

# **Gwynedd Council Local Planning Authority (LPA)**

## **PLANNING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR) 2015**

### **PREFACE**

It is my pleasure to introduce the first Annual Performance Report for Gwynedd Council's Planning Service. Good planning is 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, our communities and culture. With the introduction of the first ever Planning Act for Wales in 2015, this is a landmark year for Planning in Wales and this Council has embraced the move towards positive planning to help contribute towards the social, economic and environmental needs of Gwynedd residents.

**Councillor Dafydd Meurig, Cabinet Member (Planning and Regulatory)**

### **CONTEXT**

#### **Overview**

1. The Gwynedd Local Planning Authority area is a large rural area located in the North Western corner of Wales. It is approximately 1,699 square kilometres in size in geographical terms. The area shares a coastal boundary across the Menai Straits with the Isle of Anglesey County Council. There is a strong cross-boundary relationship with Anglesey in terms of function, economy and infrastructure as well as policy (see below). Gwynedd Council shares a terrestrial boundary with Conwy County Borough Council, Snowdonia National Park Authority, Denbighshire County Council, Powys County Council and Ceredigion County Council. It is estimated that 100,516 people lived in the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority area in 2011. An estimated 42,478 households were recorded in the area. 65% of Gwynedd's (as the County) residents speak Welsh and it is also the Council's internal administrative language. The Council delivers all its services bilingually. Key statistics about the population and households of Gwynedd can be found at: <https://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/en/Council/Key-statistics-and-data/The-Census/2011-Census-Key-Statistics.aspx>
2. Adjoining the Snowdonia National Park, the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority area includes high value landscape and biodiversity assets that have been acknowledged and designated locally, nationally and internationally. For example, a large part of the Llŷn Peninsula was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1956, one of five in Wales. Human influence on the landscape can be traced back to prehistoric times and this can be seen in the large number of conspicuous features that have been designated because of their special value, e.g. World Heritage Site, Listed Buildings, Registered Ancient Monuments, Historic Parks, and Conservation Areas. As a consequence of all these acknowledged resources, the area attracts a large number of tourists / visitors which arrive

by means of the highways, railways, the port of Holyhead in Anglesey and various marinas. In 2013, approximately 6.6 million visitors came to Gwynedd, creating £907 million in revenue.

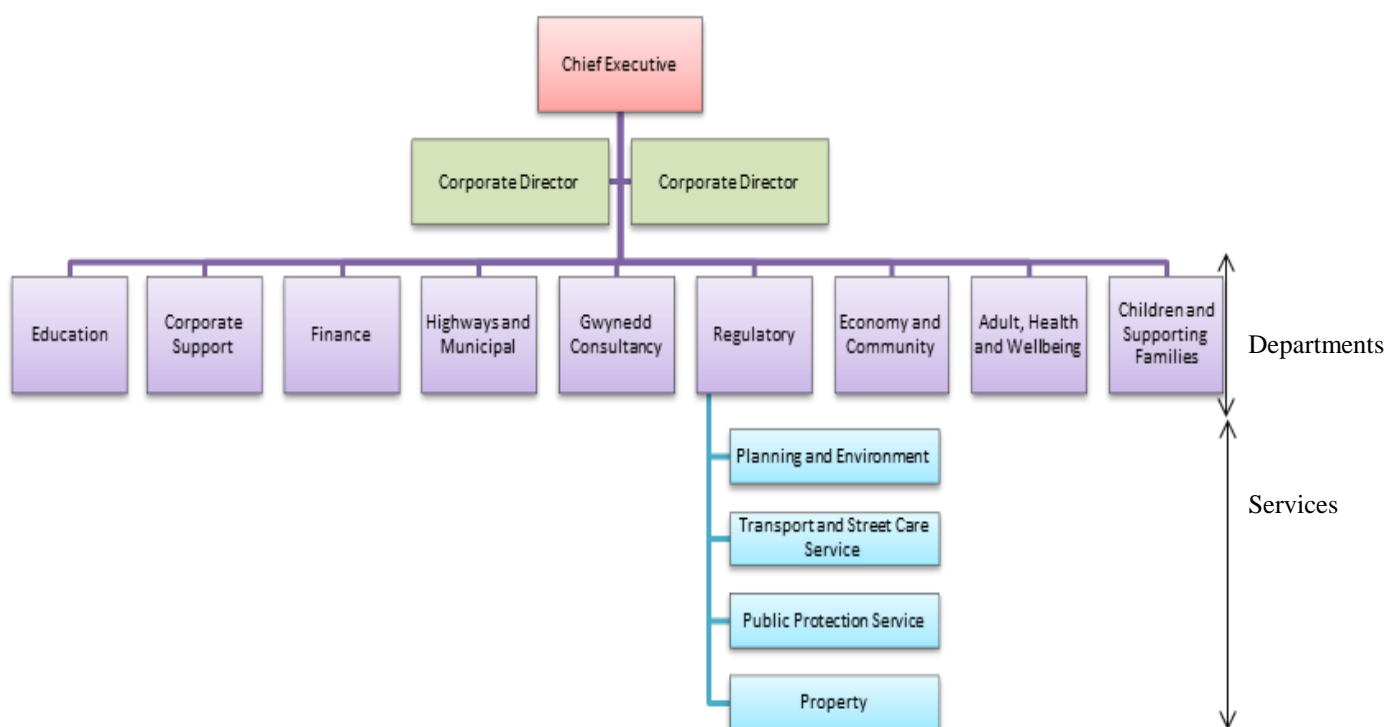
3. Agriculture is the main land use with villages and small towns found inland and most of the larger towns are along the coast. Generally, the largest employers and the largest range of services, transport and telecommunications, are located within these larger towns. Bangor, which is recognised as a sub-regional centre, is home to Bangor University and Ysbyty Gwynedd which are important components of Gwynedd's international migration profile. However, these more urban communities very often display complete contrasts with very deprived areas located in close proximity to the most prosperous.
4. Outside the more developed coastal areas, the area is mainly rural with several remote areas, especially in Meirionnydd and Llŷn. The issues that need to be addressed in these areas are very different, with the striking and special natural environment concealing the deprivation and low wages and negative impact of their peripheral locations. In 2014, the median household income in Gwynedd (£22,240) was 8% below the figure for Wales (£24,108) and 25% lower than the figure for Britain (£27,857). In 2014, the median price for a house sold in Gwynedd was £136,000 which is an increase of 3.0% compared with 2011.
5. Analysis of the most recent Welsh Government trend, based population and household projections (2011 base), suggests that the population in the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority area, could increase by 6.2% over the Joint Local Development Plan period (2011 – 2026), with a 9.0% increase in households over the same period.
6. Its peripheral location means that the area is still experiencing the impact of the global recession with a resultant low demand for all types of properties and land. Many working age households move out of the area to look for work. However, there is a strong case for optimism linked to the expected substantial and unprecedented increased employment opportunities associated with the construction of Wylfa Newydd and other major infrastructure projects being promoted in Anglesey and the Snowdonia Enterprise Zone. It has been estimated that £2.5 billion will be added to the Anglesey and North Wales economy over the next 15 years.
7. Gwynedd and Anglesey have adopted a Single Integrated Plan, - "Strengthening communities in Gwynedd and Anglesey" (2014), which incorporates the vision and action plan for the Local Service Board for both counties. A series of priorities have been identified that are centred on planning for healthy, safe and prosperous communities. Gwynedd Council's vision, as set out in its Strategic Plan (2015 – 2017), is to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the people of Gwynedd despite the fact that the Council's resources are becoming scarcer. The emphasis will be on improving the Council's ability to ensure the best for the people of Gwynedd and it will be able to do that by transforming services, to become services that the Council can maintain for the future. The strategy seeks to bring about a number of priority fields: children and young people; care; poverty, deprivation, economy; housing; Welsh language; effective and efficient Council; financial planning.

8. The Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan (Gwynedd UDP), adopted in 2009, is the current 'development plan' for Gwynedd (excluding the area covered by Snowdonia National Park). It replaced a series of Local Plans, which were adopted in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, as well as the Gwynedd Structure Plan (1993). The Gwynedd UDP and a series of adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) form the basis for decisions on planning applications until they are superseded by the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan (Joint LDP) and a new set of SPGs. Having consulted on the Deposit Plan during February and March 2015, the Joint LDP is programmed for adoption in Spring 2017.
9. The Joint LDP, when adopted, will have a critical role in supporting and delivering the priorities that have spatial requirements in both the Single Integrated Plan and the Council's Strategic Plan. The emerging Joint LDP's strategy takes the main elements of its vision and objectives and sets out principal land uses that will deliver them. In line with the Single Integrated Plan and the Strategic Plan, the broad Strategy is to strengthen communities, building on a number of elements and cross cutting themes including: - sustainable communities, economic growth and regeneration, quality housing, natural and built environment, Welsh language and culture, climate change and sustainable development, creating quality places [www.gwynedd.gov.uk/ldp](http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/ldp)

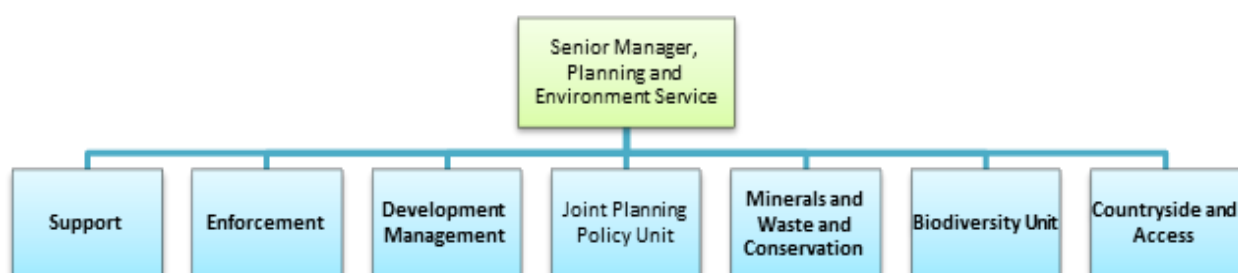
## PLANNING SERVICE

### Organisational Structure

10. All of the Council's planning functions are located within the Planning and Environment Service, which is within the Regulatory Department. The Head of Regulatory Department reports directly to the Chief Executive. The Council's corporate structure is shown below:



11. The Planning and Environment Service is made of 7 Units that report directly to the Senior Manager of the Service. There are 5 Units that are specific to planning which include Development Management Unit (which includes Unit Manager and 7 Case Officers), Enforcement Unit (which includes Unit Manager and 3 Case Officers), Support Unit (providing support mainly to Development Management and Enforcement – which includes Unit Manager and 5 support staff), the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Planning Policy Unit (which includes Unit Manager and 11 planning staff). The Minerals and Waste Unit is made up of a Senior Conservation Officer and a Senior Planning Officer (Minerals and Waste).
12. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Planning Policy Unit (JPPU) was established through a Shared Service Agreement in 2011. The JPPU is funded 50/50 by Gwynedd and Anglesey and a Joint Planning Policy Committee consisting of 7 Members from each Authority, has been established to make decisions and key stages in the process of producing the Joint Local Development Plan. The JPPU provides a complete planning policy service to both Authorities and is administered by Gwynedd Council.
13. Gwynedd Council also has a Shared Service Agreement with the other Authorities in the North Wales Region, for the provision of a shared Minerals and Waste Planning Service. The North Wales Minerals and Waste Planning Service was established in April 2011, with Flintshire County Council as the Lead Authority. Gwynedd's contribution to the North Wales Service is the secondment of a Senior Planning Officer (Minerals and Waste).
14. Since September 2014 the Council's Land Charges Function has transferred to the Planning and Environment Service and is located within the Support Unit. The Service structure is shown below:



## **Responding to financial constraints / challenges**

### **Context**

15. In 2010-11 the Planning Service, which at the time consisted of Development Management, Enforcement and Support, was subject to a full review in order to contribute towards the Department's efficiency savings programme. Running in parallel with this work was the review of the Planning Committee Structures. At the time, the Planning Service was administered in 3 area offices (Arfon, Dwyfor and Meirionnydd), with 3 Area Planning Committees held monthly (made up of all 75 Gwynedd Members), making decisions on planning applications.
16. The review of the Planning Service included a complete review of the work processes and restructuring of the Service. The vision for the Planning Service was to:  
  
**"Make the most effective and efficient use of resources in order to establish a strong Planning Service which will bring about improvements and offer good quality which focusses on the customer".**
17. The review of the Planning Service resulted in the transformation of the Service, with the new service becoming operational in April 2011. The transformation of the service moved away from the area based administration of the service to central administration / support and base for the Service in Pwllheli, but with the provision of a county wide service with hot-desks provided for Case Officers in Caernarfon, Bangor and Dolgellau (as well their office base in Pwllheli). The transformation also redesigned work processes having regard to "lean" principles, improved self service options for customers and increased electronic communication. It also established formal pre-application advice procedures and offered a first point of contact for customers via the Council's Contact Centre ("Galw Gwynedd").
18. The transformation of the Service delivered efficiency savings of approximately £300,000 and the changes implemented in April 2011 form the basis of the current Planning Service in terms of Development Management, Enforcement and Support.
19. At the same time of the review and transformation of the Service the Full Council agreed to restructure the 3 area based Planning Committees, to create a single county Planning Committee held every 3 weeks, comprising of 15 Members which is in place at present.
20. In April 2012, the Planning Service and the Environment Service, merged to form the Planning and Environment Service as it is now bringing further efficiency savings at Senior Management level.
21. For the 3 year period 2015-18, the Council's Efficiency Savings Programme for the Regulatory Department from a managed budget of £9,136,762 includes the following targets:

Year	Target
2015/16	£620,390
2016/17	£295,570
2017/18	£416,923
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,332,883</b>

22. The Department is currently on target to deliver the efficiency savings of £1,332,883 during 2015-18 which includes savings of £309,943 from the Planning and Environment Service, £129,513 of which is specific to the planning functions. For Planning, these savings will include rationalising the Development Management, Enforcement and Support Units resulting in the deletion of 3 posts. This will see the Development Management and Enforcement Units merge in 2017-18. 2 posts will be deleted from the JPPU with the Unit going from 12 staff to 10 staff and the saving split 50/50 with Anglesey, with this programmed for 2017/18, after the Joint LDP has been adopted.
23. In addition to the Council's Efficiency Savings Programme for 2015-18 there is also a programme of **possible** cuts that will be subject to public consultation in 2015-16, with a decision on the actual cuts made, in March 2016. The possible cuts in the Regulatory Department come to £1,398,880, with £866,693 of the possible cuts within the Planning and Environment Service, which would include cutting a further 3 posts in the JPPU. The staffing numbers for the JPPU could therefore go from 12 staff (which will go down to 10 following efficiency savings) to 7 staff, if the possible cuts are implemented.

### Operating Budget

24. The income that Planning generates through planning fees has increased year on year over the last 3 years with the actual income received higher than the budgeted income. As a result, in recent years, the Service has not had to deal with a situation where the actual income received is lower than the budgeted income and the potential difficulties in trying to balance the overall budget as a result.
25. The planning fee income is not retained by the Planning Service and the budgeted income target is set with consideration given to the actual income generated in the previous year(s). The information relating to planning fees is included in the following table:

Planning Fees	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
<b>Budgeted Income</b>	419,770.00	375,520.00	362,010.00
<b>Actual Income</b>	514,325.28	516,724.16	458,416.00
<b>Difference</b>	-94,555.28	-141,204.16	-96,406.00

26. The net budget for Planning which includes Development Management, Enforcement, Support, JPPU, Minerals and Waste, and Conservation is as follows:

<b>Net Budget of Planning</b>	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
Total	858,060	1,077,320	932,690

27. The Land Charges function of the Council which is located within the Support Unit of Planning since September 2014 has generated the following income:

<b>Land Charges</b>	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13
<b>Budgeted</b>	-		
<b>Income</b>	173,940.00	-159,940.00	-158,520.00
<b>Actual</b>	-		
<b>Income</b>	191,544.49	-192,641.60	-164,077.50
<b>Difference</b>	-17,604.49	-32,701.60	-5,557.50

### **Staffing Matters**

28. The Council has a Corporate Training Programme and corporate procedures for staff evaluation. The staff appraisal procedures help to identify the training needs of all the staff which includes the training provided within the Corporate Training Programme (which includes management courses such as ILM) and training that is more specific to Planning.
29. In addition to the above, the Regulatory Department has a budget for training and there has been a significant investment in the development of planning staff over the years by funding specialist planning training. This has resulted in 7 of the current staff having benefited or in the process of benefiting from MSc Planning and Environment qualifications. In addition to this, the Department has funded specialist training in the area of Conservation which has secured effective succession planning whereby a Development Management Officer has now progressed to be the Senior Conservation Officer for the Council. Over the years the Department has identified areas of the Service where there is a need to ensure succession and has been successful in delivering this within the Service, with a number of staff over the years benefitting through career development opportunities.
30. The Department's and Service's business planning process, identifies areas of risk where there is limited expertise and resilience and tries to put in place measures to control / mitigate such risks in order to ensure service delivery.
31. When the Planning Service was transformed in April 2011 all job descriptions were reviewed with some amended and some new job descriptions produced. This process was undertaken with consideration given to continued staff development, resilience and flexible use of the staff resource, to meet possible changes in demands and priorities for the Service. With this in mind, all the posts within Development Management which are at the same level (e.g. Development Management Officer and Planning Enforcement Officer)

are interchangeable so that the staff resource, where possible, can be targeted towards the needs of the Service and its customers.

32. Minerals and waste planning has in recent years been an area of planning where there is limited expertise not only in Gwynedd but also in North Wales. The agreement across North Wales to establish the North Wales Minerals and Waste Service, with Gwynedd seconding an Officer to the Service, has provided a more resilient Service for Gwynedd and the North Wales Region. As the partner Authorities face challenging times financially, the current arrangement is an annual rolling contract which is also reviewed annually.
33. The establishment of the Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Planning Policy Unit has also provided career development opportunities for both Authorities and has helped to share and pool expertise within the Unit which has provided greater resilience for both Authorities.
34. There are currently no vacant posts within the Planning Service. The Efficiency Savings agreed to be implemented for 2015-18 will result in the deletion of a Senior Development Management post and a Planning Support Officer post (2015/16), another planning post (in Development Management or Enforcement) in 2017/18, following the merger of the Development Management and Enforcement Unit in 2017/18 and 2 posts in the JPPU in 2017/18. The possible cuts (which are in addition to the efficiency saving) for 2015-18, could see 3 further posts go in the JPPU with the staffing numbers reduced from 12 (when established), to 10 (efficiency savings) to 7 (possible cuts).
35. At present for 2015-18, no possible further cuts are proposed for Development Management, Enforcement and Support. However, for Development Management and Enforcement to function efficiently and effectively, they are reliant on specialist advice from the JPPU, Biodiversity Unit, Transportation Service and Public Protection Service. There are possible cuts proposed in 2015-18 for all of these service areas which if implemented, is likely to have an adverse impact on robustness and quality of decisions on planning applications and enforcement cases and the time taken to make those decisions.

## **OUR LOCAL STORY**

### **Planning applications**

36. The workload of the Planning Service in terms of planning applications registered has been steady over the last 3 years but the numbers have increased since 2011-12 when 1068 applications were registered, compared with 2014-15 when 1127 were registered. The workload for the 7 Development Management Officers is generally in the region of 160 planning application per annum.
37. There have been some major applications in Gwynedd during the period between 2012 and 2015 which include:
  - **Redevelopment of Bangor University Campus at St Marys, Lon Bopty including student accommodation for around 600 students**



- **245 housing development (including 86 affordable houses) in Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor, on a site allocated for housing in the Gwynedd UDP (At the time – this was one of the largest housing developments dealt with in recent years**
- **49 MW Pump storage facility at Glynrhonwy, Llanberis (now in the process of resubmission as a Development Consent Order application)**
- **Redevelopment of the Sailing Academy (Plas Heli), Glan y Don, Pwllheli – this was a Council lead development to significantly improve existing facilities to enhance what is already a sailing destination that attracts international events / competitions**

38. There has also been support for the various zip-wire and outdoor activity related applications in Penrhyn Quarry, Bethesda and in Llechwedd Quarry, Blaenau Ffestiniog, that have proved to be very successful and that have had a positive contribution on the local economy, helping to establish Gwynedd and North East Wales as key destinations for outdoor activities.

#### **Pre-application**

39. Since the transformation of the Planning Service in 2011 all types of pre-application enquiries are now recorded in the back office system and there were 3214 enquiries received in 2011-12 compared to 2292 in 2014-15. The drop in numbers in terms of the enquiries receive and dealt with directly by the Planning Service between 2011-12 and 2014-15, is down to an increase in the numbers of general inquiries being dealt with directly by the contact centre, on behalf of the Planning Service.
40. A charging scheme for pre-application advice has been operational since April 2015 and where applicable, a development team approach is applied as part of the process of providing pre-application advice.

#### **Planning enforcement**

41. The planning enforcement work includes reactive work and proactive work and the framework for how this is delivered is set out in the Enforcement Strategy (which is additional to the Enforcement Policy) which was agreed by the Cabinet in 2014-15. The purpose of the Enforcement Strategy was to try and strike a balance between the day to day reactive work and the proactive work that can provide added value, although how this works depends on the staff resources available.
42. The number of planning enforcement cases / complaints received (the reactive work) over the last few years has remained fairly steady at around 500 cases per annum which for the 3 case officers works out at about 165 per annum. In addition to dealing with enforcement cases, the Enforcement Unit also receives approximately 500 general inquiries relating to enforcement issues.

43. The proactive work as identified in the Enforcement Strategy includes the monitoring of a sample of caravan sites annually. In 2014-15, due to concerns by Members relating to planning permissions granted for a 12 month holiday season on some static caravan sites, the Unit has prioritised the monitoring of the static caravan sites with planning permission for 12 month holiday season. The Enforcement Unit is also responsible for administering the register of Tree Preservation Orders and is currently (with the input of the Biodiversity Unit), reviewing and rationalising the register. The Enforcement Unit also monitors planning applications that have been subject to a section 106 agreement with the priority given to applications where there are commuted sums involved. The 245 house development in Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor (as referred to above) is an example of this, where there was a commuted sum of over £1 million for education and highway improvements.

### **Planning policy**

44. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Planning Policy Unit, is currently the only example in Wales of Authorities collaborating to produce 1 Joint Local Development Plan for the local planning authority areas. There were planning reasons and cost avoidance reasons which contributed towards justifying a business case for establishing the JPPU to produce a Joint Local Development Plan. Evidence to date has demonstrated that costs have been avoided in the plan preparation process. Costs have been avoided in the works that have been commissioned, more work has been undertaken internally by the Unit / Councils and there should also be costs avoided with having only 1 public examination. The Joint LDP is progressing well with the Deposit Plan out to public consultation in February / March 2015 and if the current timetable is achieved, it will be adopted in March / April 2017, which is within 12 months of the date in the original deliver agreement. The key issues that appear to be arising out of the consultation on the Deposit Plan are mainly related to the number of houses proposed to meet the need.

### **Current projects and local pressures**

45. There are currently major infrastructure projects in North West Wales which will have an impact on Gwynedd Council and more specifically the demand for resources within the Planning Service. These projects include:
46. **The National Grid North Wales Connections Project** : This relates to increasing the capacity of the electricity network between Wylfa Newydd and Trawsfynydd, to transport the additional capacity generated from major energy schemes such as Wylfa Newydd. Gwynedd Council and Anglesey Council have a Joint Planning Performance Agreement in place with National Grid, which provides the framework for pre-application engagement in relation to the Development Consent Order (DCO) application. National Grid are consulting on possible route options for the connection through Gwynedd and Anglesey, with a view to submitting the DCO in the summer 2017.
47. **Wylfa Newydd (Anglesey)** : The Joint Local Development Plan has been produced on the basis that the Wylfa Newydd project will happen towards the end of the Plan period. The pre-application consultation (stage 1) was held in 2014/15 and the pre-application

consultation (stage 2) will be held in 2015/16, with the DCO application to be submitted in November 2017. There will be associated developments related to the Wylfa Newydd including worker's accommodation, logistics, park and ride which will require the input of the JPPU. There is also likely to be associated development in Gwynedd which will require the input of the JPPU and Development Management.

48. There are also projects that are more specific to Gwynedd only:
49. **National Grid – Visual Impact Provision:** In September 2015, National Grid made an announcement that the transmission line near Porthmadog is one of the 4 schemes to be taken forward to potential engineering work for mitigating the impact of overhead lines. Most of the transmission line is within the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority area with the remainder within the Snowdonia National Park Authority. Preliminary discussions between the Planning Service and National Grid in relation to scoping the proposed work have commenced
50. **99.9MW Pump Storage Scheme, Glynrhonwy, Llanberis:** Gwynedd Council has already granted planning permission for a 49MW scheme on this site, but the intention now is to increase the generation output which now requires a DCO application. A Planning Performance Agreement is in place between Gwynedd and the Developer as a framework to facilitate pre-application input and advice by the Planning Service. The DCO application has been submitted and the Planning Service is in the process of preparing a Local Impact Report.

#### **Collaboration projects**

51. The North Wales Planning Officers Group (NWPOG) which is made up of Chief Planning Officers (or equivalent) has implemented numerous planning related collaboration projects in recent years, including:
- The North Wales Minerals and Waste Planning Service
  - Community Infrastructure Levy Tool Kit
  - North Wales Regional Employment Project
52. During 2015-16 NWPOG will be undertaking work to explore options for further collaboration projects for the delivery of planning services.

#### **Operational and improvement plan for the Service**

53. For 2014-15 the improvement plan tasks / improvements included:
- Review of work loads for Development Management and Enforcement
- This is undertaken regularly on an annual basis or as and when required in order to balance work load and to vary the type of applications and cases dealt with by Officers.
- Rationalise the filing system for Development Management and Enforcement

This was completed in 2014-15 as part of a 3 year plan which involved scanning historic hard copy files and files kept on Microfiche. Prior to this, planning files were stored in 3 separate office location (Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Dolgellau). The project has ensured more efficient use of staff time with all files now accessed electronically. Historic files have been destroyed, and the Service now retains only 5 years worth of the recent hard copy files which are stored in the administrative office in Pwllheli, with all information on hard copy also stored electronically in the back office system.

- Reach relevant stage within the Local Joint Development Plan time-table which included going out to consultation on the Deposit Plan.

This was achieved with the Deposit Plan going out to consultation in February / March 2015

- Review and rationalise the Tree Preservation Order register

This is part of an ongoing project which is currently on target to be completed in April 2016.

- Review of work processes for Development Management, Enforcement and Support

This is an ongoing process of refining, improving and adapting to changes.

- Adoption of an Enforcement Strategy and its implementation

This was adopted by the Cabinet in 2014-15 and is now operational to try and strike a balance between the day to day reactive work and the proactive work

- Improve customer service

This is an on going project that includes improving self service options, reviewing customer contact arrangements with the contact centre and assessing customer satisfaction in relation to the service delivered

### **Performance Framework**

54. The Council is committed to the mind set of putting the people of Gwynedd central to everything we do, ensuring that services are delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible and empowering staff to make decisions at the appropriate level. With this in mind the intention is that all Services within the Council will be subject to full reviews over the coming years which will look in detail at the purpose of service, performance measures, work processes and the views of customers.
55. The Planning Service is therefore looking at the performance indicators in the context of the above and for 2015/16 these are the issues that we are looking at:

### **What do our customers think of the Service now?**

56. The Planning Service has sent customer satisfaction surveys with decision notices over a number of years, but in 2015-16 we are taking a more proactive approach to assessing customer satisfaction. This involves telephone call surveys undertaken monthly on the basis of a sample of 10% of the applications determined for the relevant month. The feedback for the surveys are recorded and distributed to case officers and actions taken to adapt service arrangements where required.

### **Planning application indicators 5 to 8 (speed of determination)**

57. For 2015/16 we are concentrating more on the percentage of applications that have taken more than 8 weeks to determine and the reasons behind this. All applications that have taken more than 8 weeks to determine, are analysed quarterly and adaptations made to the working arrangements where required. Furthermore, there is also an emphasis on the speed of decisions within 8 weeks with a focus on quick decisions which are closer to the 21 days rather than 56 days (8 weeks). For the second quarter in 2015-16, on average, the applications that were determined within 56 days (8 weeks) were determined in 34 days.

### **Enforcement indicators 15 to 18 (speed of investigation)**

58. As with the planning applications, for 2015-16 the intention is to analyse the reasons behind the percentage of enforcement cases that have taken longer than 84 days to investigate and introduce changes if required.

### **Service Review**

59. A full review off Development Management, Enforcement and Support is proposed for 2016/17 in line with the Council's objectives for service delivery.

## WHAT SERVICE USERS THINK

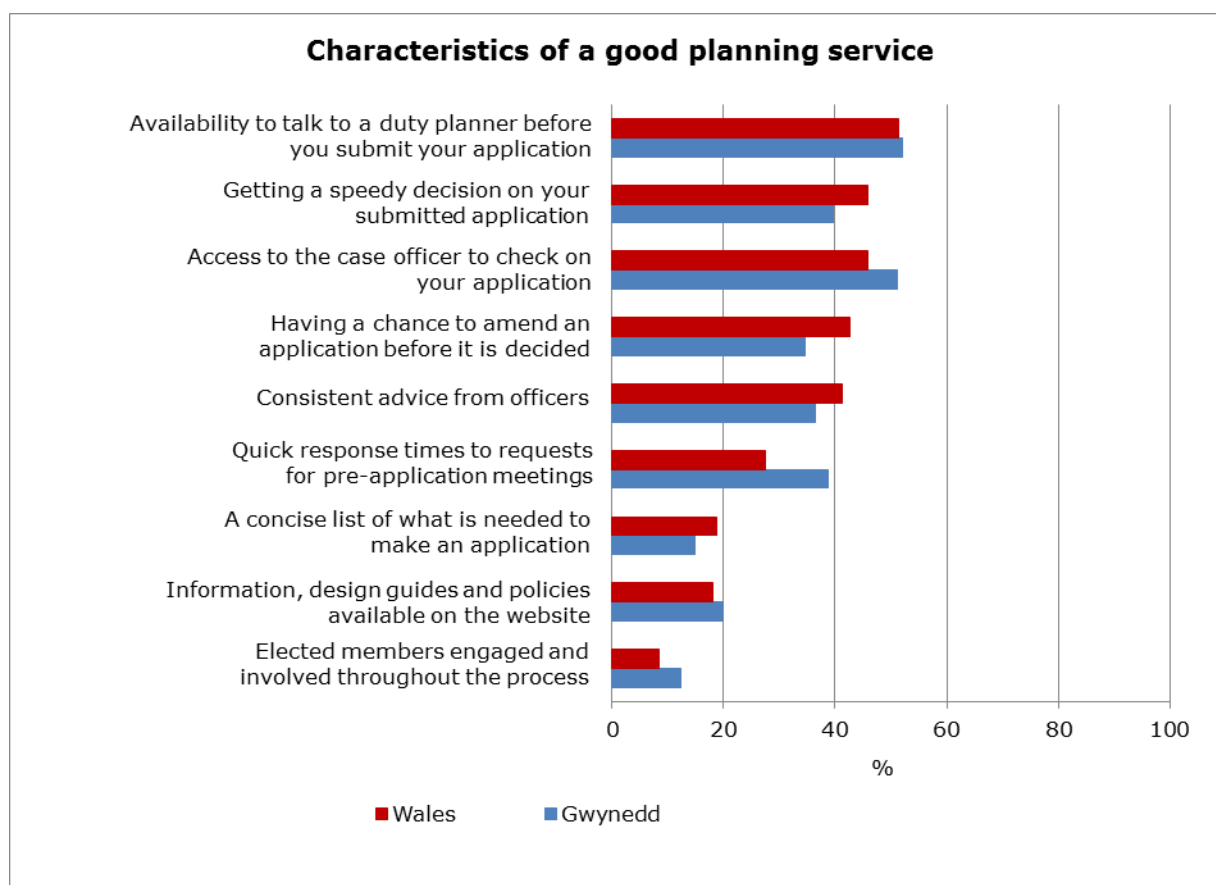
60. In 2014-15 we conducted two customer satisfaction surveys aimed at assessing the views of people that had received a planning application decision during the period. The first covered the period April 2014 - September 2014 and the second covered the period October 2014 - March 2015. The following feedback is based on the combined results of both surveys.
61. The surveys were sent to 468 people, 31% of whom submitted a whole or partial response. The majority of responses (50%) were from local agents. 40% were from members of the public. 9% of respondents had their most recent planning application refused.
62. 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.
63. 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**

	%	
	Gwynedd LPA	Wales
<b>Percentage of respondents who agreed that:</b>		
The LPA enforces its planning rules fairly and consistently	48	45
The LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application	63	57
The LPA gives help throughout, including with conditions	50	48
The LPA responded promptly when they had questions	49	55
They were listened to about their application	57	56
They were kept informed about their application	48	46
They were satisfied overall with how the LPA handled their application	65	57

64. 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.

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



65. Comments received include:

"Always found Gwynedd LPA to be efficient and thorough."

"Not enough access to planning officers and response times are far too slow. Planning advice/guidance is generally helpful and easy to understand."

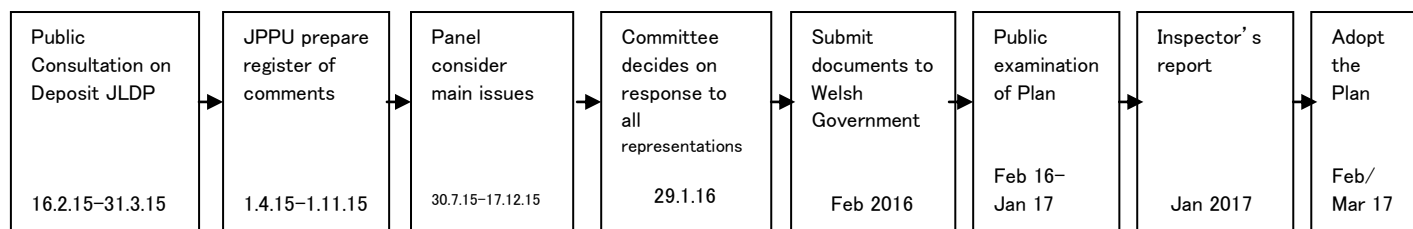
"I have worked with this authority as an agent for the last thirty years and I have always found them very helpful, professional and fair." [sic]

## OUR PERFORMANCE 2014-15

66. 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.
67. 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

68. As at 31 March 2015, we were one of 21 LPAs that had a current development plan in place. We are currently working towards adopting our Joint LDP. The original Delivery Agreement set October 2013 as a target to publish the Deposit Plan for public consultation. The Deposit Plan was published for public consultation in February 2015, which is 16 months later than initially anticipated. If the timetable set out below is achieved the Joint LDP will be adopted less than 12 months after the target set out in the original Delivery Agreement (April 2016). The slippage can be accounted for by a number of factors, which include a late local election in Anglesey, new household projections published by the Welsh Government post Preferred Strategy stage



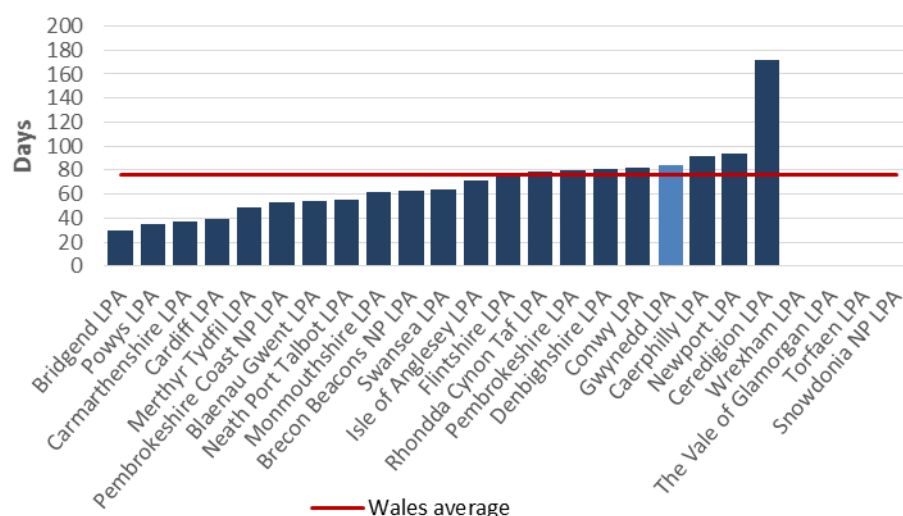
69. During the APR period we had 3.3 years (2014-15) of housing land supply identified, making us one of 18 Welsh LPAs without the required 5 years supply.

### Efficiency

70. In 2014-15 we determined 908 planning applications, each taking, on average, 84 days (12 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.

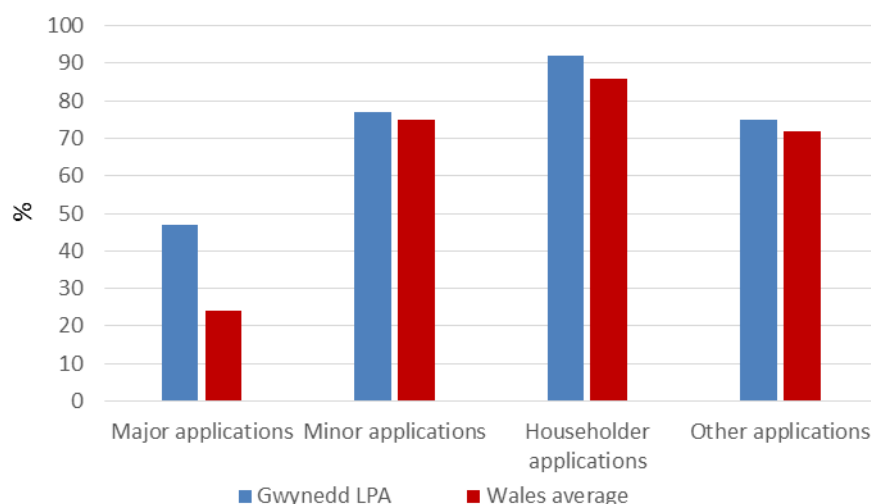


**Figure 2: Average time taken (days) to determine applications, 2014-15**



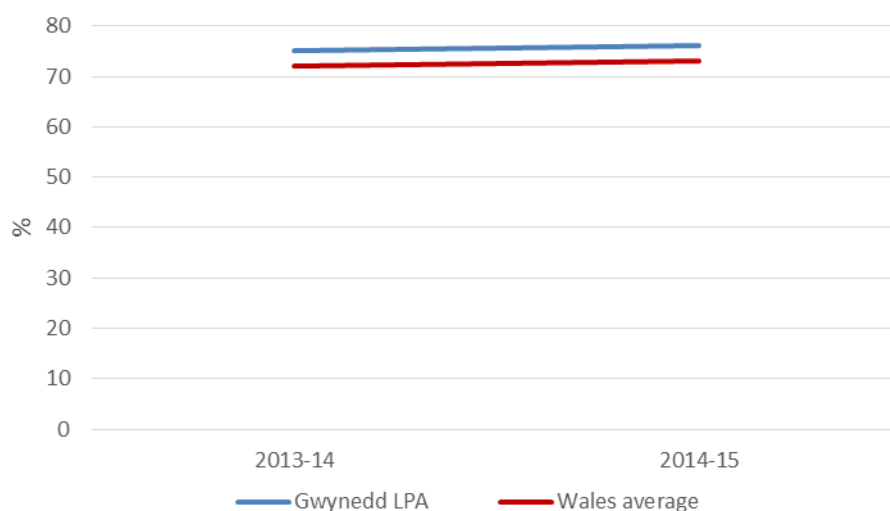
71. 76% of all planning applications were determined within the required timescales. This compared to 73% across Wales, but was below the 80% target. Only 5 out of 25 LPAs met the 80% target.
72. Figure 3 shows the percentage of planning applications determined within the required timescales across the four main types of application for our LPA and Wales. It shows that we determined 92% of householder applications within the required timescales.

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



73. Between 2013-14 and 2014-15, as Figure 4 shows, the percentage of planning applications we determined within the required timescales increased from 75%. Wales also saw an increase this year.

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

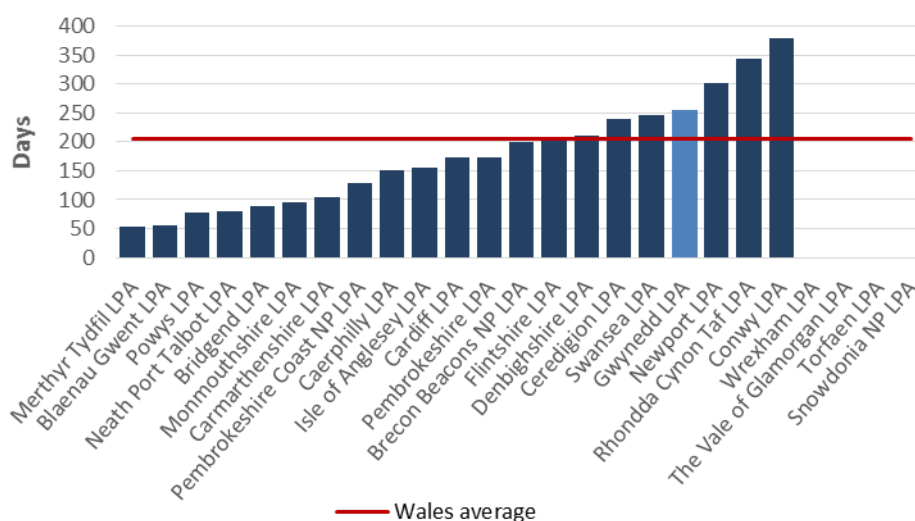


74. Over the same period:
- The number of applications we received increased;
  - The number of applications we determined decreased; and
  - The percentage of applications we approved decreased.

### Major applications

75. We determined 30 major planning applications in 2014-15, none of which were subject to an EIA. Each application took, on average, 255 days (36 weeks) to determine. As Figure 5 shows, this was the fourth longest average time taken of all Welsh LPAs.

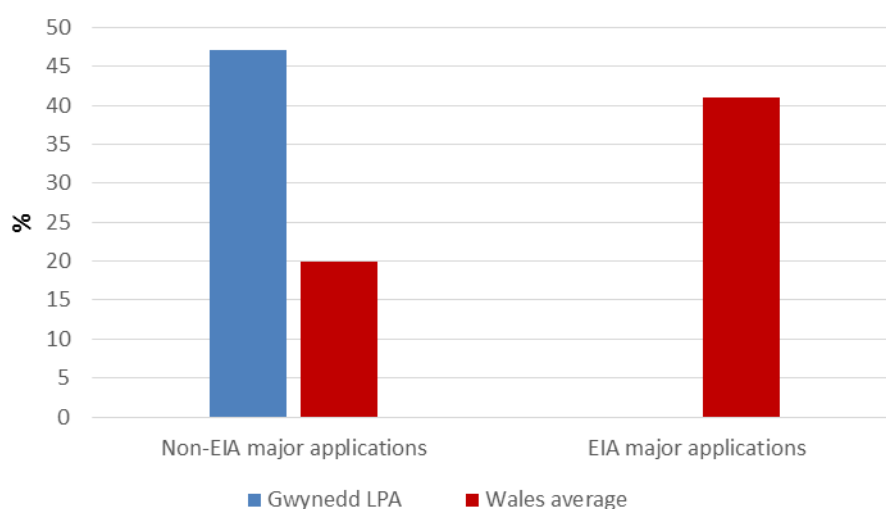
**Figure 5: Average time (days) taken to determine a major application, 2014-15**



76. 47% of these major applications were determined within the required timescales, the fourth highest percentage of all Welsh LPAs.

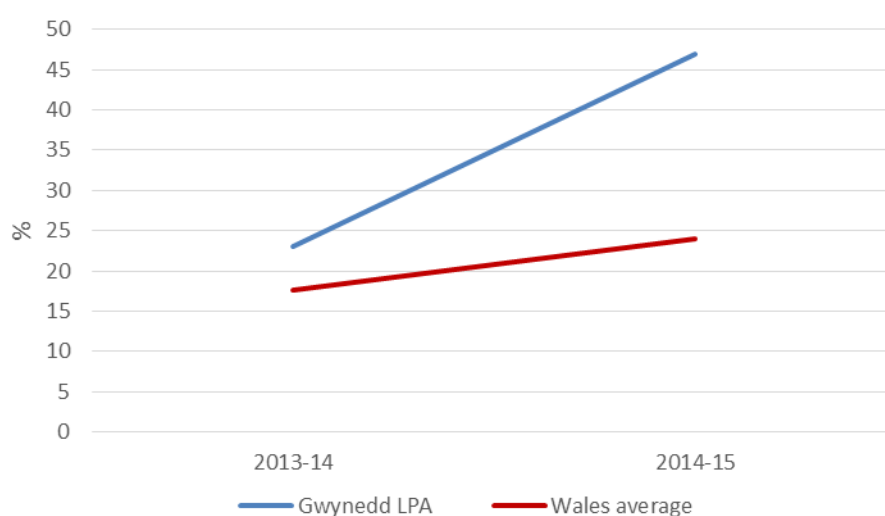
77. Figure 6 shows the percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales by the type of major application. 47% of our 'standard' major applications i.e. those not requiring an EIA, were determined within the required timescales during the year.

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



78. Since 2013-14 the percentage of major applications determined within the required timescales had increased from 23%. In contrast, the number of major applications determined decreased as had the number of applications subject to an EIA determined during the year.
79. 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**

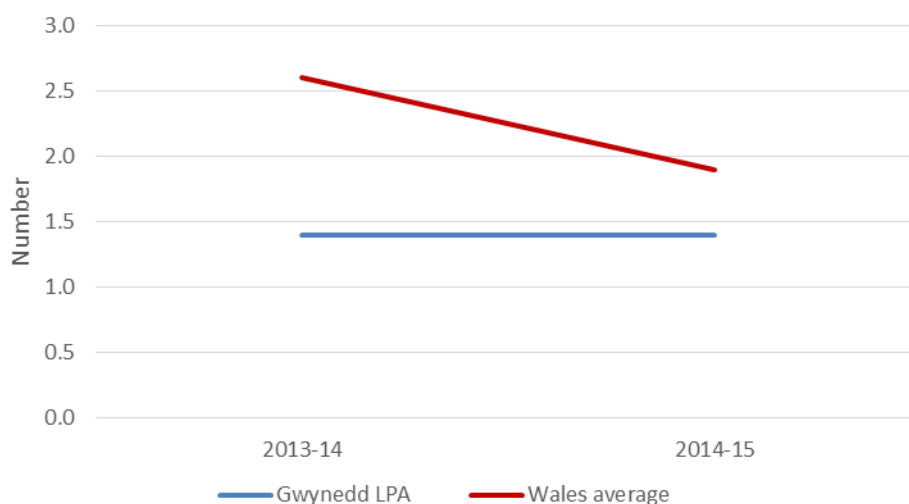


80. Over the same period:
- The percentage of minor applications determined within the required timescales decreased from 78% to 77%;
  - The percentage of householder applications determined within the required timescales increased from 91% to 92%; and
  - The percentage of other applications determined within the required timescales increased from 71% to 75%.

### Quality

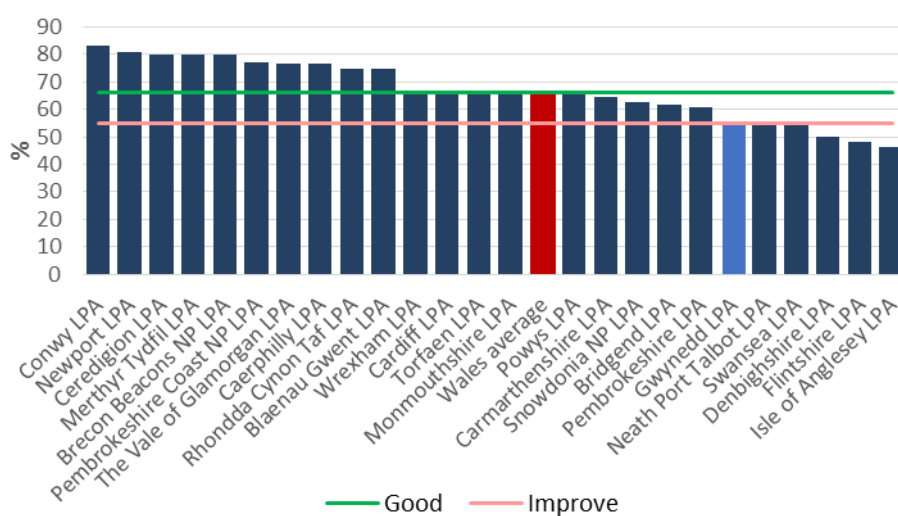
81. In the last two quarters of 2014-15 (October 2014 – March 2015) our Planning Committee made 62 planning application decisions, which equated to 14% of all planning applications determined. Across Wales 7% of all planning application decisions were made by planning committee over the same period.
82. 8% of these Planning Committee decisions went against officer recommendation. This compared to 11% of member-made decisions across Wales. This equated to 1.1% of all planning application decisions going against officer advice; 0.7% across Wales.
83. In 2014-15 we received 14 appeals against our planning decisions, which equated to 1.4 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**



84. Over the same period the percentage of planning applications approved stayed the same at 93%.
85. Of the 9 appeals that were decided during the year, 56% were dismissed. As Figure 9 shows, this was lower than the percentage of appeals dismissed across Wales as a whole and was below the 66% target.

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



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

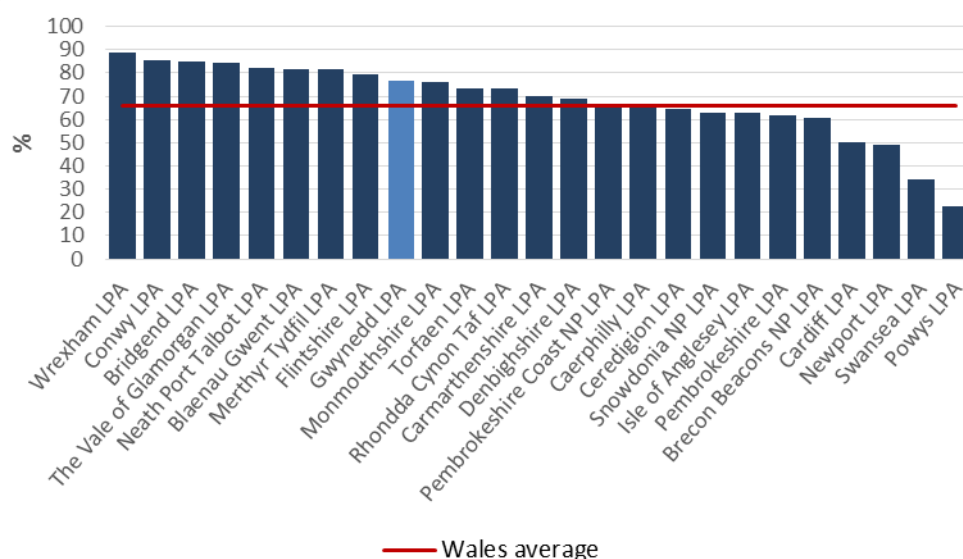
## Engagement

87. 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).
88. As shown in Table 1 (“What service users think”), 63% of respondents to our 2014-15 customer satisfaction survey, agreed that the LPA gave good advice to help them make a successful application. Furthermore, 65% of respondents replied that they were satisfied overall with how the LPA handled their application.

## Enforcement

89. In 2014-15 we investigated 194 enforcement cases, which equated to 1.6 per 1,000 population. This compared to 2 enforcement cases investigated per 1,000 population across Wales.<sup>1</sup>
90. We investigated 77% 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**



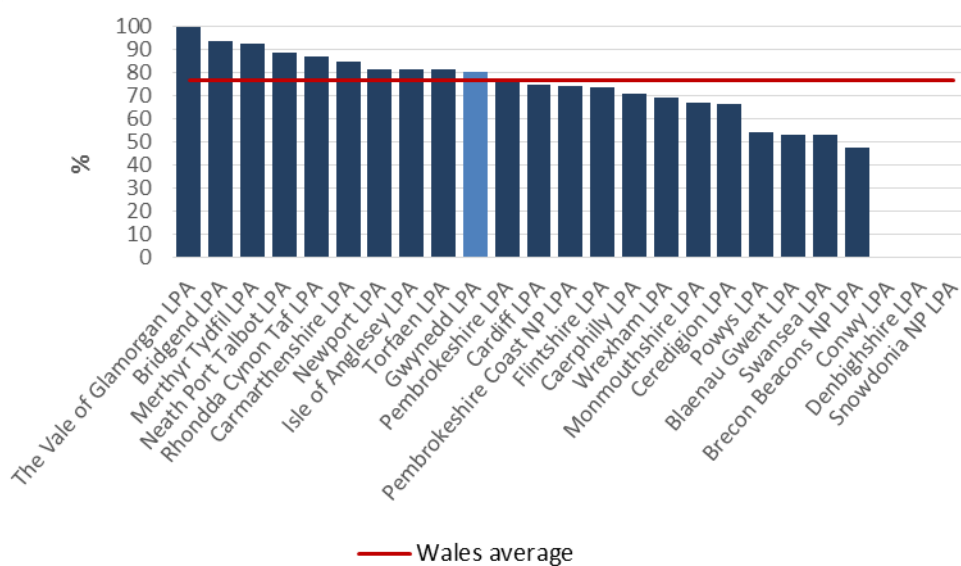
91. Over the same period, we resolved 122 enforcement cases, taking, on average, 133 days to resolve each case.

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

92. 80% 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.

***It is noted that towards the end of 2014-15, Welsh Government changed the indicators for enforcement and as a result the data relating to the enforcement indicators is not accurate.***

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



## ANNEX A - PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

### OVERVIEW

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

WALES AVERAGE	Gwynedd LPA LAST YEAR	Gwynedd LPA THIS YEAR
Yes	Yes	Yes
60	9	16
Yes	N/A	N/A
4.2	4.8	3.7
24	23	47
206	No Data	255
73	75	76
76	No Data	84
11	0.4	8
66	50	56
0	1	0
Yes	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	Gwynedd LPA LAST YEAR	Gwynedd LPA THIS YEAR
Yes	Yes	Yes
66	No Data	77
71	No Data	No Data
77	No Data	80
175	No Data	132.5

## 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
The Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan covers 2001 – 2016 and therefore remains the starting point for making decisions on planning applications and relevant appeals.	

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	16
The original Delivery Agreement set October 2013 as a target to publish the Deposit Plan for public consultation. The Deposit Plan was published for public consultation in February 2015, which is 16 months later than initially anticipated. The slippage can be accounted for by a number of factors, which include a late local election in Anglesey that delayed public consultation about the Preferred Strategy; new household projections published by the Welsh Government post Preferred Strategy that required additional analysis in order to comply with requirements set out in Planning Policy Wales. If the timetable was achieved the Joint LDP will be adopted less than 12 months after the target set out in the original Delivery Agreement (April 2016).	

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

Authority's performance	N/A
Not applicable as the Joint LDP has not been adopted.	

Indicator	04. The local planning authority's current housing land supply in years	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
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	3.3
TAN 1 requires local planning authorities to apply a residual method of calculating housing land supply. The Housing Land Availability Study report that presents the results of the assessment of sites during 2014 – 2015 reveals a 3.3 years supply.	

## 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	47
87% of the planning application determined were granted planning application which reflects the positive approach to planning in the Authority. The benchmarking data indicates that the performance is higher than the Wales average although this is largely influenced by the number of applications determined. Furthermore, the performance shows an increase of 23% compared with 2013/14.	

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	255
87% of the planning applications determined were granted planning permission. The LPA tries to work with applicants / developers so that applications where possible, with the required evidence submitted, can be supported. Quicker decisions would be likely to have resulted in more applications refused planning permission.	

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

<b>Authority's performance</b>	76
The overall performance has been maintained over the last few years with less staff resources.	

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

<b>Authority's performance</b>	84
This is influenced to a large extent by the overall time taken to determine major applications.	

### SECTION 3 - QUALITY

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

<b>Authority's performance</b>	8
<p>The 8% of decisions made by the Planning Committee contrary to Officer recommendation, did not raise any fundamental policy issues and therefore were not considered to be a risk to the Council. Where there are possible risks to the Council, the Planning Committee procedure includes referral of an application to a "cooling off" period. The application is then reported back to Planning Committee within 6 weeks with a report that highlights the planning policy context, the possible risks and possible options available to the Planning Committee. This procedure has worked well over the years and has managed to avoid possible risks to the Council.</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

<b>Authority's performance</b>	56
This represents a drop compared with previous years and is also a reflection of volume.	

Indicator	11. Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
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>	0
This demonstrates that the "cooling off" procedure of the Planning Committee has worked.	

#### SECTION 4 – ENGAGEMENT

Indicator	12. Does the local planning authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee?	
"Good"		"Improvement needed"
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>	Yes
This has been in operation since 2010 and there are standard procedures in place.	

Indicator	13. Does the local planning authority have an officer on duty to provide advice to members of the public?	
<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

Authority's performance	
There are formal pre-application advice procedures in place to deal with all planning inquiries and meetings can be arranged by prior appointment. The contact centre is used currently as the first point of contact for customers and this arrangement is currently under review.	

Indicator	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>"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

Authority's performance	Yes
This is operational since 2005 with the option of submitting an application via the Planning Portal available since 2008. 55% of planning applications were submitted via the Planning Portal in 2014/15 compared to 23% in 2009/10.	

## SECTION 5 – ENFORCEMENT

Indicator	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>"Good"</b>	<b>"Fair"</b>	<b>"Improvement needed"</b>
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

Authority's performance	77
Performance has been maintained with benchmarking data indicating that it is above the Wales average. <b>Note: Indicators changed during 2014-15</b>	

Indicator	16. Average time taken to investigate enforcement cases	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

Authority's performance	No Data
The back-office system is not currently set up to collect the data and we are still in discussions with the back-office supplier. Data for 1 quarter for 2015-16 has been collected manually. <b>Note: Indicators changed during 2014-15</b>	

Indicator	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)	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

Authority's performance	80
Benchmarking data indicates that this is higher than the Wales average but the performance is influenced by the volume of cases. <b>Note: Indicators changed during 2014-15</b>	

Indicator	18. Average time taken to take enforcement action	
"Good"	"Fair"	"Improvement needed"
Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked	Target to be benchmarked

Authority's performance	132.5
Benchmarking data indicates that this is higher than the Wales average but the performance is influenced by the volume of cases. <b>Note: Indicators changed during 2014-15</b>	

## 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>	In quarter 1 we provided a partial response (55 of 57 data items); In quarter 2 we provided a partial response (55 of 57 data items); In quarter 3 we provided a partial response (55 of 57 data items); In quarter 4 we provided a partial response (55 of 57 data items).
55 of 57 data items responded to with "0" value recorded where appropriate. Only data not responded to is the SD6 as the back office system is not set-up to facilitate recording this date. There is no date at present for this to be resolved.	

<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>
------------------	--

<b>Granted (square metres)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	22,628

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

This data is not specifically related to performance but it reflects the positive approach to planning.



<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD2. Planning permission granted for renewable and low carbon energy development during the year.</b>
------------------	--

<b>Granted permission (number of applications)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	12

<b>Granted permission (MW energy generation)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	24

This data is not specifically related to performance. The data is a reflection of the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan Policy which supports small scale renewable energy projects that are less than 5MW (except within the AONB).

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>SD3. The number of dwellings granted planning permission during the year.</b>
------------------	--

<b>Market housing (number of units)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	275

<b>Affordable housing (number of units)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	32

This data is not specifically related to performance but reflects a positive approach to planning. Furthermore, the 32 number of affordable houses only reflects schemes with a section 106 agreement to ensure affordability. It does not include the number of houses that are affordable due to size, location and the nature of the local housing market. This is data that the Planning Service is collecting for 2015/16.

<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>	0

<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>	7

<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>	69

The data is not specifically related to performance but demonstrates that the LPA deals with applications in accordance with local and national planning policies.

<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>
------------------	---

<b>Previously developed land (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	14,540

<b>Greenfield land (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	18,163

The data is not specifically related to performance and is just a high level indication of where developments that were in accordance with planning policy will be located.

<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>
------------------	---

<b>Open space lost (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	0

<b>Open space gained (hectares)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	0

This data cannot be recorded at present as back office issues have not been resolved.

<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>
------------------	---

<b>Gained via Section 106 agreements (£)</b>	
<b>Authority's data</b>	61,285

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

This is not related specifically to performance and just indicates at a high level the applications that required a section 106 agreement to accord with the Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan.