

# Flintshire County Council

## PLANNING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR) – 2016

Data relates to the year 2015/16

### PREFACE

*I am pleased to introduce the second version of the Annual Performance Report for Flintshire County Council's planning service. Good planning remains at the heart of what we are about as a Council, making good, safe places for our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time in. The planning service can help in delivering these aims whilst generating growth in the economy and protecting our natural habitats.*

*This year I am delighted to note that, despite bringing forward significant efficiencies over a three year period, we have made improvements against many of the indicators measuring our efficiency, quality of service and level of engagement. This report will help us target areas of improvement for the year 2016/17.*

**Councillor Bernie Attridge, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Planning and the Environment**

## 1. CONTEXT

Flintshire occupies a unique border location in the North East of Wales, serving as the gateway to North Wales and performing a central role in the operation of the sub-region. Characterised by diversity, Flintshire boasts a significant and prosperous industrial heartland, a thriving pattern of settlements supporting a growing population, an effective transport network, and a broad range of landscapes, environments, habitats and species, some of internationally recognised importance.

With such diversity comes significant and potentially conflicting pressures - for growth, expansion and development on the one hand, and for conservation, protection and enhancement on the other. The Planning System and in particular the Flintshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP), has a key role to play in facilitating the correct balance to ensure that where development takes place, it is carried out in a sustainable manner which maximises the nature and quality of the development, and minimises the negative impact it has.

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for Flintshire was adopted on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and covers the period from 2000 to 2015. The UDP replaced the Clwyd County Council Structure Plan (which covered the period 1996-2011); the Delyn Local Plan (which covered the period 1986-1996) and the Alyn and Deeside Local Plan (1993 to 2003).

Flintshire's Community Strategy which was approved in June 2004 aims to develop an agreed vision between a partnership of public service providers and the community of Flintshire for the period 2004 to 2020. The approved strategy is a 'live' document involving rolling 4 year action plans to deliver the service priorities agreed as well as an annual review and reporting back to the community and partners. The strategy seeks to bring about a number of key themes: learning and creative communities; healthy and caring communities; active communities; safe communities and thriving and modern communities, through the application of a number of core principles which are sustainability, social inclusion, equal opportunity and Welsh language.

The UDP plays a role in supporting and delivering the Community Strategy. The UDP however, will have a specific spatial role in relation to the Community Strategy, as the majority of physical change and development that takes place within Flintshire's communities, is either as a direct result of proposals in the UDP, or is guided and controlled by its policies.

The strategic aims of the UDP encompass a broad range of social, economic, and environmental issues relating to Flintshire's communities, and these are compatible with the Community Strategy themes. Sustainability and social inclusion are two of the four main themes that underpin the UDP, and which go to the heart of the Plan and its policies.

The UDP also works hand in hand with other corporate plans and strategies to achieve sustainable outcomes. Many of these strategies share a common sustainability agenda, and

equally all have a role and relationship to the Council's emerging Community Strategy. Some of these key strategies include :

- Local Transport Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Countryside Strategy
- Local Housing Strategy

Flintshire, located in the north eastern corner of Wales is one of the six unitary authorities covering North Wales, and the largest in population (148,600). Due to its border location with England, it is affected by the socio - economic activities of the North West region, which has the second largest population in England outside the South East. Urban development is concentrated in the coastal areas on the Dee Estuary, which has traditionally been a location for industrial development. With the expansion of Deeside Industrial Park, the County has become a significant focus for sub-regional employment generation. Away from the urbanised coastal strip, the County is predominantly rural in nature with a dispersed settlement pattern of market towns and village communities situated in attractive rolling countryside.

Flintshire lies between the Clwydian Hills and the Dee Estuary. The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which partly covers the north of western areas of the County. The Dee Estuary has several ecological designation including as a Ramsar site under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance and Special Protection Area (SPA) under the European Community Birds Directive due to its importance as a wintering site for significant populations of migratory waders and wildfowl. The Estuary is also a Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) Significance and a Special Area of Conservation.

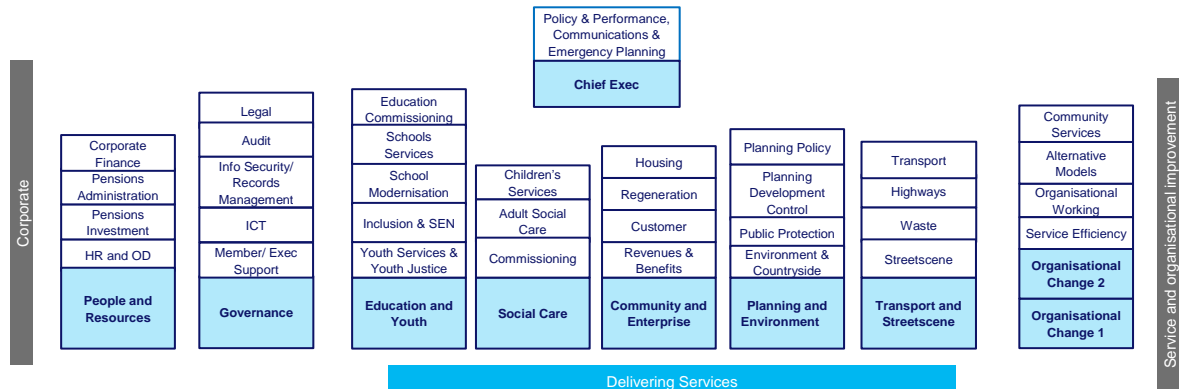
The industrial areas along the Dee Estuary with the Enterprise Zone at Deeside Industrial Park at its heart and the predominantly agricultural areas to the west in the foothills of the Clwydians provide a unique urban / rural mix. Whilst the administrative centre lies in Mold, the County is made up of a series of other main towns (Holywell, Buckley, Connah's Quay, Flint, Shotton, Saltney and Broughton).

Population growth in Flintshire is slowing down in comparison to historical trends (the last 30 years). The 2011 census based WG projections indicate that Flintshire's population is only likely to grow by 2% over the plan period for the LDP. This is due to a combination of changes in the trends for both components of population change i.e. natural change (births and deaths) and migration. Positive natural change is slowing down (more births than deaths) and migration change is neutral. These projections however may be an underestimate as they used recession period trends with which to project forwards. Flintshire's population age structure is ageing which will have implications on the demand for new housing as well as more specialised types of housing need. In terms of housing provision, the UDP plan period covered the years 2000 to 2015 and that Plan set out to

provide a housing requirement of 7,400 homes or 493 homes per annum. That requirement has not been met and is unlikely to be as we approach the end of the Plan period. This will have implications for the Local Development Plan housing requirement figure.

## 2. PLANNING SERVICE

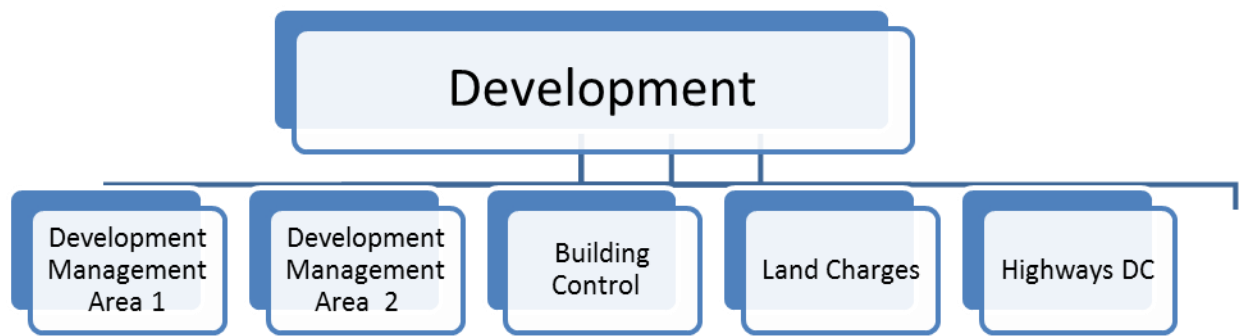
The statutory planning function sits within the wider Planning and Environment Portfolio, established following restructuring at Directorate level in June 2014. The Chief Officer (Planning and Environment) reports directly to the Chief Executive and is one of eight Chief Officers in Flintshire. This structure is shown below:



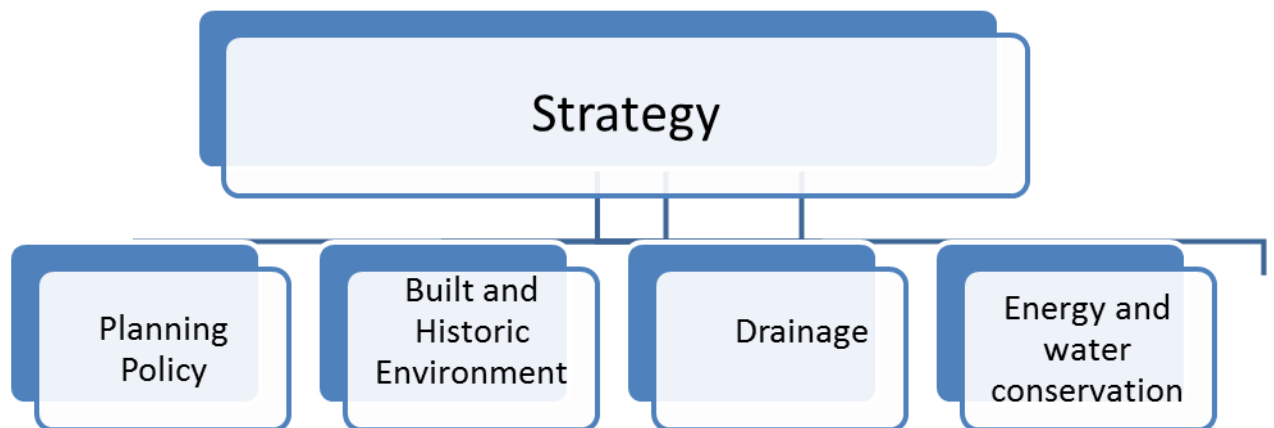
The Planning Strategy and Development Management functions are led by separate managers located within County Hall, Mold. They form part of a Portfolio Management Structure of six Service Managers as shown below:



The Development Management function is split into five teams as shown below:



- The Planning Policy team sits with three other teams, covering the following service areas:



The planning service was the subject of a Value for Money review in 2013/14 which sought to recover £456,000 of efficiencies from its budget. This was successfully achieved. In 2014/15 a further target was placed on all operational services to recover a further 30% in total over the forthcoming three financial years. The Portfolio's budget for 2015/16 was £5,561,000. The annual savings targets are delivered through the Portfolio Business Plan and overseen by the Programme Board – made up of Cabinet Members and lead officers from the portfolio. The Planning and Environment Portfolio will seek to achieve the following savings :

- 2015/16 - £874,838 (16.62 % of overall budget)
- 2016/17 - £365,272 (7.4% of overall budget)
- 2017/18 - £269,579 (5.7% of overall budget)

Whilst the overall budget provided to the Planning function has reduced over the past three years, income has risen. The primary source of income is from planning application fees, but the portfolio also receives income from land charges, publications and as part of the shared service initiative for the North Wales Minerals and Waste service. The figures below show income from planning applications and land charges over the past 5 years. Following the

global financial crisis in 2008, the budgeted income figures from both planning applications and land charges were revised downwards for 2010/11, with minor increases thereafter. The budgeted rise in 2015/16 was significant reflecting knowledge that Welsh Government were set to increase fees by 15% and allow charging for areas of work that were previously delivered free of charge e.g. pre application charging and the discharge of planning conditions. The budgeted income target was not achieved on planning application fees alone, but income from pre-application discussions did help to address the shortfall. The income trend will be closely monitored.

*Planning application fees income against budget*

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/2012	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Budgeted income	913 782	732 058	587 302	663 994	675 465	675 465	918 994
Actual income	572 811	615 863	556 740	706 324	676 604	750 532	767 900

*Land charges fees income against budget*

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/2012	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Budgeted income	169 437	132 826	135 696	150 071	170 071	170 071	170 071
Actual income	152 156	134 708	160 516	153 238	179 965	179 921	185 728

The Development Management team has had two Team Leaders in 2015/16, one leading the minor applications team and the other leads the enforcement workload. The major applications team leader post was vacant throughout 2015/16 and the planned move to two area team leaders will allow the vacant post to be surrendered as a saving. This reflects a general trend across the Council to reduce the numbers of middle managers within the organisation whilst protecting frontline staff. There are four senior planning officers and four planning officers which will be split equally into the two area teams. Staff within the enforcement team will be assimilated into the two area teams.

Between 2014/15 and 2015/16 the number of planning applications determined went down slightly from 1256 to 1224 which was against the forecast that it would increase as the building industry recovers. The team did suffer from a significant spell of long term sickness to key member of staff in 2015/16 and a member of staff to voluntary redundancy and wasn't replaced, which had a detrimental impact on performance.

It is acknowledged that staff development is key to the portfolio's future success and training and development budgets have been retained albeit following a 25% reduction for the year 2015/16. Staff appraisals and one to ones are consistently undertaken. The Portfolio has supported staff through ILM qualifications and through formal qualification to become Royal Town Planning Institute members. The Council no longer pays for employees' membership of professional bodies.

In addition, five training and development sessions per year were provided in-house to both staff and Members. This equates to three days of Continual Professional Development if all sessions are attended.



### 3. OUR LOCAL STORY

Performance against the P.I.s has been maintained during the year, despite ill-health absences within the DM team and staff taking voluntary redundancy and not being replaced.

The time expiry of the Unitary Development Plan and the associated decision to impose a deemed zero supply of housing land as a result, has encouraged the development industry to submit residential development applications on unallocated sites to address the lack of need. Handling these applications has been a significant drain on resources across the service. Inevitably these applications are of a scale to be determined by Planning committee and a number have also resulted in appeals. Such a scenario does not lend itself to good planning.

The reduction in case officers aligned to a similar number of planning applications being submitted in 2015/16, meant the number of cases each planning officer was dealing with rose to 204 each. This compares to 185 applications per officer in 2014/15 and 168 applications dealt with in 2013/14.

We introduced charges for pre-application advice, for confirming compliance with condition, undertaking planning research and for managing Section 106 Obligations. This involved a review of our current procedures with regard to advising the public and prospective developers, but by working closely with our customers on a more formal basis we can achieve better outcomes and reduce the number of incomplete and unsuccessful applications. This will bring additional responsibilities with regard to the consistency and robustness of the advice given and, again, new challenges with regard to the staff and other resources available.

There remains a concern over maintaining efficient service delivery and improved performance through the adaptations outlined above, particularly in light of the reduction in staff numbers and the new aspects of service delivery such as the charges for pre-application advice.

Next year the proposed changes identified in the previous Service Plan which include the introduction of area based DM teams, improved mobile working, a restructured Enforcement team, realigned Support Services and an office move so all staff will be on the same floor will be introduced.

These structural changes are, to a large extent, linked to the corporate Business Plan and the identified need for efficiencies. The rationalisation of the Council's accommodation and the relocation of the Planning Service from its existing office space will need to be carefully managed, as the difficulties with the Authority's external software provider and the knock on effect in relation to the Council's own ITC service result in us still having to rely on paper files. These difficulties are being addressed but in addition to this, further significant

changes will be required to adapt our software systems to the capture and monitoring of the additional information required by Welsh Government's new range of performance indicators.

Officers have been equipped with the technology to allow them to work remotely and they are encouraged to spend at least a day a week out of the office (in a structured manner) as a precursor to full mobile working.

In relation to the Local Development Plan, the Council is progressing the Plan in line with the various stages set out in the Council's Delivery Agreement, which has recently been amended and agreed with Welsh Government to reflect a more realistic and deliverable LDP timetable. A summary of progress to date is set out below:

- undertaken a **Call for Candidate Sites** and published a **Register** of all valid site submissions
- undertaking **Candidate Site Assessments** of the 734 sites involving internal and external consultations on the candidate sites as part of the on-going assessment
- consulted upon a **Candidate Site Assessment Methodology Background Paper** setting out the methodology by which candidate sites will be assessed and subsequently published an amended paper
- consulted upon a suite of 18 **Topic Papers** on a range of topics and issues and published amended versions where changes made
- appointed with Wrexham CBC a joint **Local Housing Market Assessment** undertaken by Arc4 consultants which has been published
- appointed Arc4 to undertake a **Housing Occupancy Survey** on all properties constructed / converted in the last 5 years to gain a better understanding of the local housing market
- appointed Arc4 to undertake a **Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment**
- jointly commissioned with Wrexham CBC an **Employment Land Needs Study** which will be published shortly. Follow up work on forecasting economic and jobs based growth scenarios has also been commissioned and this will feed into population and household modelling work
- appointed consultants jointly with Wrexham to undertake initial **viability** work on development sites
- held the meetings of the **Key Stakeholder Forum** which will act as a sounding board at key stages in the Plans preparation and has considered the Plan's vision and objectives
- appointed Hyder Consulting to undertake a **Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment** and the draft SA Scoping Report has been consulted upon.
- commencing a range of other studies including **green barrier review, urban capacity study, Welsh Language Assessment and Strategic Flood Consequences Assessment**

- **appointed COFNOD to undertake biodiversity mapping in relation to the County's main towns and settlements within areas of development pressure**
- undertaken an assessment of settlement services and facilities and consulted with Town & Community Councils
- Published and consulted on a Key Messages document in the spring of 2016 as it was considered important for an initial document to be prepared which would set the scene in terms of lessons learned from the emerging evidence base and early engagement and also provide key stakeholders and the general public with the opportunity to give their initial views on how the Plan is emerging and should be shaped. As an outcome of this and the feedback received, the Council has a clearer picture that the Plan is heading in the right direction and from this it has developed a series of realistic growth and spatial options to complete the components of the core strategy.
- The Council is currently consulting on a range of strategic options relating to the amount of growth the Plan should cater for, and how this should be distributed.
- As part of preparing to consult on the growth options, the Council has worked with Planning Aid Wales and has carried out extensive stakeholder and Town and Community Council engagement in order to build consensus towards the options and guide Members in subsequently selecting a preferred strategy for the LDP.

The website provides a range of information about various aspects of the LDP including the current consultation, as well as any completed studies and can be found at the following web address: <http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Planning/Flintshire-Local-Development-Plan.aspx>

The Council is presently working towards preparing and consulting upon the Pre-Deposit Consultation Draft Plan which will set out the Council's Preferred Strategy i.e. the amount of growth to be provided by the Plan and how that growth is to be distributed spatially across the County. This is progressing in line with the revised Delivery Agreement.

- Current projects. .

Working with the Council's developer partner (Wates) to delivery the Council's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) ambition of building 500 affordable homes on Council land over the next 5 years..

Co-ordinated planning input into the proposals and planning applications for the Flint Extra Care scheme (permission granted in March 2015) and the new Health Centre (planning application with the Council).

Progressing negotiations to bring forward the strategic Northern Gateway site following Welsh Government investment in essential flood risk and road infrastructure.

Working with our Mersey Dee Alliance partners to develop a mutual growth strategy for the sub region, promoting the job growth and housing development potential of the area, as well as its key strategic location from an investment and infrastructure development perspective.

Support the Council in relation to developing the Deeside Masterplan and Northern Gateway strategic development site.

- Local pressures.

Following the adoption of TAN1 methodology to calculate land supply on the residual method only (rather than completions method, as previously) Flintshire has found itself with a sub 5 year supply – most recently calculated at 3.7 years in 2014. With a UDP expired at the end of 2015, the Council has produced and consulted upon a Speculative Development Statement to set out its position in relation to planning applications that may be submitted by developers to address the shortfall in housing supply. Flintshire is now unable to demonstrate it has a five year land supply as per the revised TAN1, and will not be able to do so until it adopts the LDP. Significant pressure is now being experienced from speculative development, as is the case across Wales, and the Council maintains its long held position that the TAN is not fit for purpose and requires further review.

Against the national benchmarks, Flintshire continues to compare poorly in relation to indicators 9 and 10 (decisions against officer recommendation and appeals dismissed respectively). In relation to indicator 9, a review has been undertaken of our procedures in relation to members' overturn of an officer's recommendation, with a view to an increasing use of "cooling off" periods when applications are refused against officer recommendation (historically "cooling off" has generally been used when items are granted against officer recommendation). In relation to indicator 10 a thorough review of appeal decisions will again be undertaken with officers and Councillors to ensure that lessons can be learnt from those decisions where permission has been granted on appeal.

Other than appeal performance, our focus in 2015/16 will be on the restructuring of the Development Management Service and specifically focussing on the enforcement function. The latter will establish a new enforcement policy setting out how we identify our priorities and allocate our resources.

2015/16 will be a key year for the Planning Policy team bringing together extensive evidence into a Key Messages document; reviewing the LDP Delivery Agreement and beginning our public engagement on Growth and Spatial options for the LDP.

#### 4. WHAT SERVICE USERS THINK

In 2015-16 we conducted a customer satisfaction survey aimed at assessing the views of people that had received a planning application decision during the year.

The survey was sent to 312 people, 20% of whom submitted a whole or partial response. The majority of responses (49%) were from members of the public. 12% of respondents had their most recent planning application refused.

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

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

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

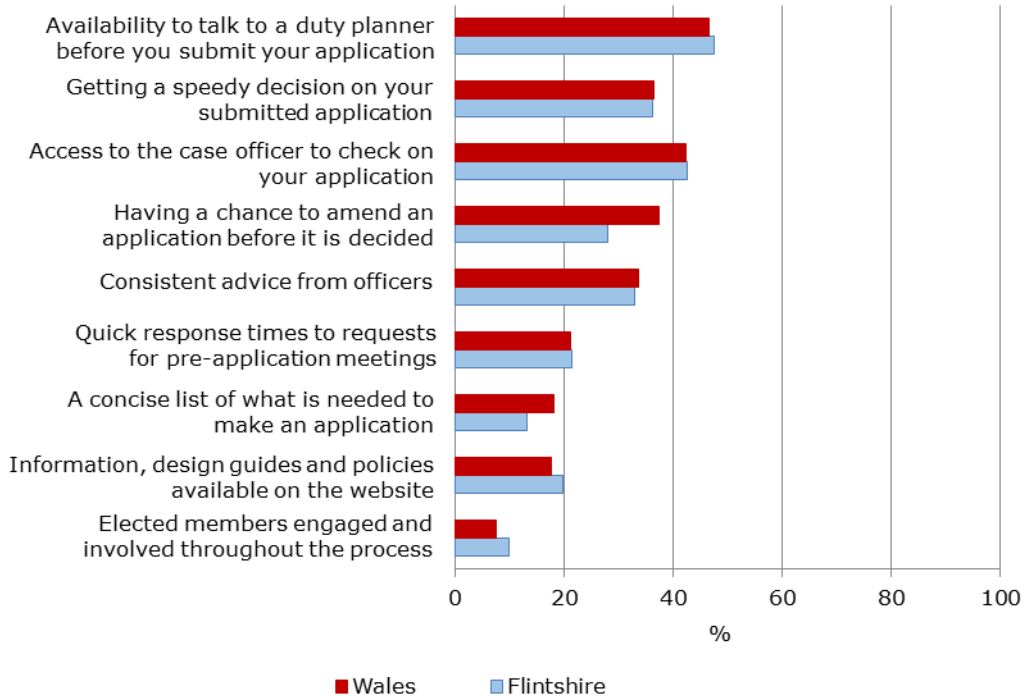
**Table 1: Percentage of respondents who agreed with each statement, 2015-16**

Percentage of respondents who agreed that:	%	
	Flintshire LPA	Wales
The LPA enforces its planning rules fairly and consistently	46	47
The LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application	69	58
The LPA gives help throughout, including with conditions	56	49
The LPA responded promptly when they had questions	65	58
They were listened to about their application	65	57
They were kept informed about their application	51	49
They were satisfied overall with how the LPA handled their application	68	61

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. For us, 'the availability to talk to a duty planner before submitting an application' was the most popular choice.

It is significant that overall satisfaction with the Planning Service rose from 64% in 2014-15 to 68% in 2015-16 and that Flintshire scored higher than the Welsh average in all of the indicators, with the exception of the consistent enforcing of planning rules.

**Figure 1: Characteristics of a good planning service, Flintshire LPA, 2015-16**



Comments received include:

- “Flintshire staff engaging, felt they wanted to help. They did what they said they would do ie ring when asked, explain reasoning. A good experience for someone who deals with other Authorities who doesn't always have the same experience” [sic]
- “Always found Flintshire to be helpful, informative and fair.”
- “My application was made online, the process was not easy. The process would have been far easier if a contact could have been made with a member of staff”

## 5. OUR PERFORMANCE 2015-16

This section details our performance in 2015-16. 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

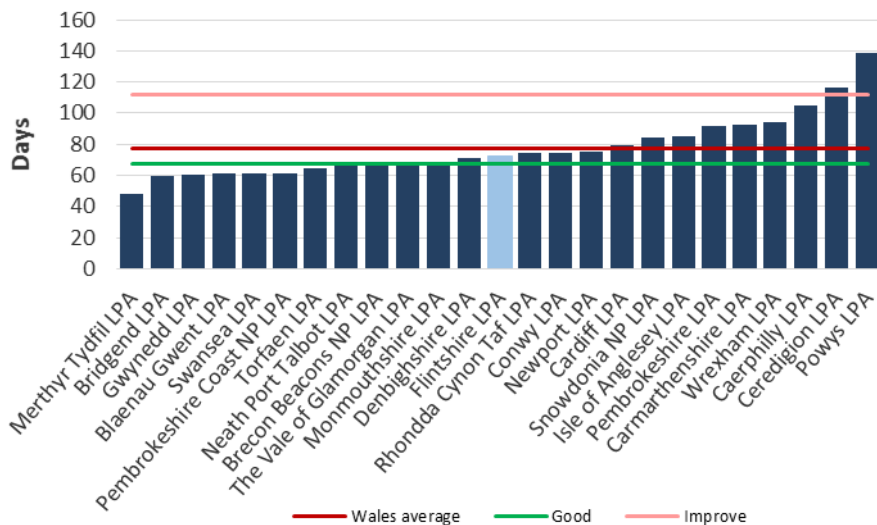
As at 31 March 2016, we were one of 22 LPAs that had a current development plan in place.

During the APR period we had 0 years of housing land supply identified, making us one of 17 Welsh LPAs without the required 5 years supply. This is significant given our on-going concerns with the methodology for measuring housing land supply which was previously referenced in Section 3.

### Efficiency

In 2015-16 we determined 1,200 planning applications, each taking, on average, 72 days (10 weeks) to determine. This compares to an average of 77 days (11 weeks) across Wales. The total number of applications is down slightly since 2014-15, when 1200 applications were determined. The average time to determine an application has reduced from 77 days (11 weeks) in 2014-15. Figure 2 shows the average time taken by each LPA to determine an application during the year.

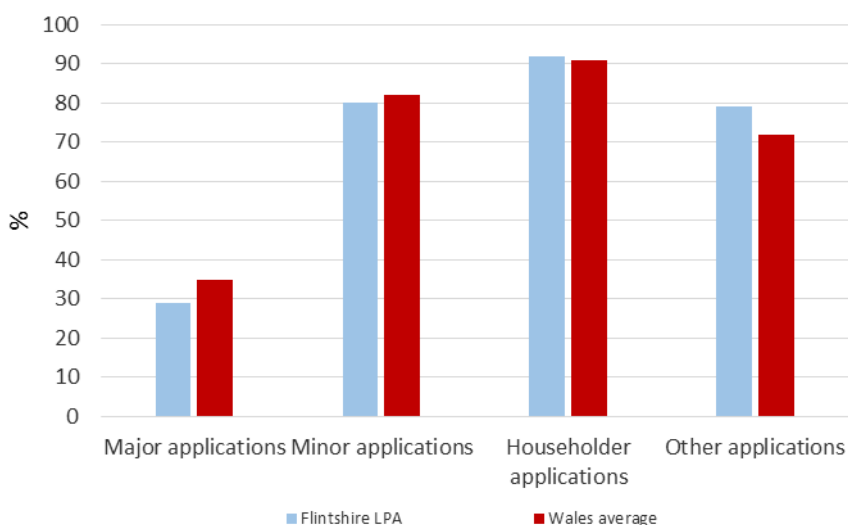
**Figure 2: Average time taken (days) to determine applications, 2015-16**



77% of all planning applications were determined within the required timescales. This compared to 77% across Wales, but was below the 80% target. Only 8 out of 25 LPAs met the 80% target.

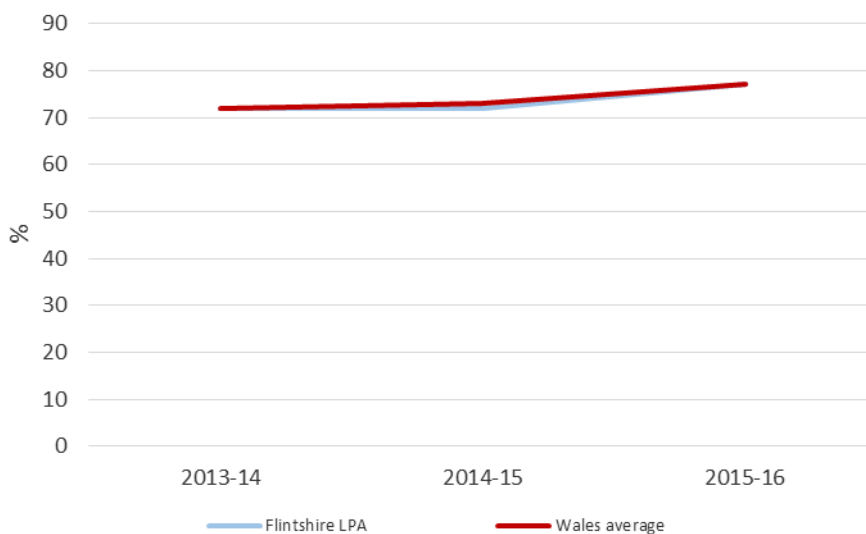
Figure 3 shows the percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales across the four main types of application for our LPA and Wales. It shows that we determined 92% of householder applications within the required timescales. That is an increase from 89% in 2014-15.

**Figure 3: Percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales, by type, 2015-16**



Between 2014-15 and 2015-16, as Figure 4 shows, the percentage of planning applications we determined within the required timescales increased from 72%. Wales also saw an increase this year.

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





Over the same period:

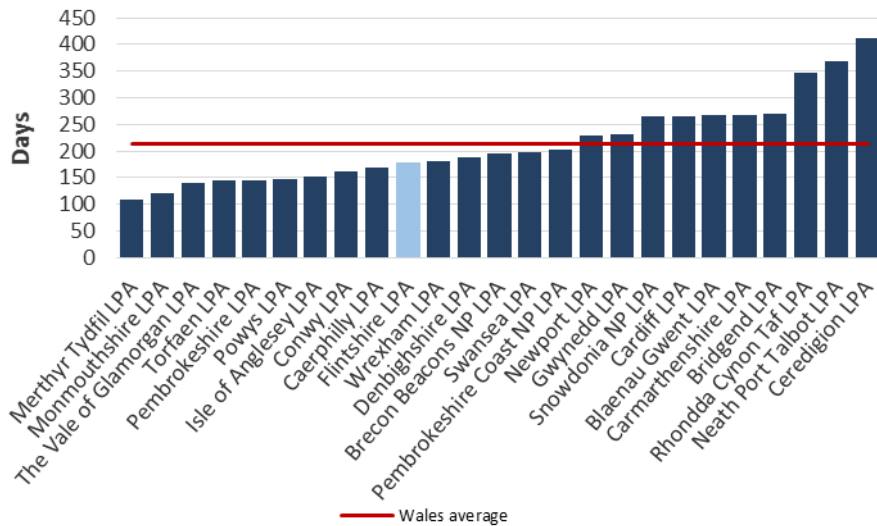
- The total number of applications we received increased;
- The number of applications we determined decreased; and
- The number of applications we approved decreased.

### Major applications

We determined 45 major planning applications in 2015-16 compared to 60 in 2014-15. In 2015-16 4% of major applications (2 applications) were subject to an EIA, the same number as 2014-15.

Each major application (including those subject to an EIA) took, on average, 178 days (25 weeks) to determine, compared to 204 days (29 weeks) in 2014-15. As Figure 5 shows, the average determination period of 178 days (25 weeks) was significantly shorter than the Wales average of 213 days (30 weeks). Flintshire lies tenth in Wales for its speed in determining major planning applications in 2014-15, compared to 14<sup>th</sup> in 2014-15.

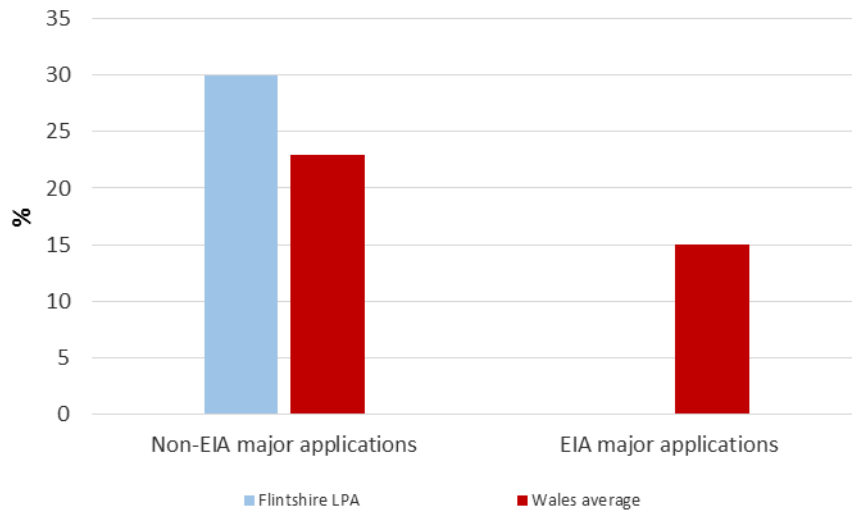
**Figure 5: Average time (days) taken to determine a major application, 2015-16**



29% of these major applications were determined within the required timescales in 2015-16 compared to 17% in 2014-15. Across Wales 35% of all major planning applications were determined within their required timescales in 2015-16, compared to 24% in 2014-15.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales by the type of major application. 30% of our ‘standard’ major applications i.e. those not requiring an EIA, were determined within the required timescales during the year 2015-16, compared to 18% in 2014-15.

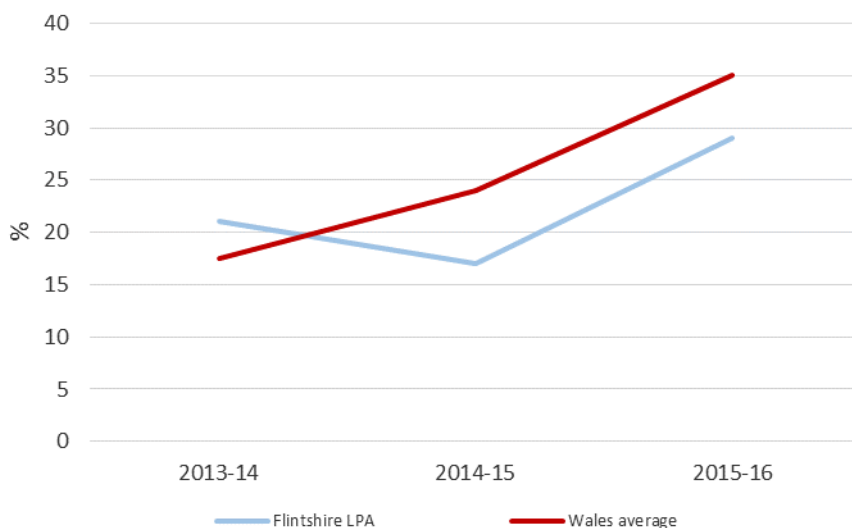
**Figure 6: Percentage of Major applications determined within the required timescales during the year, by type, 2015-16**



Since 2014-15 the percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales had increased from 17%. In contrast, the number of major applications determined decreased as had the number of applications subject to an EIA determined during the year.

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 i.e. since 2014-15,:

- The percentage of minor applications determined within the required timescales increased from 76% to 80%;
- The percentage of householder applications determined within the required timescales increased from 89% to 92%; and
- The percentage of other applications determined within required timescales increased from 72% to 79%.

It is significant that 2015-16 saw increases in performance in the efficiency of determination of all categories of planning applications, despite significant revenue budget reductions affecting the Planning and Environment portfolio.

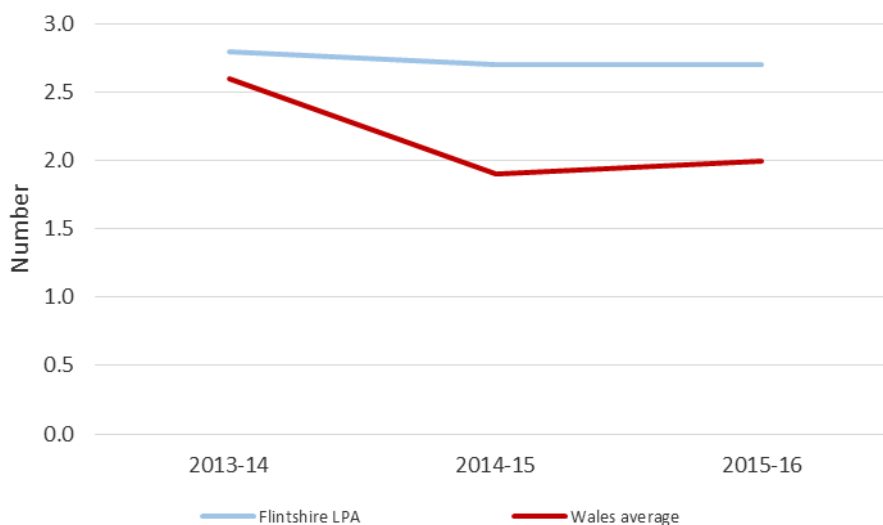
## Quality

In 2015-16, our Planning Committee made 60 planning application decisions during the year, which equated to 5% of all planning applications determined. Across Wales 7% of all planning application decisions were made by planning committee.

12% of these member-made decisions went against officer advice. This compared to 9% of member-made decisions across Wales. The 2015-16 represents a growing trend for Flintshire since 2014-15 when 8% of decisions went against officer recommendation. The 2015-16 figure equates to 0.6% of all planning application decisions going against officer advice; 0.6% across Wales.

In 2015-16 we received 36 appeals against our planning decisions, which equated to 2.7 appeals for every 100 applications received. This was the third highest ratio of appeals to applications in Wales. Figure 8 shows how the volume of appeals received has changed since 2014-15 and how this compares to Wales.

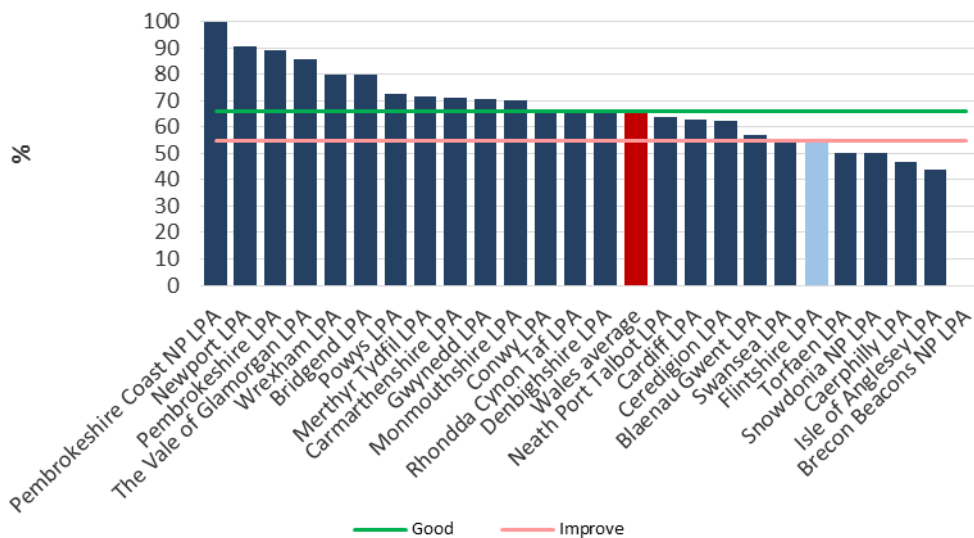
**Figure 8: Number of appeals received per 100 planning applications**



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, 54% were dismissed in 2015-16, compared to 48% the previous year. As Figure 9 shows, the 2015-16 figure was lower than the percentage of appeals dismissed across Wales as a whole and was below the 55% threshold. In 2015-16 Flintshire was ranked 20<sup>th</sup> out of 25 LPAs compared to 24<sup>th</sup> in 2014-15.

**Figure 9: Percentage of appeals dismissed, 2015-16**



During 2015-16 we had 1 application for costs at a section 78 appeal upheld, making us one of the 5 LPAs to have at least one such application upheld in the year. In 2014-15, Flintshire had 2 applications for costs upheld.

## Engagement

We are:

- one of 24 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.

As Table 2 shows, 69% of respondents to our 2015-16 customer satisfaction survey agreed that the LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application. This is a significant increase since 2014-15, when 51% agreed.

**Table 2: Feedback from our 2015-16 customer satisfaction survey**

Percentage of respondents who agreed that:	%	
	Flintshire LPA	Wales
The LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application	69	58
They were listened to about their application	65	57

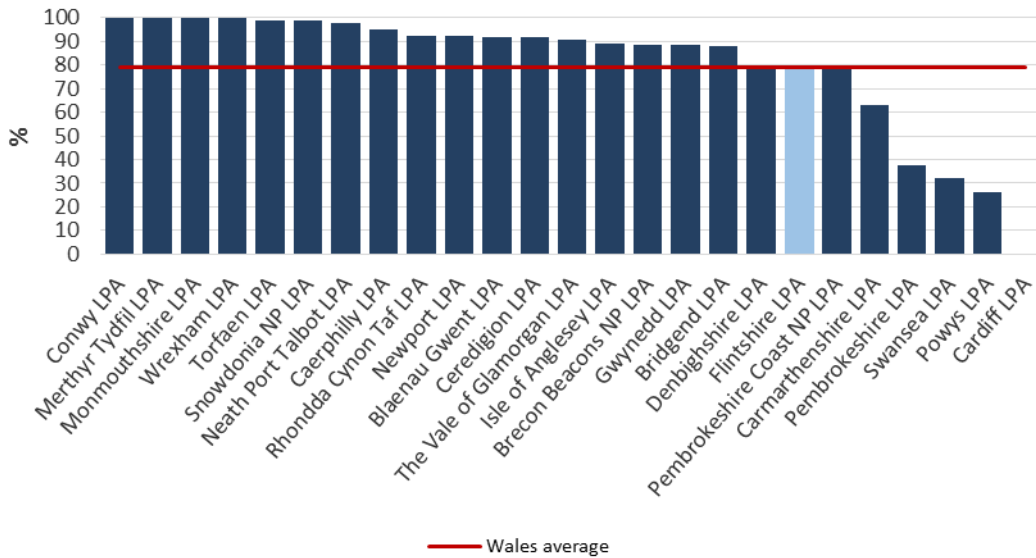
## Enforcement

In 2015-16 we investigated 406 enforcement cases, which equated to 2.6 per 1,000 population. This compared to 1.9 enforcement cases investigated per 1,000 population across Wales. This represents an increase in workload, as in 2014-15 366 cases were investigated. We took, on average, 115 days to investigate each enforcement case in 2015-16 compared to 30 days in 2014-15.

We investigated 78% of these enforcement cases within 84 days. Across Wales 79% were investigated within 84 days. In 2014-15 we investigated 80% of enforcement cases.

Figure 10 shows the percentage of enforcement cases that were investigated within 84 days across all Welsh LPAs.

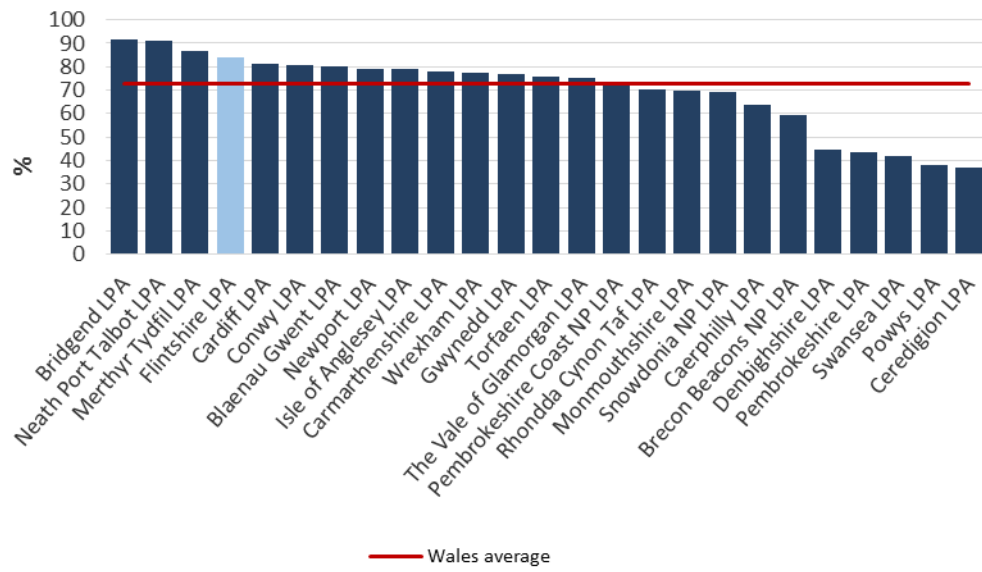
**Figure 10: Percentage of enforcement cases investigated within 84 days, 2015-16**



Over the same period, we resolved 406 enforcement cases, taking, on average, 115 days to resolve each case.

84% of this enforcement action was taken within 180 days from the start of the case. As Figure 11 shows this was the fourth highest percentage in Wales and represents an increase from 2014-15, when 745 of cases were resolved.

**Figure 11: Percentage of enforcement cases resolved in 180 days, 2015-16**



## ANNEX A - PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

### OVERVIEW

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE	WALES AVERAGE	Flintshire LPA LAST YEAR	Flintshire LPA THIS YEAR
<b>Plan making</b>						
Is there a current Development Plan in place that is within the plan period?	Yes		No	Yes	Yes	Yes
LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	<12	13-17	18+	47	N/A	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		<5	3.9	3.7	0.0
<b>Efficiency</b>						
Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	Not set	Not set	Not set	35	17	29
Average time taken to determine "major" applications in days	Not set	Not set	Not set	213	204	178
Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required	>80	60.1-79.9	<60	77	72	77
Average time taken to determine all applications in days	<67	67-111	112+	77	77	72
<b>Quality</b>						
Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	<5	4.9-8.9	9+	9	8	12
Percentage of appeals dismissed	>66	55.1-65.9	<55	66	48	54
Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	0	1	2	0	2	1
<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 provide advice to members of the public?	Yes		No	Yes	-	Yes

MEASURE	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE
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 granted 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	Flintshire LPA LAST YEAR	Flintshire LPA THIS YEAR
Yes	Yes	Yes
79	80	78
88	30	115
73	74	84
210	247	115



**SECTION 1 – PLAN MAKING**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>01. Is there a current Development Plan in place that is within the plan period?</b>	
<b>“Good”</b>	<b>“Fair”</b>	<b>“Improvement needed”</b>
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)

<b>Authority’s performance</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<p>The Unitary Development Plan time expired in 2015. Relevant policies are still used for Development Management purposes. Work is progressing on the Local Development Plan as outlined in Section 3.</p>	

Indicator	02. LDP preparation deviation from the dates specified in the original Delivery Agreement, in months	
<b>"Good"</b>	<b>"Fair"</b>	<b>"Improvement needed"</b>
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

<b>Authority's performance</b>	N/A
There has been slippage in the LDP's preparation ad a revised Delivery Agreement has been prepared with Welsh Government officials.	

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

<b>Authority's performance</b>	N/A
Not prepared as no adopted LDP in place.	

Indicator	04. The local planning authority's current housing land supply in years	
<b>"Good"</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 less than 5 years

Authority's performance	0
<p>Deemed to have “zero” supply with the expiration of the UDP. A Speculative Development Guidance Note has been prepared to aid the submission and assessment of applications submitted in response to the supply situation.</p>	

**SECTION 2 - EFFICIENCY**

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

Authority's performance	29
<p>This represents a significant improvement on 2014/15 when 17% of applications were determined within the time period. Improved case management and a more formal pre-application service have enabled this improvement.</p>	

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

Authority's performance	178
<p>Again, this represents a significant improvement in the average time taken to determine a major application with these taking a month less on average when compared to last year. Flintshire is significantly below the Welsh average of 213 days.</p>	

Indicator	07. Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
More than 80% of applications are determined within the statutory time period	Between 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	77
<p>This represents a 5% improvement on 2014/15. Improved case management and a more formal pre-application service have enabled this improvement. In 2016/17 we will actively seek to achieve the 80% target.</p>	

Indicator	08. Average time taken to determine all applications in days	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Less than 67 days	Between 67 and 111 days	112 days or more

Authority's performance	72
<p>We have improved our average time to determine applications falling below the Welsh average of 80 days to 72 days. This is an improvement for Flintshire on our previous year's performance of 77 days. We continue to aspire to the target of 67 days.</p>	

**SECTION 3 - QUALITY**

Indicator	09. Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	
“Good”	“Fair”	“Improvement needed”
Less than 5% of decisions	Between 5% and 9% of decisions	9% or more of decisions

Authority’s performance	12
<p>This represents an increase of 4% since 2014/15. The growing trend may reflect the early signs of elected Members’ reaction to the speculative developments which have been submitted since the UDP time expired.</p>	

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

Authority’s performance	54
<p>This represents a 6% improvement since 2014/15 and we continue to make appeal success rate one of our improvement priorities. A training programme is in place for Councillors and officers and all appeal decisions are reported to planning committee with an annual appeals report and detailed analysis provided to Planning Strategy Group.</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>1</b>
A 100% improvement on the year 2014/15. We work hard to avoid costs and review all decisions for matters which can improve upon.	

**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>	
This has been in place since 2010 and is reviewed every two years to refine it.		

<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>	
This has been a clear priority for us and has reflected in customer satisfaction levels above the Welsh average.		



<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>	<b>Yes</b>
<p>The website holds details of the stage which an application has reached. Both delegated and Committee reports can be sourced from eh website. We are working to improve our website so that consultation responses can be found there</p>	

**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>	78
<p>A marginal dip in performance of 2% since 2014/15, but the Council still performs well in excess of the Welsh average of 66%. The volume of enforcement cases has increased by 40 since 2014/15.</p>	

<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>	115
<p>There has been a significant increase in the number of cases being investigated, a rise of 50 cases per year. The increase in average time is significant and is being analyzed to ensure that recording is accurate. The Council’s enforcement policy is being revised which will clarify enforcement priorities and manage customer expectations.</p>	

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>17. Percentage of enforcement cases where enforcement action is taken or a retrospective application granted 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>	84
<p>Despite the increase in case load, the County is still within the top 4 in Wales when it comes to taking enforcement action within 180 days. The percentage increased from 77% to 84% in 2015/16. The introduction of the new enforcement policy will ideally see this figure increasing further.</p>	

<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>	115
<p>This is a significant improvement from 2014/15 when the average time was 247 days, compared to 115 days in 2015/16. The introduction of the new enforcement policy will ideally see this figure reducing further.</p>	

## 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>	
Due to on-going limitations with our back-office system which we are addressing with our software provider, we have only been able to collate data for indicators SD2 and SD3.	

<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

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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>	9

<b>Granted permission (MW energy generation)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	47.31

The Council has successfully promoted the development of renewable energy and in particular solar power, with three solar farms granted consent. One of these is a very large commercial development (46MW) adjacent to Flintshire's principle employment areas at Deeside Industrial Park which not only feeds power directly to the grid, but also has a local energy supply relationship with one of the County's largest industrial energy users, UDP Shotton Paper.

Significantly, the Council has also developed two solar farms itself (1MW combined) on former landfill sites which will supply power to the grid, as well as provide all of the power requirements for the Council's principle streetscene/highways depot at Alltami, thereby making a significant saving in energy consumption over time. This will also help facilitate other innovations such as the use of electric fleet vehicles for highways and waste management.

<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>	52

<b>Affordable housing (number of units)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	184

This is a significant contribution to the provision of affordable housing and in particular as over 100 of the units permitted are as part of the Council's own Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) comprising sites in Flint and Connaught's Quay. The number of market sites is low as no new large sites came forward, however there are a large number of commitments in Flintshire awaiting development or the submission of reserved matters e.g. Northern Gateway.

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD4. Planning permission granted and refused for development in C1 and C2 floodplain areas during the year.</b>
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**Number of residential units (and also hectares of non-residential units) that DID NOT meet all TAN 15 tests which were GRANTED permission**

<b>Authority's data</b>	0
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**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>Authority's data</b>	0
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**Number of residential units (and also hectares of non-residential units) that MET all TAN 15 tests which were GRANTED permission**

<b>Authority's data</b>	0
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<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>	0

<b>Greenfield land (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	0

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<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>	0

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<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>	208,715

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

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