

4 Quantifying our performance

Results of 2017-18 statutory performance standards

The Local Government (Northern Ireland) Act 2014 requires councils to collect and publish information to allow them to measure performance against a number of indicators set by the Department for Communities. This relates to activity in respect of economic development, waste management and planning applications. The indicators are outlined in the section below.

Economic Development

How did we do?

The 'number of jobs promoted through business start-up' is based on the output of the 'Go for It' initiative which is delivered through the Enterprise Northern Ireland and the Local Enterprise Agency Network. The programme is part funded by Invest Northern Ireland and the European Regional Development Fund under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Northern Ireland (2014 - 2020) Programme. 'Go for It' provides individuals who wish to start a business with support in the production of their own business plans and in registering for self-employment. Business plans produced as a result of this programme are quality assured by the 'Go for It' management team. Once verified the results of the programme are issued to each of the 11 councils and reported to Invest NI and DTE.

In 2017-18, 361 jobs were promoted in BCC. For the second consecutive year, we therefore exceeded the statutory target of 325. The figure is taken as a measure of the number of business plans produced as a result of the programme. However, beyond this BCC does have other complementary schemes and combining these we have in fact helped to produce 446 plans.

What are we doing to improve?

The new contract for the 'Go for It' programme commenced in September 2017 and an evaluation will be completed after the first full year of delivery. Prior to this, between November 2016 and August 2017, BCC had interim arrangements in place whereby the programme was delivered by our 'Innovation Factory'; this accounted for 189 of the 361 business plans, 52% of the total.

The 'Go for It' programme currently sits as a full suite of provision which we have in place to support new business start-ups in the city which collectively will ensure that anyone wishing to start a business in Belfast has access to support appropriate to their specific needs. In order to increase the number of business start-ups in the city we have implemented a

range of support from 'pre start enterprise awareness' and 'start a business' activity through to 'business growth support'. Targeted support and incentives for the retail, fashion, food and tourism sectors and support for new businesses with high growth potential is also available.

Our 'pre-start enterprise awareness' activity includes a range of initiatives to promote enterprise and self-employment as career options. Activity includes national campaign Global Entrepreneurship Week as well as initiatives targeted towards individuals facing more significant barriers to business start-up.

Waste¹

How did we do?

Because year-end waste data is not finalised by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs until November, the figures reported here are a year in arrears - i.e. they represent the year-end position for 2016-17 as reported to us on November 30th 2017 and the most recent verified information.

Article 5(2) of the EC Landfill Directive requires member states to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill, setting challenging targets. The Landfill Allowance Scheme Regulations place a statutory responsibility on councils to landfill no more than the quantity of biodegradable LAC municipal waste for which they have allowances. During 2016-17, taking account of the transfer of allowances between Councils, BCC landfilled 47,359 tonnes of biodegradable waste, which was well within the 50,753 tonne target.

In 2016/17, the tonnage of LAC municipal waste sent for 'recycling' across NI increased by 7.1% to a record high of 434,209 tonnes. Household waste sent for recycling includes all household waste prepared for reuse, dry recycling and composting. The overall household waste recycling rate across NI was 44.4% in 2016/17, slightly higher than the 2015/16 recycling rate of 42.2%. In Belfast just under one quarter, 24.6%, of our waste was sent for dry recycling, 14.2% for composting and 0.5% for reuse. This represents 39.4% of all household waste collected in the city that year. There is no statutory target for this indicator.

The proportion of Northern Ireland's total LAC municipal waste collected by each council broadly reflects the population within the councils. Belfast City Council had the greatest LAC municipal waste arisings in 2016/17 with 172,235 tonnes. This was 17% of total NI LAC waste arisings (18% of the NI population live in the BCC council area). BCC also had the largest proportion of non-household local authority collected municipal waste arisings, at 25%, reflecting the concentration of businesses in BCC.

What are we doing to improve?

Waste issues have been a priority for the Council over many years and continue to be among our most important services. Delivery of BCC's Waste Service is overseen by a dedicated Waste Board and chaired by the Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services. To meet our legislative obligations under NILAS, and to make the necessary contribution to future recycling targets, we need to significantly increase the amount of material we recycle as a city. This will require changes to such things as collection methods, infrastructure and attitudes and behaviours. BCC is therefore in the process of developing a 10 year Waste Strategy to take account of these and other pressures.

Following consultation on an initial draft of the Council's new Waste Framework last year, a programme of engagement is in place to inform a final Framework. BCC is also a member of arc21, a local waste partnership made up of six neighbouring councils, which accounts for 54% of all Northern Ireland's municipal waste. Through Arc21 councils work together to help reduce the costs of waste treatment and disposal. Arc21 has also developed a Waste Management Plan for the area to ensure each council meets its statutory responsibilities and recycling targets and provides the facilities needed to manage waste until 2020.

Planning

How did we do?

Major planning applications relate to developments with important economic, social and environmental implications; most are multiple housing, commercial and government

and civic developments. The average processing time (in weeks) for major planning applications is one of our three statutory indicators. Our target for major applications is 30 weeks. The total count includes legacy applications that have carried over from the former Planning Service within the Department of the Environment, which adversely impact on Councils' performance. The 30-week target has not yet been reached by any of the 11 Councils. However, BCC's 2017 average figure of 51.5 weeks represents an improvement of almost 9 weeks on the previous year. More than a quarter, 26.7%, of our 30 major applications were completed within the 30-week target. When we exclude the legacy cases, the average processing time improves significantly to 41.4 weeks.

Local planning applications refer mostly to residential and minor commercial applications. They also include applications for Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent and Advertisement Consent. The average processing time (in weeks) for local planning

applications in BCC was 15.2 against a target of 15 so is largely on target and also represents a slight improvement on 2016-17. In total 49.9% of local applications were processed within the target.

Enforcement cases are investigations into alleged breaches of planning control. A total of 72.6% of BCC's 427 enforcement cases opened in 2017-18 were concluded within the target of 39 weeks. The time taken to conclude an enforcement case is calculated from the date on which the complaint is received to the earliest date that a notice is issued; legal proceedings commence; a planning application is received; or the case is closed.

What are we doing to improve?

BCC's Planning Service continues to work to improve the planning application process to more effectively respond to the needs of customers and enhance performance. A new Improvement Plan setting out short, medium and long term aims for improving the Service will be published in April 2018. Central to this will be 10 Operating Principles of good practice in managing the planning applications. Actions will be based around:

- Performance - meeting and exceeding statutory targets around decisions and offer a more responsive pre-application discussion service;
- Customers - providing better access to information, including professional advice, earlier in the process;
- Communication - better understanding customer needs and providing early feedback on proposals and;
- Processes - Streamlining internal processes;

Specific improvements are likely to include:

- Publishing an Application Checklist to inform applicants at the start of the process;
- Introducing model planning conditions;
- Publishing guidance on how the council secures developer contributions; and
- Procuring an improved backoffice IT system to enable online planning applications.

A proposed Planning Performance Management Framework for Northern Ireland, proposed by the Department, will also help drive improved performance in planning across the region.

¹ The Waste figures reported here have undergone audit by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and further validation by Statistics and Analytical Services Branch (SASB) in the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). The annual validation acts as a check that all issues raised at the quarterly validation stage have been addressed. Additional validation checks incorporated later in the working year are then also applied backwards to all quarters in the reporting year via the annual validation.

Statutory indicators - year end position and comparison with previous period

Latest data	BCC Actual	Target	Other NI Councils									
Number of jobs promoted through business start-up (completed business plans)	361	325	124	138	276	267	213	281	146	205	326	245
Average processing time (weeks) for major planning applications	51.5	30	40.0	53.0	36.4	58.4	63.2	30.6	94.4	29.0	44.4	127.6
Average processing time (weeks) for local planning applications	15.2	15	12.1	17.2	14.0	20.4	16.2	12.4	21.6	9.6	14.4	17.0
% of Enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks	72.3	70	94.2	73.4	82.5	70.5	71.0	79.2	78.0	86.0	82.1	59.9
Amount (tonnage) of biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste landfilled (2016-17)	47,399	50,753	17,609	20,462	11,107	18,996	13,242	16,815	19,687	19,161	14,509	5,393
% of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (2016-17)	39.4	None	47.5	49.2	48.8	42.3	40.5	45.3	41.1	45.3	51.6	40.1
Amount (tonnage) of local authority collected municipal waste arisings (2016-17)	172,235	None	91,631	94,949	104,342	79,481	74,481	53,878	13,946	75,188	82,833	82,923
												
Previous period	BCC Actual	Target	Other NI Councils									
Number of jobs promoted through business start-up (completed business plans)	501	325	122	178	307	276	226	350	216	255	239	253
Average processing time (weeks) for major planning applications	60.24	30	73.6	37.6	52.8	51.4	304.8	69.9	73.4	67.8	73.6	86.6
Average processing time (weeks) for local planning applications	15.6	15	12.6	20.2	14.0	18.8	19.1	11.6	22.4	9.0	14.4	23.0
% of Enforcement cases processed within 39 weeks	74.8	70	94.8	77.7	82.2	89.5	75.9	82.4	80.8	88.1	79.1	56.1
Amount (tonnage) of biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste landfilled (2015-16)	45,231	50,753	18,887	27,612	10,376	17,553	13,429	17,291	17,715	19,009	15,531	16,265
% of household waste collected by district councils that is sent for recycling (2015-16)	40%	None	42.3	53.4	18.8	39.3	28.4	53.3	50.5	48.7	38.0	33.3
Amount (tonnage) of local authority collected municipal waste arisings (2015-16)	196,964	None	85,058	99,770	102,957	78,363	70,901	53,963	70,480	75,541	77,701	84,459