BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL	
Report to	**Chair & Members of Planning Regulatory & General Licensing Committee**
Report Subject	**Quarterly Performance Information** **Quarter 1: April – June 2020**
Report Author	**Service Manager Development & Estates**
Directorate	**Regeneration and Community Services**
Date of Meeting	**12th November 2020**
Key Words	**Performance Management** **Speed and quality of decision making** **Welsh Government Monitoring** **Quarter 1: April – June 2020**

1.0	**Background**
1.1	Every local planning authority (LPA) in Wales is required to collect performance information regarding the speed and quality of decision making on all types of planning and related applications. This is submitted to Welsh Government on a quarterly basis.
1.2	This report considers the most recent data published by WG. The information relates to the first quarter of the current financial year i.e. **April to June 2020**.
1.3	It was published on the Welsh Government website on 30th September 2020 Link to Data

2.0	**Options for Consideration**
2.1	I have included 3 tables to illustrate current performance.
	1. Fig 1 - ranks the 25 LPA's in order of speed of determining all applications "on time". This is defined as within the 8-week target period or longer time that may be agreed with the applicant.
	2. Fig 2 – ranks the LPA's in Wales and in respect of the average time (in days) taken to determine all applications.
	3. Fig 3. – shows decisions taken by Planning Committee that are contrary to the recommendation of its officers.
3.0	**Performance Information**
3.1	<u>Fig 1</u>: this Council decided **96%** of all applications in time. This compares to a Welsh average of 83%.
3.2	<u>Fig 2</u>: on average it takes **78 days** from registration to decision for this Council to decide each planning application. The Wales average is 94 days.
3.3	<u>Fig 3</u>: **0%** of Planning Committee decisions were contrary to officer recommendation. The Wales average is 3%.
4.0	**Consideration**
4.1	The data in this quarter covers the beginning of the Covid "lockdown" period. The returns therefore have to be viewed in that context. They are not necessarily representative of our normal service provision.
4.2	During this period, the service continued. There was an initial period of uncertainty around staff attending site visits and logistical issues, mainly IT related that continue to present difficulty, that we had to come to terms with at short notice. Many of these issues were common to other local planning authorities.
4.3	The Development Management team lost the services of the Team Manager, Team Leader and a Planning officer who were redeployed to Covid duties from what is already a small team.
4.4	The quarter April to June does not wholly cover the period when officers were seconded out of the service. I would therefore expect our performance to dip once again when the next quarter data (Q2) is published.

4.5	It is also worth noting that the response times of consultees and frontline technical administration from Business Support was (and to a degree still is) affected by Covid.
4.6	However, due to the efforts of the whole team, performance has been pleasing in very difficult circumstances.
4.7	When measured against the indicator of all applications determined "on time", the returns for the last 5 quarters are 100%, 98%, 100%, 100% and now 96%. In all cases, this is well above the all Wales average.
4.8	There is a similar picture when looking at the indicator that measures the average time (in days) it takes to decide applications. Our return fluctuates but we are consistently above the Wales average. The trend reads 67 days, 70, 60, 60 and now the expected "blip" of 78 days. In the circumstances, this dip in performance is understandable.
4.9	In terms of decisions contrary to officer advice, for this quarter we only held one Committee meeting. This was our first "virtual" meeting on 25th June where all three applications were decided in accordance with officer recommendation. Pleasingly, we therefore submitted a nil return.
5.0	**Recommendation**
5.1	That the report be noted.

Fig. 1

Welsh Government Quarterly DM Survey
Percentage of Planning Applications Determined "On Time"
(Ranked in Order of Performance)

	Welsh Local Planning Authority	Percentage Determined On Time Quarter 1 2020-2021	
		% in Time	No. of decisions
1	Merthyr Tydfil	100	59
2	Brecon Beacons NPA	99	120
	Swansea	99	336
4	Flintshire	98	179
5	Neath Port Talbot	97	141
	Caerphilly	97	200
7	**Blaenau Gwent**	**96**	**54**
8	Wrexham	94	63
9	Rhondda Cynon Taff	92	205
10	Powys	90	265
11	Vale of Glamorgan	89	262
	Ceredigion	89	136
13	Monmouthshire	87	183
	Conwy	87	165
15	Denbighshire	84	141
16	Torfaen	82	105
17	Anglesey	81	63
18	Pembrokeshire	78	137
19	Newport	73	228
20	Carmarthenshire	66	190
21	Bridgend	64	184
	Gwynedd	64	151
23	Cardiff	58	363
24	Snowdonia NPA	56	54
25	Pembrokeshire Coast NPA	47	55
	WALES AVERAGE	**83%**	**163**

Fig. 2

Welsh Government Quarterly DM Survey
Average Time to Decide Applications in Days
(Ranked in Order of Performance)

	Welsh Local Planning Authority	Average Days Taken to Decide An Application
1	Neath Port Talbot	49
2	Merthyr Tydfil	54
3	Rhondda Cynon Taff	61
4	Swansea	62
5	Vale of Glamorgan	63
6	Conwy	64
7	Brecon Beacons NPA	66
8	Snowdonia NPA	67
9	Gwynedd	74
	Pembrokeshire	74
11	Monmouthshire	77
12	**Blaenau Gwent**	**78**
	Bridgend	78
14	Caerphilly	79
15	Denbighshire	83
16	Pembs Coast NPA	86
17	Newport	91
18	Anglesey	93
19	Ceredigion	105
20	Torfaen	123
21	Flintshire	125
22	Carmarthenshire	163
23	Powys	170
24	Wrexham	271
25	Cardiff	-
	WALES AVERAGE	**94**

Fig 3.

Welsh Government Quarterly DM Survey
Decisions Contrary to Officer Recommendation
(Ranked in Order of Performance)

	Welsh Local Planning Authority	% Decisions Contrary to Recommendation	Number of Overturns / Total Decided by Planning Committee
1	**Blaenau Gwent**	**0**	**0/3**
	Bridgend	0	0/1
	Cardiff	0	0/3
	Conwy	0	0/9
	Carmarthenshire	0	0/6
	Denbighshire	0	0/2
	Newport	0	0/13
	Neath Port Talbot	0	0/3
	Pembrokeshire	0	0/3
	Pembs Coast NPA	0	0/3
	Snowdonia NPA	0	0/1
	Swansea	0	0/4
	Torfaen	0	0/7
	Wrexham	0	0/21
15	Rhondda Cynon Taff	20	1/5
16	Flintshire	29	2/7
17	Anglesey		
	Brecon Beacons NPA		
	Caerphilly		
	Ceredigion	*No Planning Committee*	
	Gwynedd		
	Merthyr	*held in this quarter*	
	Monmouthshire		
	Powys		
	Vale of Glamorgan		
	Wales Average	**3%**	**3/91**

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