

Planning Service Review – Cardiff Council

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This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions.

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This document is also available in Welsh.

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Report summary

Report summary

Exhibit 1: report summary

The exhibit below summarises the reason we undertook this audit, our key findings and recommendations for the Council.

Why the Planning Service is important

- 1 The Planning Service including enforcement and Planning Policy are key services for a council. The Planning Service manages the development and use of land in the public interest. It contributes to improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of Wales.
- 2 The Planning Service must reconcile the needs of development and conservation, securing economy, efficiency, and amenity in the use of land. Thereby, ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and protecting, promoting, conserving, and enhancing the built and historic environment.
- 3 The Welsh Government has recently consulted on 'promoting a resilient and high performing planning service'¹. In summary, the Welsh Government consulted on:
 - increasing planning applications fees;
 - changing the performance management framework;
 - Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) skills retention, bursaries, and apprenticeships; and
 - improving resilience and resources with Corporate Joint Committees including extending the Local Development Plan Review period.
- 4 At the time of this audit, the Welsh Government had not formally introduced changes following this consultation. This audit, therefore, reflects the Council's Planning Service's arrangements before any Welsh Government changes.

¹ [Consultation document](#)

The focus of our audit

- 5 We looked at the extent to which the Planning Service:
 - supports the Council in the delivery of its well-being objectives;
 - has arrangements to support delivery of its objectives;
 - has clearly defined roles and responsibilities, including the Planning Committee, and adherence to them; and
 - reviews and monitors the effectiveness of its arrangements.
- 6 We also reviewed the performance of the Planning Service.
- 7 We did not review the decisions of individual planning applications.
- 8 **Appendix 1** sets out the questions we set out to answer along with the audit criteria we used to arrive at our findings.
- 9 We undertook this audit between March and May 2025.
- 10 This audit was undertaken to help fulfil the Auditor General's duties under section 17(2)(d) of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and Section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

Our key findings

- 11 We found that the Planning Service is a key service in supporting the Council deliver its well-being objectives but there are opportunities to demonstrate its value to the Council by improving service planning, reporting and its governance arrangements:
 - the Planning Service is a pivotal service in supporting the Council to deliver its priorities.
 - the Planning Service is strengthening its resilience and capacity, but there are weaknesses in its budget setting arrangements.
 - there are gaps in the Planning Service's service planning arrangements and communication is siloed.
 - the Planning Service's arrangements do not always support it to be efficient.
 - there is a supportive learning and development culture within the Planning Service, but the service does not provide a structured induction process or have an arrangement for officers to share learning.
 - the Planning Service lacked formal opportunities for officers and stakeholders to provide feedback to inform future service design, but the service is now formalising its review arrangements.
 - the Planning Service reports its performance to meet statutory and corporate requirements, but this does not fully demonstrate the value of the service to the Council and public.
 - Planning Committee members understand their role and responsibilities. However, the Council has not reviewed its Planning Committee governance arrangements to ensure efficient use of resources that support this committee.

Recommendations

Our recommendations for the Council

Service Planning

- R1 The Planning Service should strengthen its service planning arrangements to reflect the breadth of the service's activity and contribution to the Council. This would help it provide a clear focus on the service's performance, priorities, risks, challenges, and service improvements.

Service communication

- R2 The Planning Service should introduce arrangements to improve communication across the Planning Service to reduce silo working, facilitate shared learning and improve service planning.

Performance reporting

- R3 To better demonstrate its value to the Council, the Planning Service should improve its performance reporting by:
- reinstating its annual planning performance report to allow members and the public to gain a better and more thorough understanding of the performance of the service; and
 - publishing an annual Section 106 report to provide a thorough understanding of the allocation of Section 106 monies across the Council and city.

Learning and Development

- R4 The Planning Service should:
- formalise its induction arrangements to ensure there is a structured and consistent approach; and
 - develop arrangements to share learning within the service.

Planning Service IT system

- R5 The Council needs to improve staff training on the Planning Service's IT system to ensure full use of the system's functionality and to improve efficiency.

Internal consultee responses

- R6 To improve efficiency, the Planning Service should develop formal and structured arrangements to receive responses from internal consultees.

Enforcement

- R7 The Council should adopt and publish its enforcement policy and publish its enforcement register.

Governance arrangements

- R8 The Council should strengthen its Planning Service's governance arrangements by:
- reviewing the Planning Committee procedures to ensure these are relevant and up to date to support the Planning Committee and planning officers.
 - undertaking its planned review of the Scheme of Delegation to define what it deems as strategically important and 'major' planning applications to ensure the Planning Committee focusses on the most strategically important planning applications.
 - review the balance of time local ward members have to speak on planning applications at Planning Committee meetings as compared to the public.
 - ensure planning applications submitted by, or on behalf of, the officers in the Planning service are considered by the Planning Committee and not under officer delegated powers. This would safeguard against any perceived conflicts of interest and to promote independence and transparency.

Raising awareness of the Planning Service

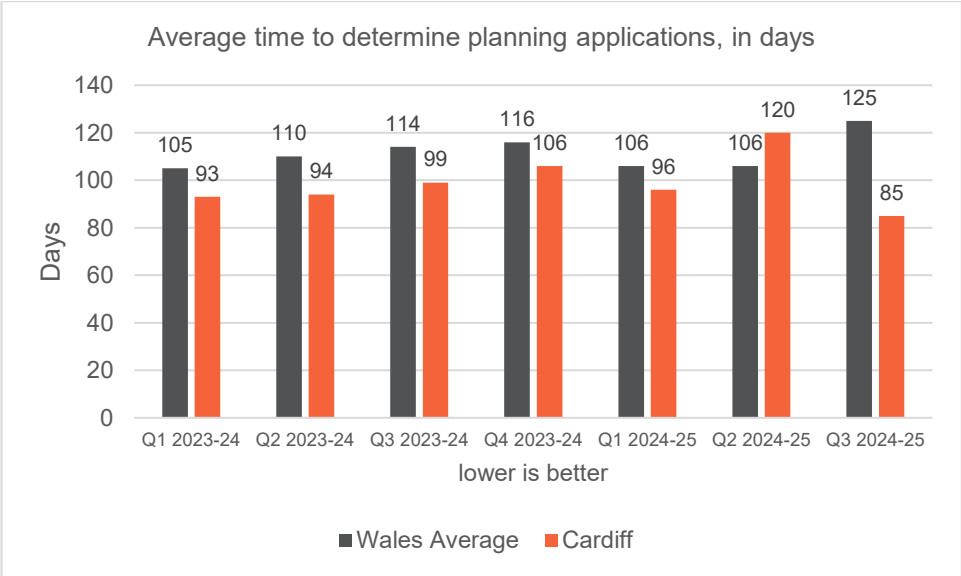
- R9 Our Capital Programme Management² report issued in January 2025 noted the Council had not reviewed its standard business case template for projects since 2014. When the Council reviews this, it should include the role of the Planning Service to raise awareness of the support available from this service and to prompt early engagement by other services.

² Audit Wales, [Cardiff Council – Capital Programme Management](#), January 2025

Performance data

- 12 Every quarter, Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) report performance data to the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government publicly reports three performance indicators³. Publication of this information allows for comparisons of the performance of the Planning Service. We reviewed the data published by the Welsh Government from the period April 2023 to December 2024. At the time of this audit, the Welsh Government had not published performance data from January 2025 onwards.
- 13 Below is the performance of the Planning Service compared to the other LPAs.

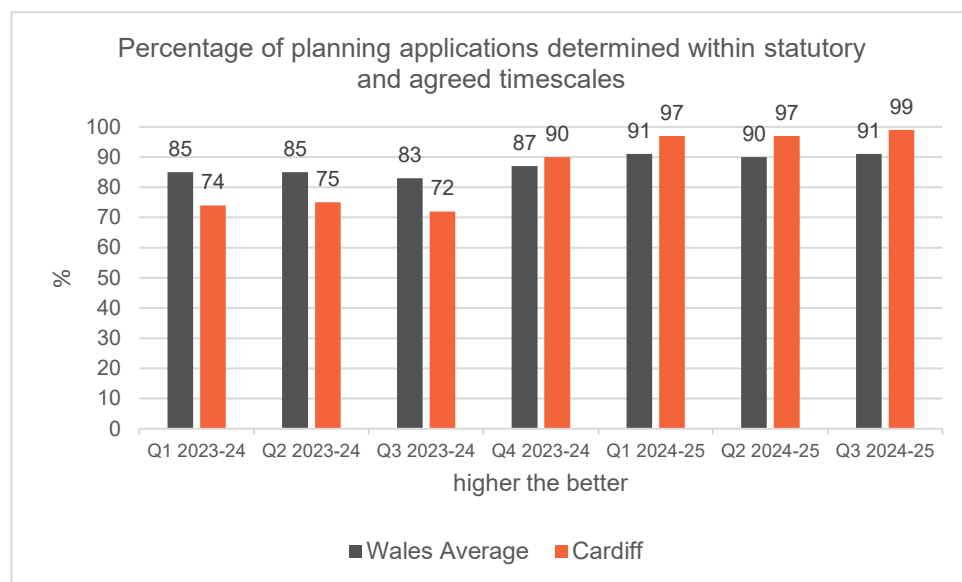
Exhibit 2: average time to determine planning applications, in days



- 14 Between April 2023 (Q1 2023-24) and June 2024 (Q1 2024-25), the Council consistently performed better than the Wales average for the average time in days to determine planning applications. Between July and September 2024 (Q2 2024-25), the Council performed worse than the Wales average but improved between October and December 2024 (Q3 2024-25) to again perform better than the Wales average.

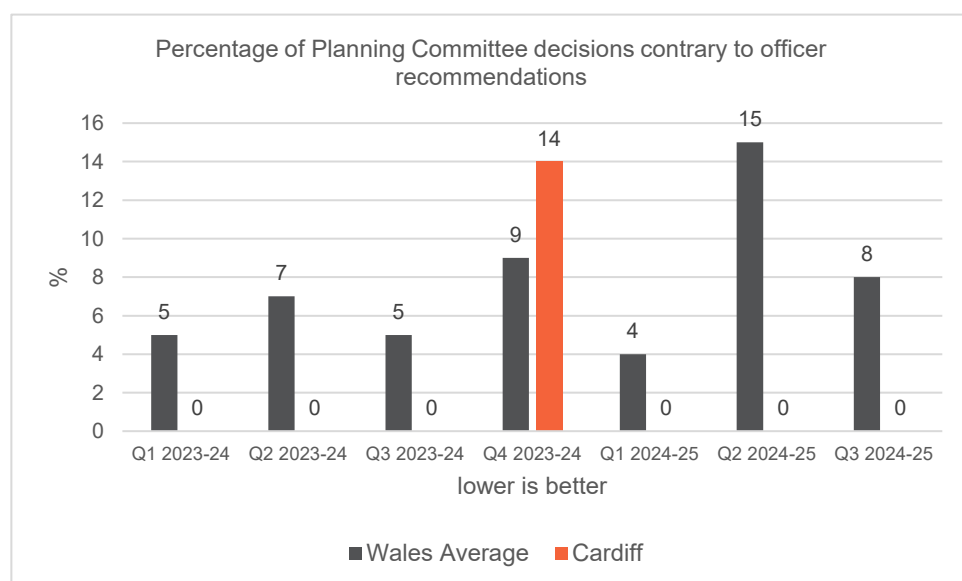
³ Welsh Government, [Development management quarterly surveys](#)

Exhibit 3: Percentage of planning applications determined within statutory and agreed timescales



- 15 Between April 2023 (Q1 2023-24) and December 2023 (Q3 2024-25), the Council performed below the Wales average for the percentage of planning applications determined within statutory and agreed timescales. However, from January 2024 (Q4 2023-24) performance significantly improved and is consistently above the Wales average.

Exhibit 4: Percentage of Planning Committee decisions contrary to officer recommendations



- 16 We also reviewed the Planning Service's quarterly returns to the Welsh Government for the period April 2023 to December 2024. While the Planning Service reports this information to the Welsh Government, the Welsh Government does not publicly report this information. Therefore, we are unable to present comparable performance information for **Exhibits 5 to 7** with other LPAs.

Exhibit 5: Percentage of enforcement cases investigated in 84 days or less

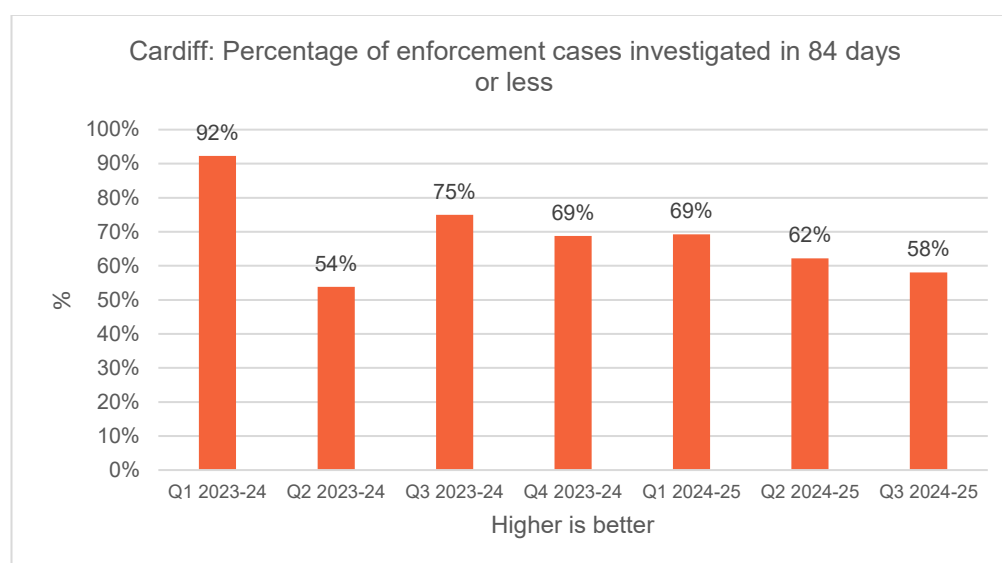


Exhibit 6: Average time taken to take positive enforcement action, in days

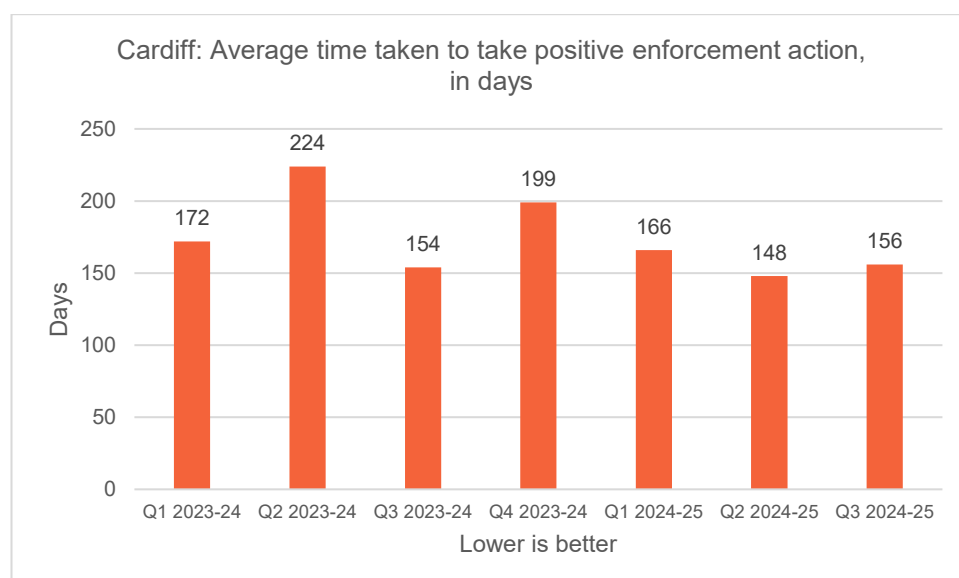
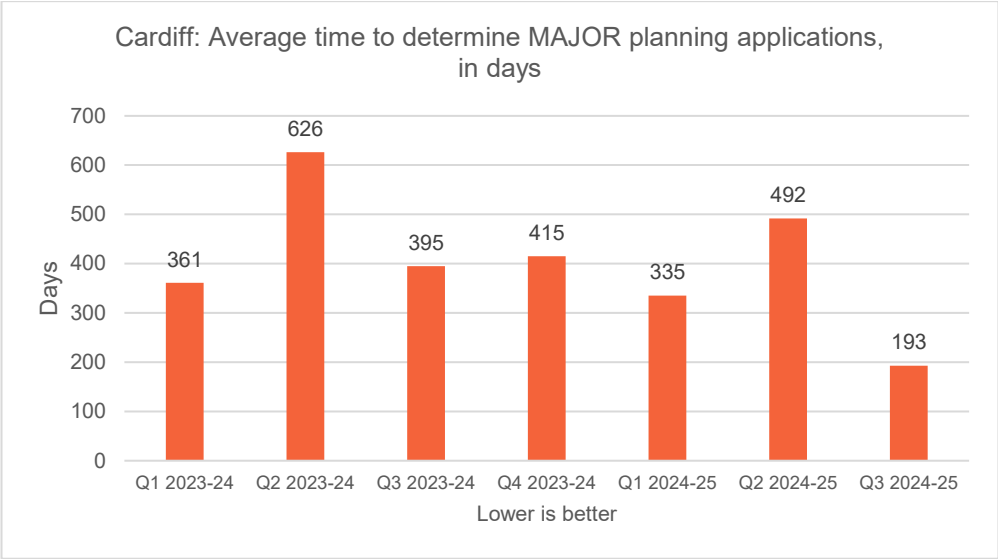


Exhibit 7: Average time to determine MAJOR planning applications, in days



Detailed report

What we found: The Planning Service is a key service in supporting the Council deliver its well-being objectives but there are opportunities to demonstrate its value to the Council by improving service planning, reporting and its governance arrangements

The Planning Service is a pivotal service in supporting the Council to deliver its priorities

- 17 The Planning Service has a key role in supporting the Council deliver its well-being objectives. Members and officers could clearly articulate how the service supports the Council. There are service level agreements in place with some Council service areas that formally connect them to the Planning Service. Officers from the Planning Service also attend a range of Council project and programme boards. These include the Schools Organisation Programme Board; Economic Development Board and Asset Management Board. These connections mean the Council is receiving professional planning advice at the right time. This is before the allocation of potentially significant resources on developing major developments that may not meet relevant planning policies.
- 18 Due to the size of the Council, inevitably there will be differing levels of awareness of the role and support available by the Planning Service. Not all service areas have a service level agreement with the Planning Service. Therefore, some service areas may not be as aware of the importance of engaging with the Planning Service early on in project development. Engaging with the Planning Service at the right time is particularly important due to the legislative requirement for the Council to comply with the Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty and national planning policies on green infrastructure. Services not engaging with the planning service early in the process can lead to added pressures on the service. This could also result in the inefficient use of Council resources in developing projects that may not meet relevant planning policies leading to delays.
- 19 In our Capital Programme Management⁴ report issued in January 2025, we noted the Council has a standard business case template for projects. The Council last reviewed this in 2014. The Council is committed to reviewing this template. When doing so, it would be beneficial to reflect on including the key role and support available from the Planning Service. This may raise awareness with Council service areas and ensure early engagement with the Planning Service.

⁴ Audit Wales, [Cardiff Council – Capital Programme Management](#), January 2025

- 20 The Council's current Local Development Plan has evolved since its approval in 2016. The Council responded to changes in national planning policies, the introduction of Future Wales 2040 and the Council declaring a climate change emergency. The current Local Development Plan is still a relevant document for the Council on which to guide planning decisions.
- 21 At the time of this audit, the Planning Policy team were working on a replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). Producing an RLDP is both resource intensive and costly. The Planning Policy team seeks a range of views and input on the drafting of policies for the RLDP and in the drafting of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs). Officers outside of Planning Policy, such as Development Management, Placemaking, Housing and Transport, drafted aspects of different SPGs. This shows the Council is using other Council resources in preparing this significant and substantial plan.
- 22 The Planning Service has a dedicated reserve which it is drawing on to fund additional costs associated with developing its RLDP. This approach shows prudent financial planning by the Council.

The Planning Service is strengthening its resilience and capacity, but there are weaknesses in its budget setting arrangements

- 23 In response to financial challenges, several years ago the Council reduced its operational managers. As a result, the number of operational managers supporting the Head of Planning reduced to two. To support these managers, in late 2024 the Council created Group Leader roles within the Planning Service. The Council designed these roles to:
- provide resilience;
 - create career development opportunities within the service;
 - address a pinch point with the sign-off of planning applications; and
 - create capacity for operational managers to forward plan and implement service improvements.
- 24 Despite having a stable workforce for several years, in the previous 12-18 months, the service lost experienced officers due to retirement and internal and external promotions. Due to the wider Council financial challenges, the service delayed its recruitment. This created extra work pressures for the remaining officers. At the time of this audit, the service was starting the recruitment process. The Council intends that this will reduce caseloads for existing officers and build greater capacity within the service.
- 25 The Council recognises the value to the Planning Service of investing in the role of student planners. This role is mutually beneficial for both the students and the service. The service offers part-time work to student planners after their one-year work placement. The Council reinstated this role ten years ago and it has helped improve resilience in the service.

- 26 The Planning Service proactively monitors its income from planning fees, Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs). It tracks its income every month and profiles its income for the next two years. Accurate monitoring of this information can support the Planning Service plan for the future.
- 27 However, the Council has incorrectly recorded staff salary costs within the Planning Service budget. As a result, the Council submitted inaccurate annual revenue outturn reports to the Welsh Government for Development Control and Planning Policy. This demonstrates weaknesses in budget setting and budget monitoring. The service has resolved this for the 2024-25 revenue outturn data submission to the Welsh Government.

There are gaps in the Planning Service's service planning arrangements and communication is siloed

- 28 The Planning Service has a breadth of responsibilities. It decides planning applications, it deals with enforcement cases, and it sets planning policies and SPGs to guide planning decisions. It is important for the Planning Service to be clear on how it will deliver its responsibilities.
- 29 The Planning Service sits within the Planning, Transport and Environment (PTE) directorate. The PTE directorate delivery plan (DDP) has five performance measures and actions for the Planning Service. These demonstrate the service's contribution to support the Council's economic growth and regeneration priorities. The five performance measures have annual targets and baseline data. However, the service is not directly involved in delivering three of the performance measures. The actions and performance measures for the Planning Service within the DDP do not encompass the breadth of the contributions of the service to both the Council and the public.
- 30 The Council has a Corporate Performance Management Framework. This framework is clear that each Directorate has an annual Directorate Delivery Plan. The DDPs should contain detail on the important actions and activities on how the Council will deliver the Corporate Plan. It is, however, optional for each service to determine if there is a need for a service-level plan.
- 31 The Planning Service does not have a service plan. Therefore, it is not providing clarity on its priorities, performance aspirations, risks, improvement actions and future use of its resources.
- 32 There are several advantages to having a service plan. For example, it can:
- reflect the breadth of the service's activity and contribution to the Council;
 - enable the Director to identify those actions and performance measures that support the DDP and corporate priorities;
 - state the service's performance aspirations;
 - include the service's improvement actions;
 - include key challenges, priorities and actions;
 - identify service risks and mitigating actions;

- improve service communication by providing a focus and shared purpose for full team meeting discussions;
 - provide a structure for an induction into the service;
 - inform future staffing resource needs; and
 - provide a structure for performance monitoring and reporting.
- 33 There are five individual teams within the Planning Service and each team has good arrangements to meet regularly and to meet with Group Leaders and Operational Managers. Officers feel well supported and well connected with colleagues in their respective teams. However, the service does not have an arrangement for the five individual teams to meet. There is no service-wide team meeting. This is a missed opportunity to create a 'one-team' approach by improving communication and eliminating current silo working.
- 34 Another consequence of not having a service plan and a service-wide team meeting is that the Planning Service's performance and performance targets are not well-understood by officers. Having a service plan with performance measures, priorities and actions covering the breadth of the service can be discussed at service wide team meetings. It can involve officers in setting the future direction of the service and help officers understand their contributions as well as the future performance aspirations for the whole service.

The Planning Service's arrangements do not always support it to be efficient

- 35 Officers describe good working relationships with internal consultees. However, some consultees respond to planning applications informally. Informal responses can create a risk to the Council as the consultee may not explicitly provide their views. Developing a formal and structured arrangement to receive internal consultee responses could eliminate the risk of officers misunderstanding the views of consultees. It can also improve efficiency in how officers deal with internal consultees' responses as well as being able to share the consultee responses with developers, planning applicants and agents.
- 36 There is frustration amongst officers with the Planning Service IT system. The service introduced a new IT system in 2022 with limited training. Officers are mindful the system could offer additional functionality and that they are not using it to its full potential. Another frustration with the system is the word-processing changes it makes when officers input information. This creates extra work which is an inefficient use of officer time. However, officers value the process notes produced by the Customer and Business support team and the IT system works efficiently for allocating, processing and signing off planning applications.
- 37 In March 2024, Internal Audit concluded a review of the Planning Service and gave an audit opinion of 'effective with opportunity for improvement'. This review focussed on controls supporting the processing of planning applications and enforcement decisions. One of Internal Audit's recommendations was for the service to review its Planning Enforcement Policy dated 2011. This document

outlines the procedures and standards of service the public can expect when making enquiries. The service also did not make available to the public an up-to-date register of enforcement in accordance with statutory requirements. At the time of our audit, the Council had not fully addressed Internal Audit's recommendation. The Council website did not include information on enforcement and the Council's enforcement policy remained in draft. Having this document approved and publicly available can manage the public's expectations and potentially reduce the number of contacts to the service. It can also standardise the information provided by the public to the officers, which could lead to less site visits leading to more efficient use of officer time.

There is a supportive learning and development culture within the Planning Service, but the service does not provide a structured induction process or have an arrangement for officers to share learning

- 38 There is a positive culture in addressing any differences of opinion when deciding planning applications. The weekly individual team meetings allow for discussions on planning applications. These meetings promote a supportive working environment. These discussions are also a learning and development opportunity for officers.
- 39 Aside from the role of Student Planner, there is no formal or structured induction process for new starters in the Planning Service. Despite this, officers noted that colleagues are welcoming and supportive in helping new colleagues settle in. This informal approach, however, could inadvertently lead to inconsistencies in support. At the time of our audit, the service was actively recruiting for its vacant roles. Having a structured induction process can provide consistency to new starters. It can provide a clear understanding of the job, its responsibilities, the working practices within the service, the priorities of the service and expected performance. Having a service plan can also contribute to providing that induction structure.
- 40 There is a supportive learning and development culture within the Planning Service. Officers use the corporate Personal Performance Development Review (PPDR) to discuss learning and development needs. Due to budget constraints, officers told us there is limited money available for fee-paying learning and development opportunities. The Planning Service does encourage officers to look for free training opportunities and supports officers to attend. However, there are no arrangements for officers to share learning with the wider team. At a time of limited resources, this is a missed opportunity to maximise the benefits of individual officer's learning.
- 41 The current staff structure can limit officers' ability to gain broader experience across the Planning Service. The split of development management into two teams: strategic and non-strategic creates two separate teams with officers stating there is limited opportunity to gain experience working in both. This arrangement

can negatively affect succession planning and officer career development. At the time of our audit, the service was reviewing its staffing structure.

The Planning Service lacked formal opportunities for officers and stakeholders to provide feedback to inform future service design, but the service is now formalising its review arrangements

- 42 Officers told us the Planning Service is open to new ideas and ways of working, albeit there is no formal arrangement to capture these views. Also, the service does not formally capture views from its key partners. These are missed opportunities to understand if current working practices are fit for purpose.
- 43 At the time of this audit, the Planning Service had just started to identify service improvements. These include changes to recruitment, potential changes to the scheme of delegation and changes to working practices, such as introducing a Lone Working policy. The Planning Service is looking to learn from other Welsh LPAs and Core Cities to help inform its own arrangements and service improvements.
- 44 The Planning Service set up a Planning and Improvement Group to coordinate and action improvements. This Group had just been set up at the time of our audit, so we are unable to assess its effectiveness or gain assurance the service intends to seek feedback from all its officers and key stakeholders to identify service improvements.

The Planning Service reports its performance to meet statutory and corporate requirements, but this does not fully demonstrate the value of the service to the Council and public

- 45 The Council has robust arrangements to ensure there is oversight and scrutiny of organisational performance. Members and senior officers regularly receive updates. These include the mid-year and annual well-being reports. All performance information relating to the Corporate Plan is updated and added to the Corporate Plan dashboard every three months. This includes the Planning Service actions and performance measures stated within the PTE Directorate Delivery Plan.
- 46 However, as these reports only include a couple of planning related performance measures, members only receive a snapshot of the service's performance. The limited performance measures reported to members do not portray the extent of the work of the Planning Service.
- 47 The requirement from the Welsh Government for LPAs to produce a Planning Annual Performance Report ended during the pandemic. As a result, there is no standalone report which pulls all Planning Service performance, successes and

challenges into one place for review. Reinstating an annual performance report could help to fill the current gap in service-wide performance monitoring. It can allow Planning officers and members to gain a more thorough understanding of the performance of the service. It would also facilitate scrutiny and challenge of the performance of the service. Having a service plan can provide the structure and content of a future performance report.

- 48 The Council does not produce an annual S106⁵ report. This is a missed opportunity to promote how S106 funding benefits the Council and communities. If the Council reported this information, it would better demonstrate the impact and value of this funding.

Planning Committee members understand their role and responsibilities. However, the Council has not reviewed its Planning Committee governance arrangements to ensure efficient use of resources that support this committee

- 49 The 'Responsibility for Non-Executive Council Functions' and 'Members Planning Code of Good practice' provide a clear overview as to the role of the Planning Committee. Members we interviewed could clearly articulate the Committee's role and purpose as well as their responsibilities.
- 50 The Council provides all members with an opportunity to access briefings on the role and procedures of the Planning Committee. Additionally, the Council provides committee members with a suitable induction programme and good ongoing support.
- 51 To support and guide all elected members and the public on the Planning Committee procedures, the Council has Planning Committee Procedure Rules; a Members Planning Code of Good Practice and a Site Visit Code of Practice. The Council's constitution includes these documents. These detail:
- the operational arrangements of the Planning Committee;
 - public speaking arrangements;
 - expected behaviour of elected members and members of the public attending committee meetings; as well as
 - members' role and responsibilities outside of the Planning Committee meetings.
- 52 However, elements of the Members Planning Code of Good Practice are out of date. Sections of this document refer to a Development Control Committee; a Development Control Manager; a Cabinet Member with responsibility for Environment and Transportation; and District Auditors under the Local Government

⁵ A Section 106 agreement (S106) is a legally binding private contract between a developer (or a number of interested parties) and a Local Planning Authority (LPA) that operates alongside a statutory planning permission.

Act 2000. These inaccuracies could create confusion about the Council's arrangements supporting the Planning Committee.

53 There are also some inequitable rules within the Planning Committee Procedure Rules:

- a planning applicant or planning agent does not have the right to speak at a Planning Committee meeting, unless it is in response to a petitioner.
- the time limit for petitioners to address the committee and the right of response for applicants is three minutes while local ward members have five minutes. This arrangement is not equitable and can create a perception that member comments are more valuable with members having more time to influence Planning Committee decisions.

54 There are also some arrangements within the Planning Committee Procedure Rules that the Planning Committee does not always follow: These are:

- three minutes for officers to present any issues not included in the Planning Committee report, such as issues on the late representation sheet;
- 15 minutes for Planning Committee Members to debate and decide on each planning application; and
- late representations must be received no later than 24 hours in advance of a Planning Committee meeting.

55 The Council recognises it does not consistently follow these arrangements and is committed to reviewing them.

56 The Council follows its scheme of delegation, but it plans to review it. The Council purposely does not define major planning applications within its scheme of delegation. While this gives flexibility to the service on whether major planning applications are decided by officers or the Planning Committee, there is not a clear decision-making route for applicants.

57 The Council's arrangement to determine planning applications submitted by officers in the Planning Service lacks transparency. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis as to whether a colleague or the Planning Committee decides an officer's application. Although this approach is allowed, it is good practice for the Planning Committee to decide these applications. This helps to safeguard officers against any perceived conflicts of interest. It also promotes transparency, especially for the public.

58 The scheme of delegation states any planning application that has one or more comments must go the Planning Committee Chair for review. This places a heavy workload on the Chair. The scheme of delegation also includes the need for the Planning Committee to decide all planning applications where there is a valid petition with at least 50 signatures.

59 The Council has not completed a comprehensive review of its current scheme of delegation and Planning Committee governance arrangements for a long time. Reviewing its arrangements is prudent to reflect on the inequitable Planning Committee rules and to ensure the Planning Committee receives the strategically important and potentially controversial planning applications. This should provide

the Council with assurance it is using its resources efficiently to support the Planning Committee.

- 60 The Planning Committee understands the risks of making a decision against officer advice. The Planning Committee induction includes the risks and during committee meetings, members are reminded of potential risks. Additionally, the Planning Committee is made aware of Planning Inspectorate decisions on similar types of planning applications. This also helps members understand the potential risks of making a decision that is different to an officer recommendation.

Appendix 1

Audit questions and audit criteria

Below are the questions we sought to answer in carrying out this audit, along with the audit criteria we used to arrive at our findings.

Main audit question: **Does the Planning Service have proper arrangements to deliver value for money in the use of its resources?**

Exhibit 8: audit questions and audit criteria

Level 2 Questions	Audit Criteria
1. Is the planning service supporting the Council in the delivery of its well-being objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Officers and Members understand the role of the Planning Service as a key enabler to support delivery of the Council's well-being objectives.• Senior officers in the Planning Service are members of corporate/strategic groups to ensure the service is involved in corporate developments.• The Planning Service is well-connected to other Council services which support and advise on planning matters.• The Local Development Plan (LDP) is a relevant document which is adhered to and understood by those involved in planning decisions in the Council.

Level 2 Questions	Audit Criteria
<p>2. Does the Planning Service have arrangements to deliver its objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Planning Service has a business plan (or equivalent) with service objectives aligned to the Council's well-being objectives which are understood by those involved in the Planning Service. • The Planning Service has performance measures including baseline data, targets and milestones that reflect progress as appropriate, which planning officers understand. • The Council understands the reasons for its Planning Service performance and manages this. • The Planning Service has a comprehensive understanding of its costs, income and resources to support the delivery of its objectives and this is used to inform its financial planning in the short, medium and long term as far as practicable. • The Planning Service has effective internal communication. • There is a supportive culture to address any differences of professional opinion when determining planning applications and planning enforcement cases. • There are positive working relationships with consultees (statutory and internal). • The Planning Service has a planning system (IT) which supports delivery of the service.

Level 2 Questions	Audit Criteria
<p>3. Does the Planning Service have clearly defined roles and responsibilities which are adhered to?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear terms of reference for the Planning Committee. • The Council has a Planning Committee protocol (or equivalent) containing a code of conduct and Planning Committee procedural arrangements which officers and members understand and adhere to. • Planning Committee members and planning staff receive appropriate training and support to understand the service objectives, planning policies, the role of a committee member and Planning Committee procedural arrangements, and this is updated when required. • The Council guides non-Planning Committee members on local and national planning policies and committee procedural arrangements. • The Council has a clear and transparent scheme of delegation which is adhered to. • The Planning Service has clear and transparent processes for determining planning applications. • The Planning Service clearly identifies risks, opportunities and a clear rationale for any planning application decisions made against professional officer advice, and this is recorded.

Level 2 Questions	Audit Criteria
<p>4. Does the Planning Service review and monitor the effectiveness of its arrangements?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Planning Service demonstrates how it involves staff and key partners in designing future service delivery. • The Planning Service uses complaints and compliments (both internal and external) to improve. • There is a supportive culture of learning and development for Planning staff and Members which is regularly reviewed. • The Planning Service and Planning Committee have a culture of continuous development and observe best practice to learn from other Local Planning Authorities. • The Planning Service uses available data to benchmark. • The Planning Service can demonstrate it works with support services such as legal services to review and monitor its arrangements and conduct. • The Planning Service is progressing towards delivering its intended outcomes (as per the Council's corporate plan). • There are arrangements for the Planning Service to report its performance against its objectives and the Council's wellbeing objectives to senior management and members



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