

BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL	
Report to	Chair & Members of Planning Committee
Report Subject	Quarterly Performance Information
Report Author	Tean Manager Development Management
Directorate	Regeneration and Community Services
Date of Meeting	February 2025
Key Words	Performance Management Speed and quality of decision making Welsh Government Performance Monitoring Q1 – April to June 2024/25

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Every local planning authority 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 Welsh Government publishes this data on its website. It is a useful source of comparative information where the Council can not only scrutinise its own performance, but benchmark the data against the 25 other Local Planning authorities (22 unitary authorities and 3 National Parks)
- 1.3 It is usual practise to present a report to Planning Committee to update Members on the most recent performance in the form of league tables. This report deals with Quarter 1 of 2024/25 i.e. April to June 2024.

2.0 Content of the Report

- 2.1 This report will focus on three indicators:
- 2.2 i. Applications determined in time - This is defined as within the 8-week target period or longer time that may be agreed with the applicant/agent.

- ii. Time Taken – the average time (in days) taken to determine all applications.
- iii. Quality of decision making – decisions taken by Planning Committee that are contrary to the recommendation of its officers.

3.0 Performance Information

- 3.1 The latest data WG has published was on 7th January 2025 and covers Quarter 1 of the financial year being April to June 2024.
- 3.2 i. BG decided **96%** of applications “in time”. This compared to an all-Wales average of 91%.
- 3.3 The trend for BGCBC over the preceding quarters was 97%, 97%, 89%, 95% and now 96% This is consistently above the all-Wales average in each quarter respectively which was typically in the mid 80’s percentile range.
- 3.4 ii. On average, it took **72 days** to decide each application against an all-Wales average of 106 days.
- 3.5 In the 4 preceding quarters to this one, the returns were 95 days, 105 days, 83 days and 76 days. In each of the quarters, this performance was well above the Wales average which fluctuated between 109 and 116 days.
- 3.6 iii. **0%** of applications in this quarter decided by Planning Committee were contrary to officer recommendation. The Wales average for this quarter was 4%.

4.0 Evaluation of Performance and Conclusions

- 4.1 These figures represent a snapshot of performance for the given quarter, in this case the early part of this year. They confirm our performance is relatively stable in terms of trends over the past year and given capacity, more than satisfactory.
- 4.2 The service is currently operating with one less planning officer who is seconded to other duties associated with migrating to a new back-office software system. Whilst some of this work was being allocated to an external consultancy, it does not fully compensate for losing one FTE.
- 4.3 Members are made aware that one of the two enforcement officers is seconded to another team within the Department. Further, we have had a maternity absence since the Autumn. A recruitment exercise to temporarily cover the vacancy failed to attract a suitably qualified or experienced candidate. We have had to increase the volume of outsourced work as a result. The cost has been set against the vacancy in the establishment structure. One of our Planning Officers is also due to retire on 31st March 2025, we have already gone out to advert to backfill this post.
- 4.4 On a positive note, at the time of writing the new back-office software has now been implemented and is in very early stages of applications being online, as such the planning officer remains seconded to this role for the next few months.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 No decision is required.
- 5.2 However, Planning Committee is invited to scrutinise the performance returns and officers will address any issues or questions at the meeting.

Table 1

WG Quarterly DM Survey: Q1 24

April to June 2024/25

Percentage of Planning Applications Determined “On Time”

(Ranked in Order of Performance – **Higher Figure Better**)

Welsh Local Planning Authority		Percentage of All Applications Determined On Time
1 st	Torfaen	100
2 nd =	Caerphilly	99
	Powys	99
3 rd =	Cardiff	97
	Monmouthshire	97
	Isle of Anglesey	97
4 th =	Blaenau Gwent	96
	Pembrokeshire	96
5 th =	Swansea	94
	Vale of Glamorgan	94
6 th =	Neath Port Talbot	92
	Newport	92
7 th =	Carmarthenshire	91
	Rhondda Cynon Taff	91
8 th =	Ceredigion	90
	Gwynedd	90
	Merthyr Tydfil	90
9 th	Brecon Beacons	88
10 th	Flintshire	81
11 th	Pembrokeshire Coast	77
12 th	Conwy	76
13 th	Bridgend	70
14 th	Wrexham	59
	Denbighshire	-
	Snowdonia	-
Wales Average		91%

Table 2

WG Quarterly DM Survey: Q1 24/25

April to June 2024/25

Average Time to Decide Applications in Days

(Ranked in Order of Performance - **Lower Figure Better**)

Welsh Local Planning Authority		Average No. of Days Taken to Decide Each Application
1 st	Torfaen	58
2 nd	Caerphilly	65
3 rd	Blaenau Gwent	76
4 th	Merthyr Tydfil	75
5 th	Swansea	79
6 th	Isle of Anglesey	82
7 th	Rhondda Cynon Taff	81
8 th	Monmouthshire	87
9 th	Gwynedd	94
10 th	Cardiff	96
11 th	Pembrokeshire Coast	98
12 th	Vale of Glamorgan	107
13 th	Newport	109
14 th	Conwy	113
15 th	Neath Port Talbot	114
16 th	Bridgend	115
17 th	Pembrokeshire	116
18 th =	Carmarthenshire	124
	Ceredigion	124
19 th	Flintshire	128
120 ^h	Powys	137
21 st	Brecon Beacons	166
22 nd	Wrexham	202
21 st	Denbighshire	-
22 nd	Snowdonia	-
WALES AVERAGE		106 Days

Table 3

WG Quarterly DM Survey: Q1 24/25

April to June 2024/25

Decisions Contrary to Officer Recommendation

(Ranked in Order of Performance – **Lower Figure Better**)

Welsh Local Planning Authority		% of Planning Committee Decisions Contrary to Officer Recommendation
1 st =	Blaenau Gwent	0
	Bridgend	0
	Caerphilly	0
	Cardiff	0
	Carmarthenshire	0
	Conwy	0
	Flintshire	0
	Gwynedd	0
	Isle of Anglesey	0
	Monmouthshire	0
	Neath Port Talbot	0
	Newport	0
	Pembrokeshire Coast	0
	Powys	0
	Swansea	0
	Torfaen	0
	Vale of Glamorgan	0
2 nd	Rhondda Cynon Taff	5
3 rd =	Pembrokeshire	8
	Wrexham	8
	Merthyr Tydfil	20
4 th	Ceredigion	23
5 th	Brecon Beacons	33
	Denbighshire	-
	Snowdonia National Park	-
Wales Average		4%
