable. Post LDP adoption there has been a minor decrease in budget due to staff rationalisation.

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

### ***Staff issues***

The current structure of Development Services was established following a restructure in 2012 which resulted in the loss of one enforcement officer post and a reduction in the number of managers. The service used to offer 2 student placement positions each year via the local University, but this is no longer the case due to budget pressures.

There is a training budget allocated each year to develop staff. Annual reviews of staff help assess performance and identify training needs. Staff are encouraged to attend relevant training courses and conferences in order to broaden and develop their skills and knowledge.

The Development Services Manager position is currently vacant. However, the remainder of the service is currently fully staffed.

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

## **YOUR LOCAL STORY**

### ***Workload***

Newport is currently witnessing a significant uplift in development delivery. Housing completions for this year are on course to be the highest recorded for over ten years. Friars Walk, the multi-million pound retail and leisure redevelopment scheme is set to significantly reshape the city centre and increase economic prosperity in Newport. The Celtic Manor International Convention Centre project is due to commence early 2016, which will elevate Newport's status on the world stage. In addition, major housing, business and infrastructure projects are also underway or are in the stages of being planned right across the city area. All of which are extremely positive for Newport, but all represent major pressures on an already stretched planning service.

Caseloads for a DM planning officer would be expected to be in the region of 45 applications at any given time, approximately 30 applications for senior officers and around 24 applications for a principal officer. This is in addition to providing paid pre application advice, permitted development advice, defending appeals and covering a duty officer service. Pressure has been compounded in Newport by the inability to recruit a Development Services Manager (Chief Planning Officer), a post which has been vacant since May 2015. The duties of the Development Services Manager are primarily being shared between the team leaders across DM and Policy, but this is not a long term solution.

In addition to resources pressure, more specific risks exist in relation to the Council's inability to pool S106 contributions as per the CIL Regulations. Therefore officers need to be more astute with regard to S106 negotiations whilst the authority continues to prepare for CIL. A policy to seek affordable housing commuted sums on every residential scheme has also been recently introduced and is consequently presenting added pressure, especially with regard to determination within the dedicated timeframes. Small-scale developers have not previously engaged with the S106 process in Newport and as a result, the new policy is raising numerous questions surrounding viability and has the potential to delay determination.

Despite increased growth rates, economic viability continues to be a problem in Newport, with many developers disputing S106 requirements, either during the determination process or through post decision re-negotiation. This is ultimately leading to lower affordable housing delivery rates, thus adding further pressure as those in need of social housing are having to wait longer for accommodation.

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

The Newport LDP was adopted in January 2015 and a suite of 10 SPGs were adopted in the summer to supplement the LDP. Early indications suggest the LDP policies are functioning as per expected, with delivery rates performing well and a healthy housing land supply in place.

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

As the LDP was adopted in January 2015, Newport's first AMR is not due until October 2016. Initial work has begun on the preparation of the AMR, but the majority of statistics cannot be collected until after April 2016.

### ***Current projects***

The Council has recently adopted a Local Development Order (LDO) for Newport city centre, which is the first LDO to be adopted in Wales. The LDO streamlines the planning system by granting blanket planning permission for non-contentious, though not necessarily minor, forms of development in a defined area.

The LDO grants conditional planning permission for specified uses in basements and in ground and upper floor units. It is hoped the LDO, in permitting a wide range of compatible uses, will help to increase occupancy levels and commercial activity in Newport city centre.

Officers are also in the process of exploring the use of planning performance agreements and the mutual benefits of the approach. A political decision has not yet been made, but if agreed, planning performance agreements could be used for major planning proposals across the Authority.

Policy officers are also working on additional SPGs and conservation area appraisals for Caerleon and the city centre in order to broaden the policy base upon which decisions are made.

Enforcement Officers are key contributors to project groups such as the Vacant and Commercial Derelict Properties, Empty Homes and Problem properties. These groups seek to pool resources and information to secure the redevelopment and reuse of problem properties within the City.

### ***Local pressures***

The service has recently been experiencing a steady flow of renewable energy planning applications, particularly solar farms. The nature of these applications is often contentious and they do have a disproportionate impact on the efficiency of the service. Recent appeal decisions relating to the temporary nature of solar farms has set a precedence which some communities are disappointed with. Member training on renewable energy schemes is also in the process of being arranged so Planning Committee can deal with such decisions in a more informed way.

Other issues which present a disproportionate impact on the service centre on Gypsy and Traveller planning applications and enforcement cases, particularly on the Gwent Levels. The proposed Gypsy/Traveller site allocated at Hartridge Farm Road went through intense scrutiny and was subject to thousands of objections during the LDP examination. The full planning application for this site is scheduled to be submitted in 2016 and will undoubtedly attract significant interest and due to the emotive nature of the subject, is likely to put increased pressure on the service.

With respect to other local pressures, as noted above, the time taken to negotiate and agree the terms of the Section 106 legal agreements has meant that in some instances, delays in determination have been experienced. The indicators demonstrate that Newport has an average of 13 weeks to determine a planning application compared to the Welsh average of 11 weeks. With the introduction of the affordable housing policy and officers seeking contributions on all residential schemes, care is needed to ensure that determinations aren't delayed any further.

A further local pressure which is starting to emerge but likely to escalate in the future, relates to areas in Newport in desperate need of regeneration, but also within flood risk zones. The strict application of TAN 15 means that redevelopment opportunities are severely restricted. This is something that is likely to cause a significant impact in the future as potential brownfield housing sites cannot be brought forward due to flood risk. The Council has been in discussions with Natural Resources Wales on this issue and has made the Welsh Government aware of its concerns.

Finally, there are two developments of national significance which are currently in the planning stages which officers are assisting with accordingly. The M4 motorway corridor scheme and the proposed Newport tidal lagoon, although currently not having a major impact on service resource, both have the potential to increase officer workloads as the projects gather more pace. Whilst not the determining Authority, the work involved in being a consultee to the Planning Inspectorate results in a comparable amount of work to be undertaken.

### ***Service improvement***

It is acknowledged that there is some room for improvement with regard to determination times. As set out above, many of the delays have been caused by the need to sign a S106 legal agreement and the actual process involved in negotiating this and coming to an agreement. Newport is making progress in this regard

and officers have put in place steps to ensure that applicants are required to complete any necessary legal agreements within 3 months of the date of resolution.

Targets in the Service Plan relating to enforcement complaints, housing completions, planning decisions appeals, approved applications have all been successfully met.

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

- Completion and opening of City Centre Friars Walk scheme;
- Approvals of the Wales International Convention Centre at the Celtic Manor;
- Adoption of 10 SPGs;
- Adoption of an LDO in the City Centre and support of applications for high quality residential conversions in the City Centre;
- Deliver a high quality customer service that delivers sound decisions and sustainable development;
- Continue to secure appropriate planning contributions and affordable housing from new development;
- Progress to developing a Community Infrastructure Levy (Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule consultation closed in August 2015).

### ***Performance Framework***

On the basis of the performance indicators currently set, the Authority is performing well. The most notable areas of good performance centre around Plan Making, Quality and Engagement. The most obvious areas for improvement are in the Efficiency, and to a lesser extent, the Enforcement categories. In particular improvement is required in the percentage of applications determined within the requisite time period and the average time taken to determine applications. The Authority is taking steps to address timeliness but this will not involve the recruitment of staff. Instead we are looking at efficiency and putting mechanisms in place to enable Officers and Area Managers to be fully aware of, and meet deadlines. This involves weekly monitoring reports with monthly performance monitoring allowing success to be measured.

Whilst the Authority would like to improve the percentage of major applications determined within time, our performance is comparable with the Wales average. It is considered that the only mechanism for improving performance across all Authorities is to reconsider the time period allowed. Whilst changes have been made to 'stop the clock' for applications which require a Section 106 Agreement when a resolution is made, 8 weeks is not sufficient to deal with the complex nature of major applications as well as meet set Committee cycles. As a minimum it is considered that major applications should revert back to the 13 week determination period.

Another pressure on the service relates to the Authority's duty under the Welsh Language Act and the need to have all correspondence translated into Welsh. There is very limited demand for Welsh translations and correspondence in Newport and certainly Welsh does not feature in the top 5 languages spoken within the City. Nonetheless the Act places a duty on the Authority and time delays for having a large volume of notices, letters and reports translated into Welsh will have to be factored into timescales, but with very little capacity for extra delays, it is anticipated that this duty will affect performance in the next monitoring period.

In respect of Enforcement, the Authority is performing well in respect of the percentage of cases where enforcement action is taken or a retrospective application received within 180 days and we are certainly on a par with other Welsh Authorities in respect of the average time taken to take enforcement action. However the percentage of cases investigated with 84 days needs improvement and is reflective of the staffing issues we have experienced, particularly in respect of staff retention and recruitment. In terms of existing staff, mechanisms have been put in place which trigger reminders for case officers and Area Managers. This enables cases to be flagged up and discussed in order to establish a way forward. There are no planned increases in resources within the Development Services Section.

## WHAT SERVICE USERS THINK

In 2014-15 we conducted two customer satisfaction surveys aimed at assessing the views of people that had received a planning application decision during the period. The first covered the period April 2014 - September 2014 and the second covered the period October 2014 - March 2015. The following feedback is based on the combined results of both surveys.

The surveys were sent to 399 people, 14% of whom submitted a whole or partial response. The majority of responses (51%) were from local agents. 36% were from members of the public. 17% of respondents had their most recent planning application refused.

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

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

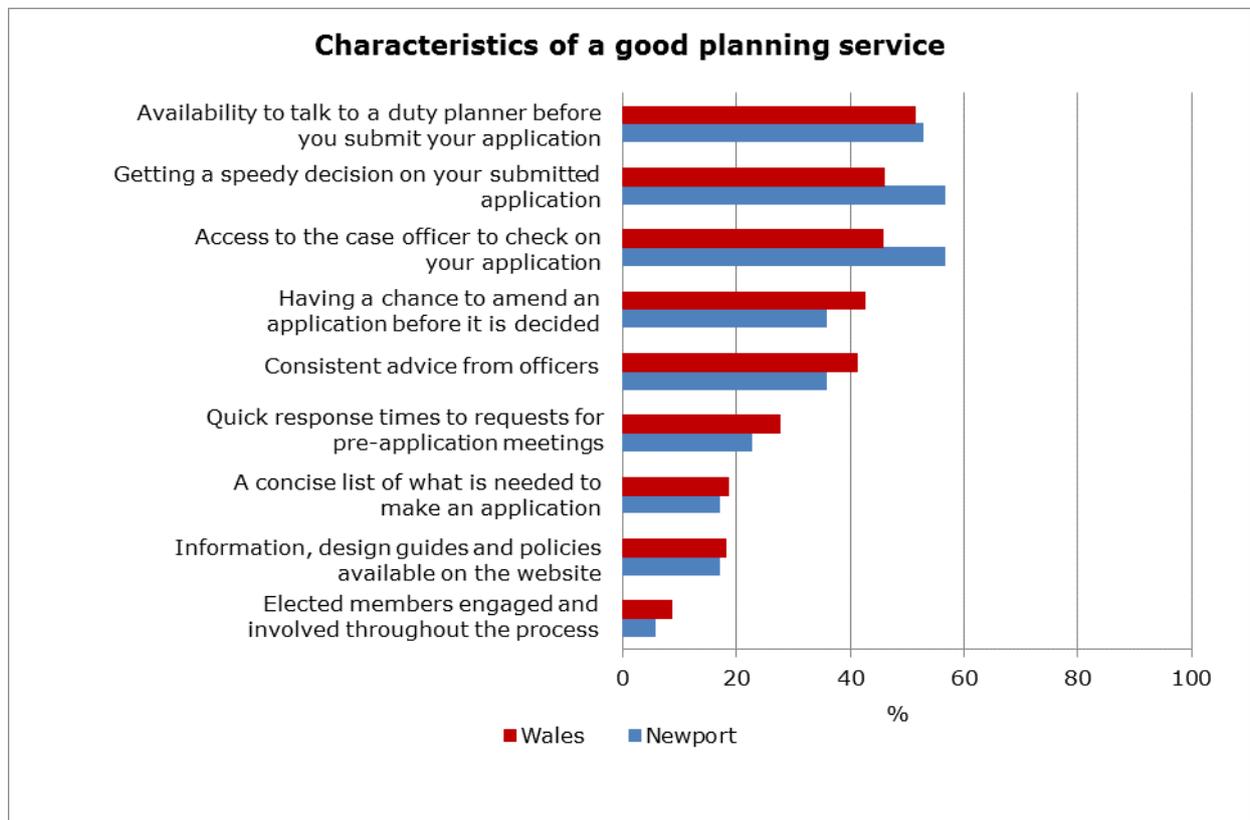
Table 1 shows the percentage of respondents that selected either 'tend to agree' or 'strongly agree' for each statement for both our planning authority and Wales.

**Table 1: The percentage of respondents who agreed with each statement, 2014-15**

	%	
	Newport LPA	Wales
<b>Percentage of respondents who agreed that:</b>		
The LPA enforces its planning rules fairly and consistently	51	45
The LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application	69	57
The LPA gives help throughout, including with conditions	48	48
The LPA responded promptly when they had questions	63	55
They were listened to about their application	57	56
They were kept informed about their application	44	46
They were satisfied overall with how the LPA handled their application	61	57

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

**Figure 1: Characteristics of a good planning service, Newport LPA, 2014-15**



Comments received include:

"Reasonably happy with the process. Ability to meet with planning officer face to face would without doubt improve the planning procedure."

"Generally advice is good and consistant. Some officers are very approachable and offer clear and concise guidance." [sic]

## OUR PERFORMANCE 2014-15

This section details our performance in 2014-15. It considers both the Planning Performance Framework indicators and other available data to help paint a comprehensive picture of performance. Where appropriate we make comparisons between our performance and the all Wales picture.

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

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

### Plan making

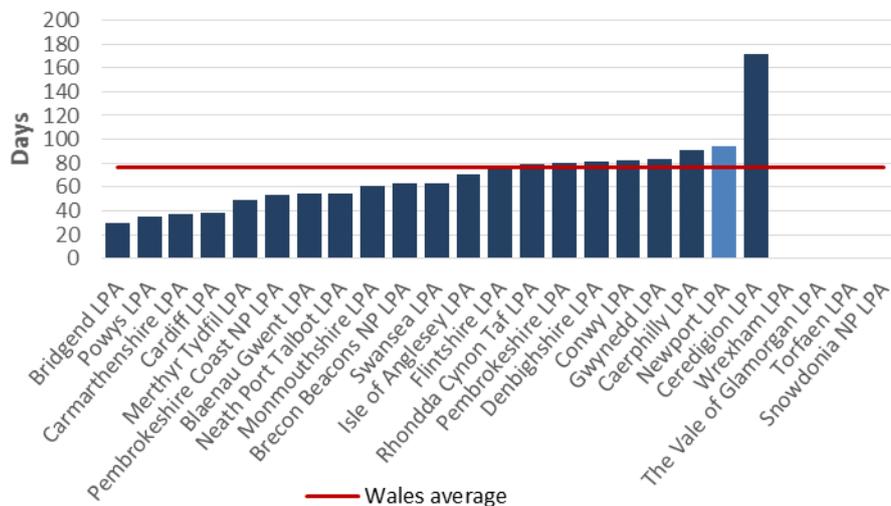
As at 31 March 2015, we were one of 21 LPAs that had a current development plan in place.

During the APR period we had 9.2 years of housing land supply identified, making us one of 7 Welsh LPAs with the required 5 years supply.

### Efficiency

In 2014-15 we determined 1,055 planning applications, each taking, on average, 94 days (13 weeks) to determine. This compares to an average of 76 days (11 weeks) across Wales. Figure 2 shows the average time taken by each LPA to determine an application during the year.

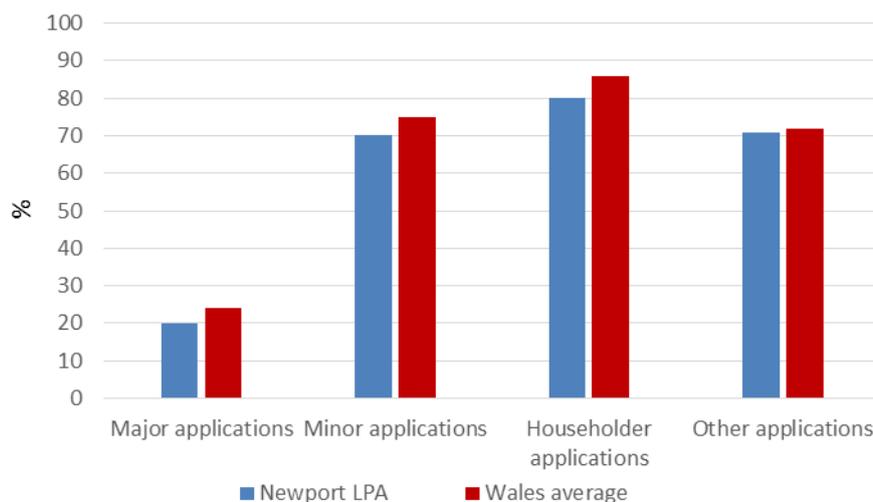
**Figure 2: Average time taken (days) to determine applications, 2014-15**



69% of all planning applications were determined within the required timescales. This compared to 73% across Wales and was below the 80% target. Only 5 out of 25 LPAs met the 80% target.

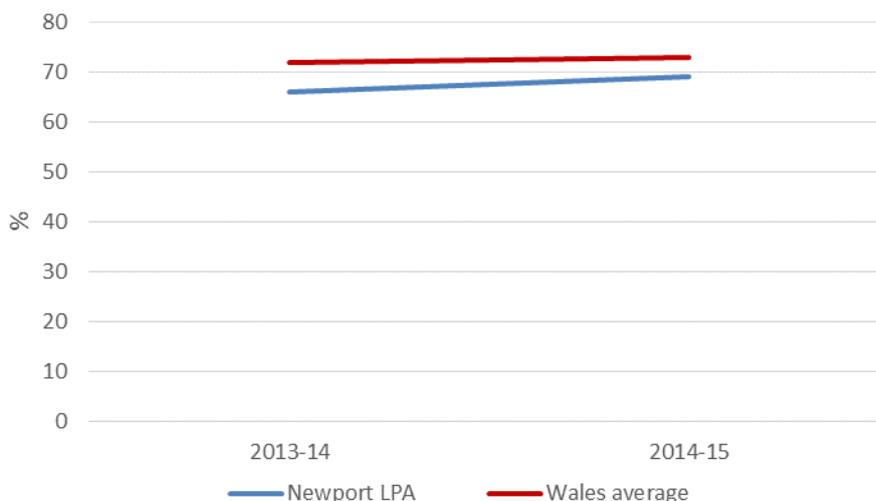
Figure 3 shows the percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales across the four main types of application for our LPA and Wales. It shows that we determined 80% of householder applications within the required timescales.

**Figure 3: Percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales, by type, 2014-15**



Between 2013-14 and 2014-15, as Figure 4 shows, the percentage of planning applications we determined within the required timescales increased from 66%. Wales also saw an increase this year.

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



Over the same period:

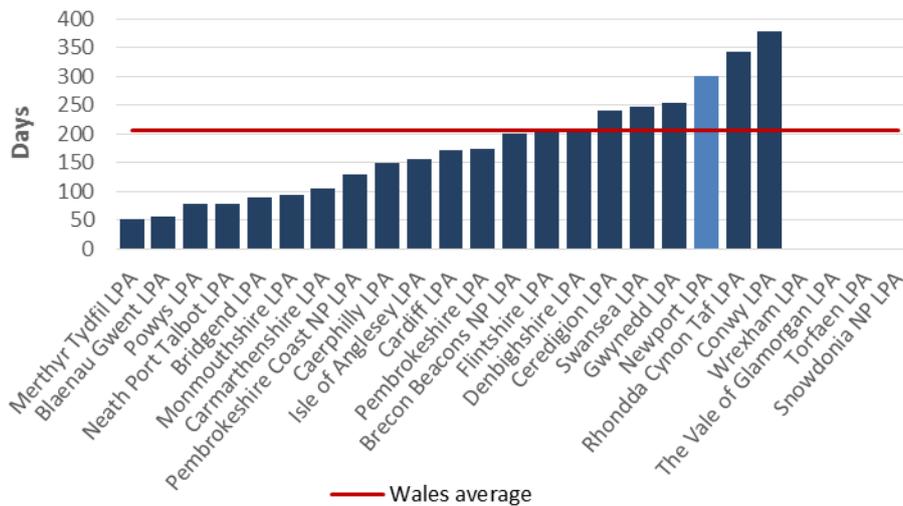
- The number of applications we received increased;

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

### Major applications

We determined 35 major planning applications in 2014-15, 6% (2 applications) of which were subject to an EIA. Each application (including those subject to an EIA) took, on average, 302 days (43 weeks) to determine. As Figure 5 shows, this was the third longest average time taken of all Welsh LPAs.

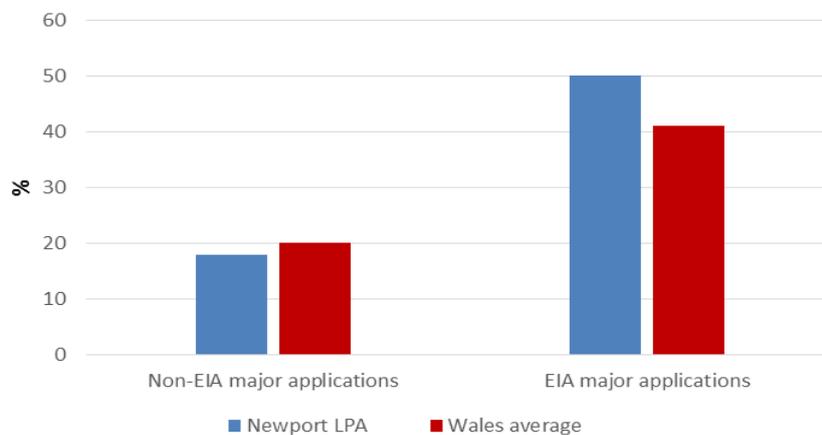
**Figure 5: Average time (days) taken to determine a major application, 2014-15**



20% of these major applications were determined within the required timescales, compared to 24% across Wales.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales by the type of major application. 18% of our ‘standard’ major applications i.e. those not requiring an EIA, were determined within the required timescales during the year.

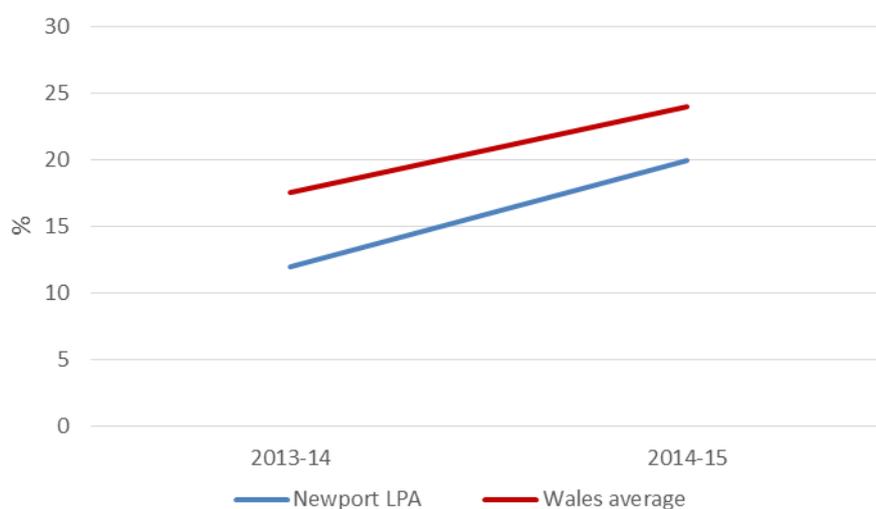
**Figure 6: Percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales during the year, by type, 2014-15**



Since 2013-14 the percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales had increased from 12%. Similarly, the number of major applications determined increased while the number of applications subject to an EIA determined during the year decreased.

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

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



Over the same period:

- The percentage of minor applications determined within the required timescales increased from 69% to 70%;
- The percentage of householder applications determined within the required timescales stayed the same at 80%; and
- The percentage of other applications determined within the required timescales increased from 66% to 71%.

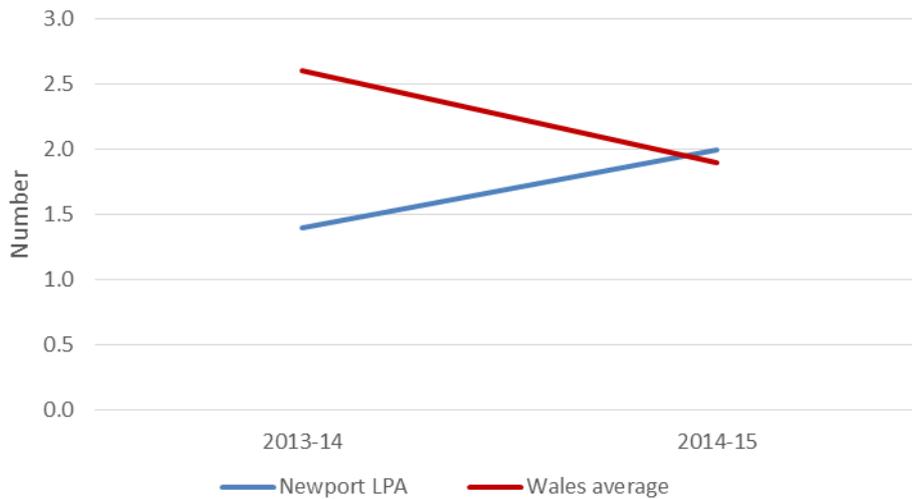
## Quality

In the last two quarters of 2014-15 (October 2014 – March 2015) our Planning Committee made 30 planning application decisions, which equated to 6% of all planning applications determined. Across Wales 7% of all planning application decisions were made by planning committee over the same period.

3% of these member-made decisions went against officer advice. This compared to 11% of member-made decisions across Wales. This equated to 0.2% of all planning application decisions going against officer advice; 0.7% across Wales.

In 2014-15 we received 24 appeals against our planning decisions, which equated to 2 appeals for every 100 applications received. Across Wales 1.9 appeals were received for every 100 applications. Figure 8 shows how the volume of appeals received has changed since 2013-14 and how this compares to Wales.

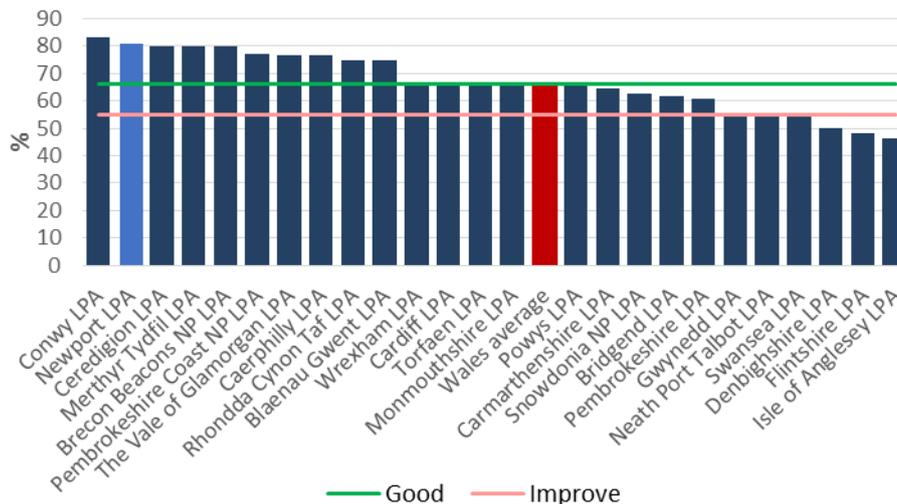
**Figure 8: Number of appeals received per 100 planning applications**



Over the same period the percentage of planning applications approved decreased from 90% to 88%.

Of the 26 appeals that were decided during the year, 81% were dismissed. As Figure 9 shows, this was the second highest percentage of appeals dismissed in Wales and we were one of 14 LPAs that reached the 66% target.

**Figure 9: Percentage of appeals dismissed, 2014-15**



During 2014-15 we had no applications for costs at a section 78 appeal upheld.

## Engagement

We are:

- one of 22 LPAs that allowed members of the public to address the Planning Committee; and
- one of 20 LPAs that had an online register of planning applications, which members of the public can access, track their progress (and view their content).

As Table 2 shows, 69% of respondents to our 2014-15 customer satisfaction survey agreed that the LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application.

**Table 2: Feedback from our 2014-15 customer satisfaction survey**

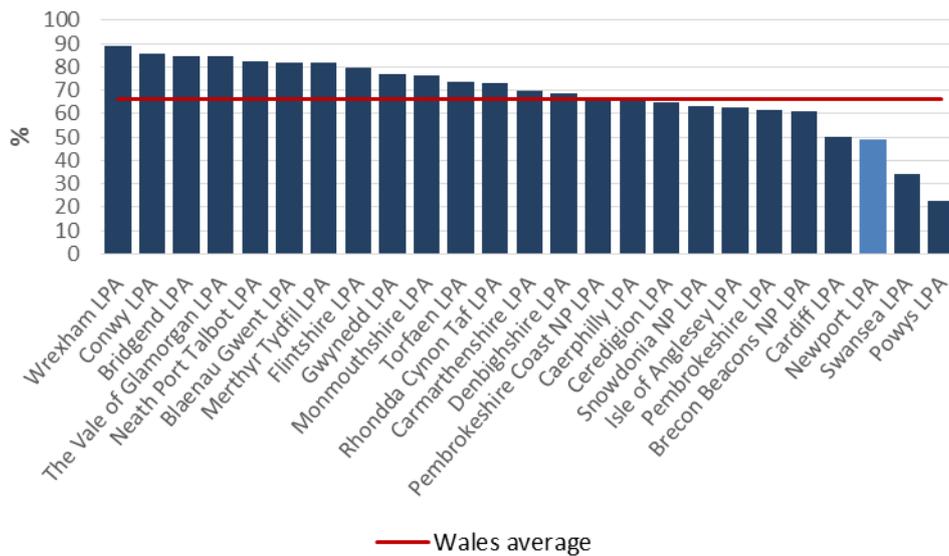
Percentage of respondents who agreed that:	%	
	Newport LPA	Wales
The LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application	69	57
They were listened to about their application	57	56

## Enforcement

In 2014-15 we investigated 315 enforcement cases, which equated to 2.1 per 1,000 population. This compared to 2 enforcement cases investigated per 1,000 population across Wales. <sup>1</sup>

We investigated 49% of these enforcement cases within 84 days. Across Wales 66% were investigated within 84 days. Figure 10 shows the percentage of enforcement cases that were investigated within 84 days across all Welsh LPAs.

**Figure 10: Percentage of enforcement cases investigated within 84 days, 2014-15**

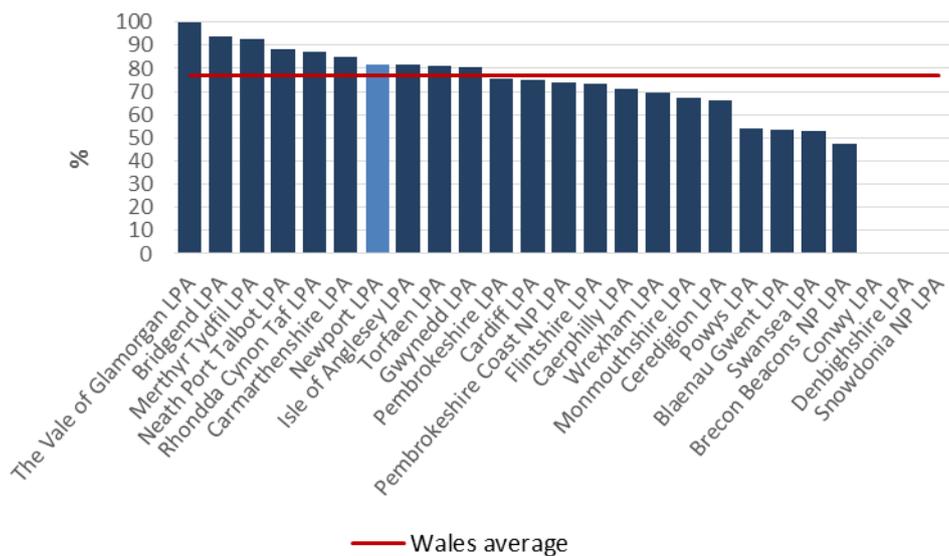


<sup>1</sup> Robust comparisons are not currently available as only 14 of the 25 LPAs supplied data for this indicator.

Over the same period, we resolved 356 enforcement cases, taking, on average, 176 days to resolve each case.

81% of this enforcement action was taken within 180 days from the start of the case. As Figure 11 shows this compared to 77% of enforcement cases resolved within 180 days across Wales.

**Figure 11: Percentage of enforcement cases resolved in 180 days, 2014-15**



## ANNEX A - PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

### OVERVIEW

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE	WALES AVERAGE	Newport LPA LAST YEAR	Newport LPA THIS YEAR
<b>Plan making</b>						
Is there a current Development Plan in place that is within the plan period?	Yes		No	Yes	No	Yes
LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	<12	13-17	18+	60	30	N/A
Annual Monitoring Reports produced following LDP adoption	Yes		No	Yes	N/A	N/A
The local planning authority's current housing land supply in years	>5	4-4.9	<4	4.2	7.0	9.2
<b>Efficiency</b>						
Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	Not set	Not set	Not set	24	12	20
Average time taken to determine "major" applications in days	Not set	Not set	Not set	206	No Data	302
Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required	>80	60.1-79.9	<60	73	66	69
Average time taken to determine all applications in days	Not set	Not set	Not set	76	No Data	94
<b>Quality</b>						
Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	Not set	Not set	Not set	11	0.1	3
Percentage of appeals dismissed	>66	55.1-65.9	<55	66	69	81
Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	0	1	2	0	0	0
<b>Engagement</b>						
Does the local planning authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee?	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Does the local planning authority have an officer on duty to	Yes		No	-	Yes	Yes

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

WALES AVERAGE	Newport LPA LAST YEAR	Newport LPA THIS YEAR
Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Enforcement</b>		
66	No Data	49
71	No Data	No Data
77	No Data	81
175	No Data	176

## SECTION 1 – PLAN MAKING

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

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

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

Authority's performance	N/A

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

Authority's performance	N/A
The Authority is not required to produce an AMR until October 2016.	

Indicator	04. The local planning authority's current housing land supply in years	
<b>"Good"</b>	<b>"Fair"</b>	<b>"Improvement needed"</b>
The authority has a housing land supply of more than 5 years	The authority has a housing land supply of between 4 and 5 years	The authority has a housing land supply of less than 4 years

Authority's performance	9.2
Using the past build rate method of calculating housing land supply, figures for 2014-2015 show that the City had a healthy supply of land equivalent to 9.2 years demand, the highest of all Welsh Authorities. The most recent published figures based on the residual method of calculating housing land supply shows that Newport has a 6.3 year land supply.	

## SECTION 2 - EFFICIENCY

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

Authority's performance	20% within 8 weeks
<p>A total of 35no. major applications were determined during 2014-2015, 7 of which were within 8 weeks of receipt. Compared to the previous year, the number of major applications determined has increased by one but the number of applications determined within 8 weeks improved from 6% to 20%. Of the 35no. major applications determined during 2014-2015, 3 applications were accompanied by Environmental Impact Statements, of which 2 (67%) were determined within 16 weeks.</p> <p>A total of 27no. Section 106 and other Legal Agreements were completed in the same year. With an 8 week determination period, the Authority found it increasingly difficult to meet target determination dates due to the length of time required to complete such agreements.</p>	

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

Authority's performance	302
This figure has been adversely affected by protracted negotiation and discussion relating to Section 106 Agreements. In one instance the Agreement took 3,242 days to complete. This has been addressed and now applicants are required to complete any necessary agreement within 3	

months of the date of resolution. It is expected that this figure of 301 days will significantly decrease during future monitoring periods.

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

Authority's performance	69% within 8 weeks
Over two thirds of the all of the Council's planning applications determined during 2014-2015 were done so within the target time limit and represents a positive improvement compared to the same period in 2013-2014 (66%).	

Indicator	08. Average time taken to determine all applications in days	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

Authority's performance	94
The average number of days taken to determine all applications during 2014-2015 was 94. As outlined in section 6 above, the length of time taken to deal with some Section 106 Agreements relating to larger schemes has affected the overall average time taken to determine all applications. This is supported by the fact that 80% of all householder applications (approximately one quarter of all applications) were determined within 8 weeks within the same period.	

## SECTION 3 - QUALITY

Indicator	09. Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	
<b>"Good"</b>	<b>"Fair"</b>	<b>"Improvement needed"</b>
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

<b>Authority's performance</b>	3%
<p>A total of 30 decisions were made by Planning Committee in the last two quarters of 2014-2015, which equates to 6% of all planning decisions made. 3% of Committee decisions were against officer recommendation and compared to the Welsh average of 11%, this is considered to be a good outcome and demonstrates the quality of recommendations being put to Members and the good working relationship that exists between Officers and Members.</p>	

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

<b>Authority's performance</b>	81%
<p>Over 80% of appeals against the Council's decision to refuse planning permission were dismissed. This compares favourably to the same period in 2013-2014 when 69% of appeals were dismissed. The Authority has met and noticeably exceeded the Welsh Government target, as well as having the 2<sup>nd</sup> best appeals performance in Wales. Whilst not necessarily the quickest to determine applications, Newport endeavour to make robust and sound planning decisions which can be defended at appeal. A success rate of over 80% is testament to the quality of decision being made in Newport.</p>	

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

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

**SECTION 4 – ENGAGEMENT**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SECTION 5 – ENFORCEMENT

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

<b>Authority's performance</b>	49%
In 2014-2015 we investigated 315 enforcement cases which is slightly above average compared to other Welsh Authorities. 49% of these cases were investigated within 84 days. Whilst this is below the 66% average for Wales, there has been a high turnover of staff within the Team and significant periods of time when the Team have been understaffed. This affects the ability of Officers to investigate all cases in a timely manner.	

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>16. Average time taken to investigate enforcement cases</b>	
<b>“Good”</b>	<b>“Fair”</b>	<b>“Improvement needed”</b>
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

<b>Authority’s performance</b>	No Data
No data available for analysis.	

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

<b>Authority’s performance</b>	81%
81% of enforcement action was taken within 180 days. This is considered to be very good compared to a Welsh average of 77%.	

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>18. Average time taken to take enforcement action</b>	
<b>“Good”</b>	<b>“Fair”</b>	<b>“Improvement needed”</b>
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

<b>Authority’s performance</b>	176
The Authority takes, on average, 176 days to resolve enforcement cases. This is on par with the Welsh average of 175 days.	

## SECTION 6 – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

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

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

<b>Authority's returns</b>	<p>In quarter 1 we provided a full response          In quarter 2 we provided a full response          In quarter 3 we provided a full response          In quarter 4 we provided a full response</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New fields were introduced into the Development Management Quarterly Survey to collect Sustainable Development information. Due to the linked additional work in order to accurately collect and report on this data, Welsh Government introduces a phased approach for implementation.</li> <li>• Phase 1 – Optional collection and reporting (Oct-Dec ¼ 2014)</li> <li>• Phase 2 – Benchmarking and analysis of statistical returns reporting quarters 1 (Jan- March 2015) and 4 (Oct- Dec)2015</li> <li>• Phase 3 Submission of full data sets required from all Local Authorities for reporting Quarter 1 (Jan-Mar)2016.</li> </ul>	

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD1. The floorspace (square metres) granted and refused planning permission for new economic development on allocated employment sites during the year.</b>
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<b>Granted (square metres)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	0

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

No relevant applications have been determined during the review period.	
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<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD2. Planning permission granted for renewable and low carbon energy development during the year.</b>
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<b>Granted permission (number of applications)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	3

<b>Granted permission (MW energy generation)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	0

2 applications granted for Waste Heat Energy  
 1 application granted for Solar energy

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD3. The number of dwellings granted planning permission during the year.</b>
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<b>Market housing (number of units)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	663

<b>Affordable housing (number of units)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	90

Over 13% of all dwellings granted planning permission were classified as affordable housing. Supplementary Planning Guidance has recently been adopted which redefines affordable housing requirements based on need within individual wards.

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

<b>Number of residential units (and also hectares of non-residential units) that DID NOT meet all TAN 15 tests which were GRANTED permission</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	1 unit. 4.05 SqM non-residential floorspace

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

<b>Number of residential units (and also hectares of non-residential units) that MET all TAN 15 tests which were GRANTED permission</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	571 units. 21.9 hectares

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

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD5. The area of land (ha) granted planning permission for new development on previously developed land and greenfield land during the year.</b>
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<b>Previously developed land (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	131 Hectares

<b>Greenfield land (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	20 Hectares

These figures demonstrate that the Authority seek the development of previously developed land in preference to greenfield land. This aligns with adopted local and national policy.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD6. The area of public open space (ha) that would be lost and gained as a result of development granted planning permission during the quarter.</b>
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<b>Open space lost (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	0

<b>Open space gained (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	1.6hectares

These figures demonstrate that the Authority seek to retain and enhance rather than redevelop open space within the City.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD7. The total financial contributions (£) agreed from new development granted planning permission during the quarter for the provision of community infrastructure.</b>
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<b>Gained via Section 106 agreements (£)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	£1,335,313.00

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

The adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy is being progressed. The consultation on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule closed in August 2015 and it is expected that the Inspector's examination and subsequent adoption will take place later in 2016.