



PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013



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Vision

The vision for Aberdeen is to be a city which is vibrant, dynamic, forward looking, where people can expect high-quality services that meet their needs. This means making a visible difference to the quality of the city's urban and natural environment by promoting high quality development and providing an effective infrastructure to make us a world class strategic location.

To do this we must think strategically, facilitate development, engage positively with communities and the business sector and be open and transparent in our decision making. We also have a key role in delivering the vision for the City and Shire as expressed through regional plans and strategies. We are tasked with seeing that Aberdeen stays at the forefront of planning for the future.

1 National Headline Indicators (NHIs)

Key Outcomes	2012-2013	2011-2012
Development Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> age of local/strategic development plan(s) (full years) <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i> development plan scheme: on track? (Y/N) 	1.083 years DPS3 (Yes)	0.083 years DPS3 (Yes)
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective housing land: years supply effective housing land supply¹ housing approvals² effective employment land supply³ employment land take-up³ effective commercial floor space supply⁴ commercial floor space delivered 	5.7 years 11,013 units 2,312 units 125.3 ha 2.46 ha See Note 4 4,570 m ²	4.4 years 8602 units 1326 units 125.3 ha 2.46 ha - 26,441 m ²
Development Management Project Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice number of major applications subject to processing agreement⁵ or other project plan/ percentage planned timescales met⁶ Decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> application approval rate delegation rate 	28.3 1 / 100 94.6 90.3	Not available 1 / 100 96.5 90.9
Decision-making timescales <p>Average number of weeks to decision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> major developments local developments (non-householder) householder developments 	87.8 16.2 9.8	60.7 13.3 8.4
Enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> time since enforcement charter published/ reviewed (months) <i>Requirement: review every 2 years</i> number of breaches identified/resolved 	3 134/106	24 106/80



Notes

1. Both housing land years and land supply are for the Aberdeen Housing Market Area. Figures not available for the City alone. The Housing Land Audit information is correct up to 31 December each year.
2. Calendar year 2012.
3. It is not possible to provide up to date figures at present and so last year's figures have been carried over. The Employment Land Audit 2013 is underway at present, it is expected to be completed and published May 2014 so updated figures will be available next year.
4. The Council does not have the figure for commercial floor space supply. This would require monitoring of all commercial lets available at any point in time - the figure is likely to change on a weekly basis and it is considered that the value gained would not be worth the effort.
5. The service now has a policy of encouraging all applicants for Major developments to enter into a processing agreement and this figure will increase in future reports on the PPF.
6. Based on the timescale in the processing agreement which was the target date of reporting to Committee with a recommendation on the application.

Contextual Statement

The average number of weeks for determining applications (and Major applications in particular) is a concern but the following factors have had a significant effect:

- The figures have been significantly influenced by 4 applications.

One application for a major commercial development at Dyce Drive took 3002 days. The acceptability of the proposal in planning terms was directly associated with potential mitigation of the local road network, which is severely congested, as well as the continuing uncertainty the, not least by way of legal challenge, over the provision of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. Very lengthy negotiations took place between the developers, Transport Scotland, Scottish Ministers and the Council to try to find a solution that would allow some development to take place prior to the provision of the AWPR. It was only when the implementation of the AWPR became certain that a solution could be reached by way of legal agreement and suitable conditions to allow an agreed level of development to take place pre-AWPR. Such a solution would not have been possible if the application had been determined (as it would have had to by way of refusal at an earlier stage). The remaining 3 major applications referred to above related to major residential development at Cove. The application were given a willingness to approve 6 months after they were validated but took another 16 months to determine due to protracted hold ups in relation to unforeseen land ownerships and title searches.

- The Development Management Team has been striving to adapt to an unprecedented volume of major and significant applications: a consequence of Aberdeen's buoyant economy. The capacity of the team to cope has been further affected by the retirement of 2 experienced officers and the recruitment process for 2 newly created Senior Planner posts (to build capacity) - resulting in vacancies in the team that have cascaded downwards as some posts are filled internally. This process has now almost reached its conclusion and, with a full and expanded team in place, improvements in processing times will be evident in the next year
- A limited number of historic undetermined "legacy" applications
- The time taken to secure legal agreements and
- The lack of a procedure for "stopping the clock" on the applications

These factors are being actively addressed as priorities as explained in the remainder of this year's PPF and specifically in the Service Improvement Actions.

SUDS pond, Robert Gordon University, Garthdee



2 Defining and measuring a high-quality planning service

The report focuses on the improvements and new developments in the planning service since the submission of PPF 2011-12. Unless otherwise indicated it should be taken as read that all the activities and service actions detailed the PPF 2011-2012 are still being undertaken.

In accordance with the request from the Planning Minister, Appendix III cross references to relevant evidence in the main PPF report and service actions to show how the planning service is specifically addressing each of the Performance Markers produced by the Heads of Planning High Level Group and, if not met, the steps being taken to meet the marker.

Open for Business

The **Aberdeen Local Development Plan** (ALDP)¹ has a strong focus on development delivery providing the development industry and the general public with clear guidelines on the likely infrastructure requirements that are needed to support development. This level of transparency helps to promote certainty, trust and confidence that necessary infrastructure, such as new schools and medical facilities will be delivered alongside new development.

The infrastructure requirements for each Masterplan area are set out in the ALDP Action Programme² - a live document which is updated quarterly to reflect changes and to identify any new actions, keeping the development industry as up to date as possible on the likely infrastructure requirements for their development.

The updates to the Action Programme are supported through delivery days³ which provide developers with an opportunity to discuss development on a particular site with the Council and representatives from relevant key agencies. Where necessary, plans are made to address any barriers to development.

Since the ALDP's adoption in 2012, the Council has worked closely with developers to bring forward area based Development Frameworks and Masterplans. This work has resulted in the adoption and ratification of 32 such documents⁴, which provide clear and specific guidelines for the development of sites on the ground.

Trinity Group⁵

The Council (officers/elected members) has continued its active involvement in the Trinity Group including:

- meeting with the Minister for Local Government and Planning⁶
- high level meetings with Key Agencies/ Scottish Government⁷

As an example of consequent progress Scottish Water has become involved in the planning service's Key Agencies Liaison meetings⁸ and established an on-the-ground presence in City.

Development Management

In tandem with the foregoing, progress has been made on a number of priority strands of "Planning Reform: The Next Steps"

- **Processing Agreements (PAs):**
Despite active encouragement/promotion for every major application, the uptake of PAs by applicants has been disappointing with only one recorded for the year. A key lesson from experience to date is that PAs have to be simple, brief and focussed to work effectively as a project management tool. Work to simplify the PA template in consultation with private sector partners is a priority for the coming year.

In collaboration with Scottish Government. The service is piloting a fully aligned approach with all key consultees to project managing a major mixed use application at Woodside. All Key Agencies and Sport Scotland now signed up to the PA.

Positive promotion/engagement of PAs with stakeholders has occurred through RTP1⁹. PA guidance has been developed to, amongst other things, ensure focussed/proportionate information is secured up front and PAs are promoted through website.¹⁰ On the whole there has been positive feedback on PAs from agents and developers.¹¹

- **Multiple consents:** Progress with private sector/Scottish Government on aligned RCC/planning consents. A discussion paper has been produced and workshops with internal and external partners have been held: full implementation scheduled for Spring 2014.^{12,13}

- **Pre-application discussions:** recorded on the casework system and linked to subsequent application(s) - see NHIs (above). A working group is actively progressing more efficient ways of recording pre-application enquiries including online pre-application forms, geographic plotting and link to subsequent application.¹⁴

Infrastructure Contributions negotiated by specialist Aberdeenshire-based Developer Obligations Team as a shared service which, together with Infrastructure Contributions Supplementary Guidance¹⁵, ensures impartiality and consistency between applications in Shire and City and proportionate requests for developer contributions. The Strategic Transport Fund won "Most Innovative Transport Project of the Year" at the Scottish Transport Awards.



Sir Duncan Rice Library,
Aberdeen University, Old Aberdeen

High quality development on the ground

Masterplanning

The Aberdeen Masterplanning Process¹ is adopted as SG and ensures that all development frameworks and masterplans focus on design led planning and “place-making”².

Over 20 detailed Masterplans have been adopted or are currently under preparation, including Stoneywood³ where a Masterplan for 500 new homes and a neighbourhood centre has enabled development to respond positively to existing landscape character, topography and riverside setting. The masterplan respects the traditional landscaped policies and mature tree cover and has encouraged the developer to be continuously more architecturally creative as each phase progresses through the planning process. Early phases are currently on site.

The Masterplanning process has ensured efficient delivery of Kingswells Prime 4 business park⁴, with the first 2 phases of a 50ha development site currently nearing completion. The masterplan has ensured a strong focus on quality of architecture, materials, landscaping and public realm, including emphasis on place-making and pedestrian movement, not normally associated with such development. The community has benefited from an increased level of engagement whilst the developer has benefited from speed and efficiency of decision-making.

Design

The Team provides specialist design advice to applicants, agents and Council colleagues and in the procurement stages of Council projects such as the redevelopment of St Nicholas House and the new Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre.

The Team runs a Local Design Review Panel (DRP)⁵ jointly with Aberdeenshire Council. This monthly Panel consists of architects, urban designers, landscape architects and planners from the private sector and assists with design challenges

on the full range of projects. This peer review supports improved quality of design and raises design awareness and expectations amongst designers in the North East. The outcomes of the DRP are a material consideration in determining planning applications.

The redevelopment of Marischal College as the Council Headquarters and the Sir Duncan Rice Library at Aberdeen University have been shortlisted in the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning.

The Service has a representative on the board of Architecture and Design Scotland and staff participate in the annual A+DS Design Symposium.

A Senior Urban Designer is being recruited to expand the capacity of the service to deliver design objectives set out in the ALDP and nationally.

Conservation⁶

A conservation specialist provides advice on listed buildings and conservation areas. The team operates a development management “surgery” twice weekly for DM case officers which has provided benefits of additional staff resource and increasing confidence in addressing issues early in the process.

The Service is currently piloting an Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) accreditation scheme for 6 internal mentees in the DM Team - working closely with the IHBC national director. The pilot scheme will embed conservation knowledge and experience across teams as each candidate progresses through their training.

Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans for 6 of 11 of the City’s conservation areas have been completed to assist in DM decision making.

The Service maintains an up to date list and digital mapping references for listed buildings in the City.

The team supports the Aberdeen City Heritage Trust to deliver conservation grant schemes in the City Centre and is working with the Trust to apply for a Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme for the east end of the City Centre.

Successful delivery of the Green Townscape Heritage Initiative (end 2013) is nearly complete and a number of properties have been restored and refurbished, including the Tivoli Theatre.

Environmental Strategy

The ES Team has developed a Green Space Network GIS layer⁷ to assist in the submission and processing of planning

applications. It is now available on the Council's website and is therefore available to developers and agents in addition to DM staff. This layer provides a range of environmental information for each site, including opportunities for environmental or recreational enhancement. The project is a finalist in the Scottish Green Awards 2013.

A specialist Strategic Environmental Assessment Officer, shared with Aberdeenshire, provides in-house expertise in producing SEAs for the Council's plans programmes and strategies⁸ and provides training for other council officers in Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Grandhome Development Framework, Site layout



Certainty

The **Development Plan** is up to date and robustly/consistently applied. In 2012-2013 only 2 applications were approved that were identified as being contrary to the adopted LDP and both were justified on grounds that other material considerations outweighed the provisions of the plan.^{1,2}

The review of the ALDP will produce a revised document within the 5 year statutory time frame and involves collaborative working across the Planning Service. Early pre-Main Issues Report consultation was undertaken³ to ensure that the community and business bodies are fully engaged and informed of the process.

All stakeholders are actively engaged in delivering the LDP action programme (see above).

ALDP display panel, St. Nicholas Street



Development Management

Service protocols are in place with all key internal/external consultees to ensure consistency and reliability of application advice (MP and D, Roads, Environmental Health, Legal Services, Developer Obligations Team, Key Agencies).⁴ Regular scheduled liaison meetings are held between the Development Management Manager and all internal consultees.

It is recognised that the time taken to negotiate legal agreements is a significant factor affecting application determination times. With that in mind:

- All legal agreements are reviewed/progress chased with the Legal Manager at the monthly liaison meeting using a live spreadsheet⁵
- A legal instruction sheet/guidance note has been developed to ensure earlier legal engagement and establish clear roles, responsibilities and timescales⁶

Priority Actions for next year include:

- Ensure active involvement/sign up of legal team to processing agreement timescales and actions
- Consider mechanism for conclusion (or reconsideration) of applications with legal agreements within 6 months of 'willingness to approve'

Biannual liaison meetings in place with key agencies (SEPA and SNH) now extended to include Scottish Water.⁷

Communications, engagement and customer service

Customer Service Excellence Award (CSE)¹

CSE Accreditation was achieved by the Development Management Team. This requires compliance with a broad range of customer service and customer focussed criteria. Amongst other things as part of CSE:

- A new Customer Charter has been introduced²
- The Development Management³ and Enforcement Charters⁴ have been updated and a 2 year review programmed. All Charters are publicised on the Council website.
- Performance is being monitored against targets and timescales in the Charters and areas are being identified for improvement eg. single mobile phone number for "Duty" Planner to ensure rapid response.
- A staff suggestion scheme (post box/ e-mail folder) has been initiated and suggestions are considered for action and an annual award presented at Service Management Team Meetings.
- Customer insight is sought through surveys of all customers (hardcopy, e-mail signature and web based questionnaire⁵) and actions arising are being implemented. Feedback on customer satisfaction levels is provided online.⁶
- It is recognised that engagement with Community Councils is not as good as it should be. With this in mind training sessions and the joint development of a Community Council concordat will be advanced over the coming year.

CSE is to be rolled out to remainder of the Service in the next year. Further audits and assessments are scheduled over the next three years.

An Enterprise Planning and Infrastructure Service wide 'e-mag' and an online newsletter⁷ (sent to agents/posted online) keeps staff and stakeholders up to date on initiatives and news across the Service.

Embedding Organisational Behaviours Workshops⁸ have been held for staff in each team to further understanding of our Council's 'core behaviours' – these include 'communication'. In the workshops staff considered what the service does well and where there is room for improvement. Actions were then agreed to help bring about improvements.

An internal audit of the planning process found no areas of significant concern but highlighted the potential benefit of a register of interests for senior staff determining planning applications in the interests of promoting greater transparency in the decision making process.

Electronic Service Delivery

Improvements in the last year include:

- enhanced application search facility of planning register including a location map
- Introduction of online payment
- Development of the generic XML functionality for the Public Information Notices (tellmescotland). Planning notices are published automatically with no manual intervention. Future development will enable users to receive alerts for all planning applications.
- 31 percent of all applications were submitted via the Scottish E-Planning Portal

There are undoubtedly efficiencies to be gained from further development of electronic workflow eg electronic despatch of decision document and this is an action for the coming year.

Efficient and effective decision-making

It is also recognised that the quality, ease of use and customer focus of the information on the Council's website and online register requires improvement. An inter-service focus group has been established to pursue a prioritised list of improvements over the coming year in line with Pendleton criteria. These include user friendly navigation, map based planning application search facility and developing real time tracking of application progress.

Local Development Plan

The results of all consultation exercises that are undertaken as part of the production of the ALDP are published online⁹. The interactive online development plan (OLDP) will be updated as the ALDP is progressed.¹⁰

Development Management

The service has continued its biannual meetings with agents (Agents Focus Groups¹¹)

For second year a shared stand with Aberdeenshire Council at the Scottish Homes Show weekend event to promote the development management service and give advice.

The duty planner service ensures that there is always a planner available to provide advice during opening hours of the Council.

In general there has been positive feedback from developer/agents on the service provided.¹²

Organisational structure unchanged form last year (see PPF 2011-12)¹. The benefits of close working relationships/proximity to colleagues in Roads Projects Team are particularly evident in resolving difficulties via face to face dialogue.

Development Management

The Scheme of delegation for local developments has been reviewed and streamlined to fit amended legislation. Aligned delegated powers for other types of development will be reported to Council for approval in November.

A new delegated and committee report format for reports of handling has helped to increase clarity relating to the issues taken into account in decision making

The redesign of the Development Management Portal (internal website)⁸ has enhanced its value as a structured and easy to navigate web based tool and information source for case officers. This has proved to be an invaluable reference for officers and new employees and helps to train and inform staff and ensure procedural consistency and clarity.

Maggie's Centre interior, Forresterhill



Effective management structures

In the coming year the P&SD Service will be restructured to align with Corporate priorities of co-ordinating and prioritising key infrastructure (in its widest sense) to facilitate the dynamic economic growth of the City and promote partnership working between functional teams. This is likely to be achieved by:

- incorporating and integrating the Council's economic and business development function with P&SD
- focussing on project management and delivery and the regeneration and development of the City Centre
- strengthening management capacity by the creation new management positions that will enable smarter prioritisation of workloads.

With this in mind a priority for this year will be align the planning service within any new structure - possible options include the creation of a Major Project team, a City Development Programme Manager post, secondment or transfer of staff between teams and further integration of the Roads Construction Consent and Development Management functions.

Biannual Benchmarking Group meetings between four largest Scottish Cities¹ and with Aberdeenshire Council

Financial management and local governance

Income from increased fees is being reinvested in the planning service. Two new Senior Planner posts have been created in the Applications and Masterplan, Conservation and Design Teams.

The former post will help the Service cope with the unprecedented surge in major and significant applications associated with the economic buoyancy of the City and the release of land through the recently adopted Local Development Plan.

The latter post will be a design professional to give design advice for major development and help co-ordinate the Masterplanning to achieve high quality development on the ground and sustainable liveable communities.

The service is actively engaged in the HOPS exercise to cost the planning service.

A new Committee structure gives the Planning Development Management Committee full Committee rather than Sub-Committee status.

Scheme of Delegation¹ ensures only the most difficult/controversial applications now go to committee with the number of applications at monthly Committees are rarely in double figures.

A "live view" web based case officer application caseload monitoring system has been further developed and assists work allocation and monitoring

Culture of continuous improvement

A rolling programme of both planning and separate local review body training (5 sessions) has been carried out to ensure all Elected Members on the relevant Committees are trained.

Four out of the six Senior Planners in the planning applications team are studying for management qualifications (ILM or equivalent).

Both managers of the planning service (LDP and DM) completed the Scottish Government's Leading for Outcomes Masterclass Programme and an Aspiring to be Head of Service workshop.

Most team leaders and both managers have attended a four day Negotiating and Influencing Skills Course.

Full staff workshops are held quarterly which focus on service priorities, culture and continuous improvement – led by Head of Service¹.

Service and Team Plans developed with staff involvement and setting out clear priorities.

Maggie's Centre, Forresterhill



3 Supporting evidence

Part 2 of this report was compiled, drawing on evidence from the following sources (numbers refer to superscript in the text above).

- **National Headline Indicators**

1 Draft Housing Land Audit 2013

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/housing/HousingLandAudit/HousingLandAudit.asp>

2 Employment Land Audit 2012

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=51028&SID=9484>

3 Office and Hotel Planning Information 2012

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=48516&SID=9484>

- **Open for Business**

1 Aberdeen Local Development Plan 2012

www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_local_development_plan.asp

2 Aberdeen Local Development Plan Action Programme

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_aldp_action_programme.asp

3 Delivery Days (example agenda) (electronic attachment)

4 Masterplans and Development Frameworks

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/planning_sustainable_development/pla_mdc_mplans_devframe_planbrief.asp

5 A high level partnership panel that provides a forum for public and private sector leaders to help facilitate the delivery of development in the City

6 Minute of meeting with Planning Minister (electronic attachment)

7 Minute of Trinity Group meeting with Key Agencies (electronic attachment)

8 Minute of Key Agency Liaison Meeting (electronic attachment)

9 RTPI Processing Agreement evening event

[http://www.rtpi.org.uk/events/events-calendar/2013/march/processing-agreements-good-practice-and-lessons-learnt-\(5\)/](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/events/events-calendar/2013/march/processing-agreements-good-practice-and-lessons-learnt-(5)/)

10 Processing agreement page on Council website

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/planning_sustainable_development/pla_planning_preapp_discuss.asp

11 Feedback from developers (electronic attachment)

12 Aligned Consent Workshop (electronic attachment)

13 Aligned Consents Workshop Presentation (electronic attachment)

14 Minutes of pre application working group (electronic attachment)

15 Infrastructure Developer Contributions SG

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=31772&SID=13446>

- **High Quality Development on the ground**

- 1 Masterplanning Home Page

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/planning_sustainable_development/pla_planningbriefs.asp

- 2 Aberdeen Masterplanning Process Supplementary Guidance

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=40000&SID=23486>

- 3 Stoneywood Masterplan

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/planning_sustainable_development/pla_masteplan_stoneywood.asp

- 4 Kingswells Prime 4 Masterplan

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/planning_sustainable_development/pla_masterplan_kingswells.asp

- 5 Design Review Panel

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=40638&SID=17215>

- 6 Conservation Guidance including CA Appraisal documents

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/conservation/pla_conservation_areas.asp

- 7 Green Space Network

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/outdoor_accesslocal_development_plan/pla_green_space_networklocal_development_plan.asp

- 8 Strategic Environmental Assessment

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/environmental/sustainability/sus_SEA.asp

- **Certainty**

- 1 Committee Report on Copper Beech (090737)

<http://planning.aberdeencity.gov.uk/docs/showimage.asp?j=090737&index=25565>

- 2 Committee Report on Lower Baads - helicopter flying

<http://planning.aberdeencity.gov.uk/docs/showimage.asp?j=111147&index=69033>

- 3 Pre Main Issues Report engagement

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_2016_pre_mir_engagement.asp

- 4 Key Agencies, Roads Projects Team and Environmental Health Consultation Protocols (electronic attachments)

- 5 Legal agreements spreadsheet (electronic attachment)

- 6 Legal instruction sheet and guidance (electronic attachment)

- 7 Minutes of Key Agencies Liaison Group (electronic attachment)

- 8 Development Management Portal Home screen (electronic attachment)

- **Communications, Engagement and Customer Focus**

- 1 Customer Service excellence press release
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/CouncilNews/ci_cns/pr_CustomerServiceExcellence_110913.asp
- 2 Customer Charter
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/planning_sustainable_development/pla_developmanage_charter.asp
- 3 Development Management Charter
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/planning_sustainable_development/pla_developmanage_charter.asp
- 4 Enforcement Charter
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=27250&sID=6823>
- 5 Online Customer satisfaction survey
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning_and_environment.asp
- 6 Customer Satisfaction Survey analysis
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=50748&sID=2545>
- 7 ALDP Newsletter
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=49304&sID=2200>
- 8 Embedding Organisational Behaviours Action Plan (electronic attachment)
- 9 ALDP Consultation feedback
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_2016_consultation_events.asp
- 10 Online Local Development Plan
<http://oldp.aberdeencity.gov.uk/oldp-web/doc/contentsAction.do>
- 11 Agents Focus Group Minutes (electronic attachment)
- 12 Feedback from developers (electronic attachment)

- **Efficient and effective decision-making**

- 1 Planning Performance Framework 2011-12
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=48032&sID=1344>

- **Effective Management Structures**

- 1 Benchmarking Group Minutes (electronic attachment)

- **Culture of Continuous Improvement**

- 1 Planning and Sustainable Development workshop agendas (electronic attachment)

4 Service improvements: 2012-13

In the coming year we will:

- Reconfigure the planning service in line with any proposed new Structure align with Corporate priorities of co-ordinating and prioritising key infrastructure and major projects to facilitate the dynamic economic growth of the City and promote partnership working between functional teams.
- review processing agreement template and guidance
- implement "stop the clock" facility for stalled applications
- consider conclusion/reconsideration of applications with legal agreements within 6 months of 'willingness to approve'
- target determination of legacy applications

Local Development Plan

- Gain approval for the Main Issues Report
- Continue to monitor the infrastructure constraints to the delivery of development through the LDP Action programme and, where appropriate, instigate Action Programme Delivery Days with developers and relevant key agencies to overcome barriers.

Environmental Policy

- Establish an Environmental Policy Monitoring Group consisting of Council officers, stakeholders and elected members which will ensure that the Council's environmental strategies, policies and plans, that require actions across a range of Council services and external bodies are implemented.
- Ensure the maximum benefit is gained from Developer Contributions towards access and environmental improvements, including setting up a database to monitor for each contribution; the sum involved, the purpose, the area in which it can be used and the timescale.

Development Management (Applications)

- Actively address the factors that are slowing the determination of applications (especially Major developments):
 - ensure involvement/sign up of legal team to processing agreements

- In partnership with stakeholders continue the programme of continuous improvement of the information systems (eService programme) based on a revised Business Architecture with the aim of improving efficiency and effectiveness: overseen by a eService programme board and implemented via an eService project team focussing on:

- develop electronic workflow eg. electronic decision documents
- web site improvements implemented through an inter-service focus group
- real time tracking of application progress
- map based application search and planning alerts facility
- recording of pre-application enquiries
- Work together with the Community Council Forum to develop a concordat and planning training

Masterplanning, Design and Conservation

- Develop a conservation accreditation programme for staff with the IHBC
- Adopt 5 Masterplans as supplementary guidance to the development plan
- Prepare 4 Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plans
- Work with our partners to develop a City Centre Vision

Delivery of our service improvements actions in 2012-13

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committed Improvements and Actions Actively pursue achieving Customer Service Excellence and ISO901 accreditation for the Development Management/Masterplanning Team (as a first step towards full Service-wide accreditation) in accordance with a project plan and a customer consultation plan including community council concordat, customer focus groups and satisfaction surveys in various formats. Action Taken CSE achieved. Evidence See "Communications, Engagement and Customer Service" section of this year's PPF. 	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committed Improvements and Actions In partnership with various stakeholders begin a programme of continuous improvement of the information systems (eService programme) based on a revised Business Architecture for the service with the aim of improving efficiency and effectiveness: overseen by a eService programme board and implemented via an eService project team. Action Taken The Project Board advised that the e-Service project should focus short term on delivering local solutions. The e-service project teams have therefore met and worked on improvements including delivery of web enhancement, epayment and pre-application facilities. The holistic approach to developing systems based on the business architecture will resume in the coming year with a focus on integrating historical data along with evolving local solutions as part of the corporate Enterprise Architecture. Evidence See "Communications, Engagement and Customer Service" section of the PPF. 	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committed Improvements and Actions Continue to develop a project management approach to application handling including aligning consenting processes (masterplanning, roads and building standards) and reducing supporting information requirements as a pilot authority in the Modernisation initiative. Action Taken Continued promotion/ongoing review of Processing Agreements and alignment of RCC/DM teams and process. Evidence See "Open for Business" section of PPF. 	On-going

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed Improvements and Actions Review and update our Development Management and Enforcement Charters. • Action Taken Completed. • Evidence See "Communications, Engagement and Customer".service section of this year's PPF 	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed Improvements and Actions Review Schemes of Delegation • Action Taken Local Developments Scheme review complete. Local Government Act Scheme to be reported to Committee November 2013. • Evidence See "Efficient and Effective Decision-making" section of this year's PPF. 	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed Improvements and Actions Review and update all protocols/service level agreements with other ACC Services and key agencies to ensure reliability of advice and working timescales. • Action Taken Review almost complete. • Evidence See "Certainty" section of this year's PPF. 	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committed Improvements and Actions Monitor the infrastructure constraints to the delivery of development through the LDP Action Programme and, where appropriate, instigate Action Programme Delivery Days with developers and relevant key agencies to overcome barriers. • Action Taken 3 Delivery Day Workshops have been held so far which have included developers, representees from across the Planning Service and relevant key agencies. • Evidence See "Open for Business" section of PPF report. Delivery Day agendas. 	Yes

Appendix One

Planning Performance Framework Official Statistics

Decision-making timescales

		Average timescale (weeks)	
Category	Total number of decisions 2012-2013	2012-2013	2011-2012
Major Developments	10	87.8	60.7
Local developments (non-householder)	489	16.2	13.3
• Local: less than 2 months	29.2%	7.1	6.8
• Local: more than 2 months	70.8%	19.9	21.1
Householder developments	700	9.8	8.4
• Local: less than 2 months	68.9%	7.6	6.6
• Local: more than 2 months	31.1%	14.7	21.3
Housing developments			
Major	6	68.9	71.2
Local housing developments	64	21.6	27.5
• Local: less than 2 months	6.3%	7.4	7.4
• Local: more than 2 months	93.7%	22.6	35.3
Business and industry			
Major	3	28.4	98.3
Local business and industry	97	15.8	12.0
• Local: less than 2 months	20.6%	7.4	6.0
• Local: more than 2 months	79.4%	17.9	25.4
EIA developments	6	20.8	-
Other consents*	18	13.0	15.4
Planning/legal agreements*	25	44.9	94.7
Local reviews	3	5	7.8

* Consents and certificates: Listed buildings and Conservation area consents, Control of Advertisement consents, Hazardous Substances consents, Established Use Certificates, certificates of lawfulness of existing use or development, notification on overhead electricity lines, notifications and directions under GPDO Parts 6 and relating to agricultural and forestry development and applications for prior approval by Coal Authority or licensed operator under classes 60 and 62 of the GPDO.

** Legal obligations associated with a planning permission; concluded under section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 or section 69 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973

Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2012-2013		2011-2012	
		Number	%	Number	%
Local reviews	3	1	33.3	11	72.7
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	9	6	66.7	10	40.0

Enforcement activity

	2012-2013	2011-2012
Cases taken up	170	164
Breaches identified	134	106
Cases resolved	106	80
Notices served***	13	7
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

***Enforcement notices; breach of condition notices; planning contravention notices; stop notices; temporary stop notices; fixed penalty notices, and Section 33 notices.

Context

Enforcement Activity

See Context Report under NHIs for context on application processing times
Enforcement Activity – of the 170 cases taken up/investigated, 134 were identified as having planning related breaches warranting further action to resolve either through negotiation or formal enforcement action. The remaining 36 cases were, after investigation, identified to be 'permitted development', or works/activities established to be in compliance with a valid planning approval or permitted planning uses.

Appendix Two

Workforce and Financial Information

Snapshot of staffing at 31 March 2013. Please note the figures do not have to be exact as we are looking for a snapshot of each authority.

	Tier								
Head of Planning Service (1)	1	2	3	4					
	Managers (2)		Main Grade Posts		Technician Posts		Office support/ Clerical		Totals
	No. Posts	Vacant	No. Posts	Vacant	No. Posts	Vacant	No. Posts	Vacant	
Development Management	3	1	16.4	3.11	6	0	11.4	3.1	44.01
Development Planning	1.86	0.14	7	1	0	0	0	0	10.00
Enforcement Staff	0	0	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	2.50
Cross Service/ Other Planning	0	0	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	1.50

Staffing profile	Number
Under 30	10.4
30-39	13.5
40-49	10.86
50 and Over	14.9

Committees and site visits (3)	No. per year
Full Council committees	7 to 8
Planning Committees	11
Area Committees (where relevant)	N/A
Committee site visits	11
LRB (4)	3 held (14 scheduled not required)
LRB site visits	None

Budgets	Budget	Costs		Income (7)
Planning Service		Direct (5)	Indirect (6)	
Development Management	525,000	1,406,000	107,000	(988,000)
Development Planning	511,000	392,000	129,000	(10,000)
Enforcement	Subsumed in DM budget	0	0	0

Notes on Completion

1 In relation to service structure, 1st tier post holders are Chief Executives, 2nd tier are Directors, 3rd tier are Heads of Service and 4th tier are Managers.

2 Managers are those people who are responsible for the operational management of a team/division. They are not necessarily line managers.

3 References to committees also include National Park Boards. Number of site visits are those cases where visits were carried out by committees/boards

4 This related to the number of meetings of the LRB, application numbers going to LRB are reported elsewhere.

5 Direct staff costs covers gross pay, including overtime, national insurance and the superannuation contribution. The appropriate proportion of the direct cost of any staff member within the planning authority concerned spending 30% or more of their time on planning should be included in costs irrespective of what department they are allocated to. (For example: Legal advice, Administration; Typing) Exclude staff costs spending less than 30% of their time on planning.

6 Indirect costs include all other costs attributable to determining planning applications. Examples (not exhaustive) are:

- Accommodation
- Computing Costs
- Stationery
- Office machinery/Equipment
- Telephone charges
- Print
- Advertising
- T&S
- Committees
- Elected Members' expenses
- The relevant apportionment of Support Service costs

7 Income - include planning fees for applications and deemed applications. (exclude income from property and planning searches)

Appendix Three

Measurement against Performance Markers produced by Heads of Planning High Level Group on Planning Performance

Driving Improved Performance

Performance Marker	Measure	Source/Evidence	PPF
Decision making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types	Evidence of continuous improvement.	Performance has not been as good as last year. The PPF explains the reasons and actions being taken and improvement is expected year. See contextual statement to NHIs and Service Improvements 2013/14 in PPF	NHIs
Project management: offer of processing agreements (or other agreed project plan) made to prospective applicants in advance of all major applications and availability publicised on planning authority website	YES	See Section 2 Paragraph 6 of the PPF	NHIs; Certainty
Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications: - availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications - clear and proportionate requests for supporting information	YES Examples	See Section 2 of PPF	NHIs; Open for Business; Certainty
Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications within 6 months of 'resolving to grant'* * this will require production of supporting guidance, following wider stakeholder input	Reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from same time last year)	It is a service action to consider implementing this in the coming year. See Certainty and Service Improvements in PPF	Certainty; Efficient and Effective Decision-Making
Enforcement charter updated/ re-published	Within 2 years	Enforcement Charter updated less than 6 months ago	NHIs

Continuous improvement: - show progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators - progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report	Progress on all commitments	Performance in terms of NHIs has not been as good as last year. The PPF explains the reasons and actions being taken and improvement is expected year. See contextual statement to NHIs and Service Improvements 2013/14 in PPF	Culture of Continuous Improvement; Service Improvement Plan
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Promoting the Plan-led System

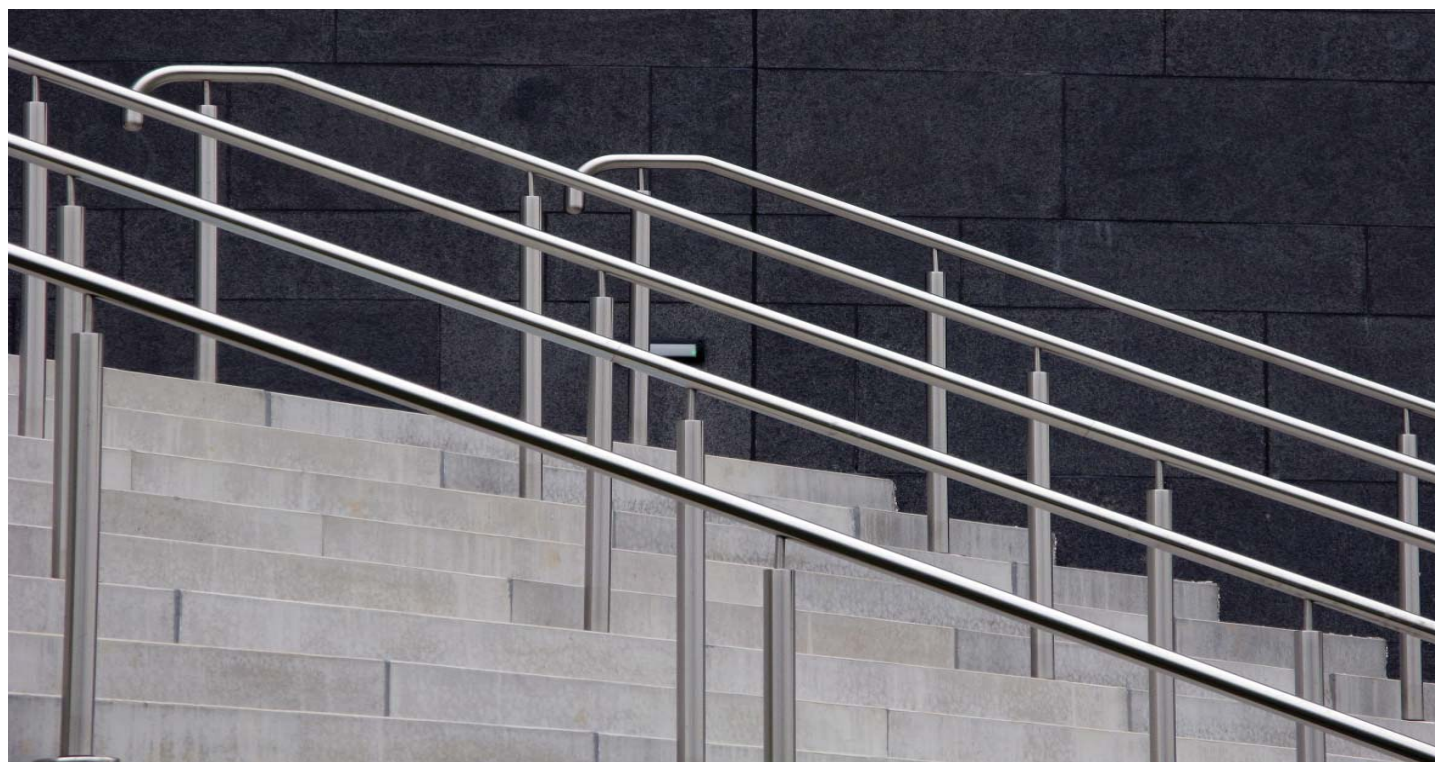
Performance Marker	Measure	Source/Evidence	PPF
LDP (or LP) less than 5 years since adoption	YES	LDP adopted February 2012	NHIs; Certainty; High Quality Development on the Ground
Development plan scheme demonstrates next LDP: - on course for adoption within 5-year cycle - project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale	YES YES	See PPF report High Quality Development on the Ground and Certainty sections	NHIs; Certainty; High Quality Development on the Ground
Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	YES Evidence of activity	See PPF report High Quality Development on the Ground and Certainty sections	Certainty; Efficient and Effective Decision-Making
Cross-sector stakeholders, including industry, agencies and Scottish Government, engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	YES Evidence of activity	See PPF report High Quality Development on the Ground and Certainty sections	Certainty; Efficient and Effective Decision-Making
Production of regular and proportionate policy advice, for example through SPGs, on (i) information required to support applications and (ii) expected developer contributions	YES Evidence of activity	See PPF report High Quality Development on the Ground and Certainty sections	Open for Business; Certainty

Simplifying and Streamlining

Performance Marker	Measure	Source/Evidence
Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (e.g. protocols; joined-up services; single contact; joint pre-application advice)	Examples from the year	Full range of Protocols in place across service boundaries. Restructuring ongoing to integrate transportation, economic and business development and planning service Single point of contact for duration of application Details in PPF Certainty and Effective Management Structures Section
Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Evidence of activity to pass on and adopt good practice	Active participation with Scottish Government in 2 main strands of "Planning Reform: the next Steps" (Aligned Consents, Processing Agreements) Regular Benchmarking meetings between 4 largest Scottish Cities and with Aberdeenshire Council See PPF Open for Business and Effective Management Structures sections

Delivering Development

Performance Marker	Measure	Source/Evidence
Stalled sites/legacy cases: conclusion/withdrawal of planning applications more than one year old	Reducing number of applications more than 1 year old	Priority service action for next year to determine "legacy" applications
Developer contributions: clear and proportionate expectations - set out in development plan and in pre-application discussions	YES Examples	Infrastructure Contributions SG and specialist Planning Obligations Team See PPF



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