

Planning Performance Framework

Annual Report 2012-13

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Planning and Building Standards Service
Kirkbank House, English Street
Dumfries DG1 2HS



1. National Headline Indicators (NHIs)

Key outcomes	2011-2012	2012-2013
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) 	5 years (Local Plans) N	6 years (Local Plans) N
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> effective housing land: years supply effective housing land supply housing approvals effective employment land supply employment land take-up effective commercial floor space supply commercial floor space delivered 	8.5 years 5,043 units 487 units (comple- tions) 70.4 ha 5.6 ha n/a n/a	8.5 years 5,049 units 931 units (approv- als) 303.21 ha 3.32 ha n/a n/a
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 agreement or other project plan percentage planned timescales met Decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> application approval rate delegation rate 	 18.3% 0% n/a 92.6 % 92.1 %	 50.6% 0% n/a 91.6% 92.3%
Decision-making timescales Average number of weeks to decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> major developments local developments (non-householder) householder developments All local developments	 95.1 13.6 7.2 (<2 months) 13.2 (> 2 months) 13.6	 51.3 15.3 7.1 (<2 months) 14.5 (> 2 months) 13.3
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 	8 months 205 / n-a	4 months 153 / 45

Notes to Key Outcomes

Development Planning

We are in the process of replacing the existing Structure and Local Plans with a single Local Development Plan (LDP). Good progress was made with this during the year including publication of the Proposed Local Development Plan in January 2013, which generated 1,141 representations; publication of eleven pieces of draft supplementary guidance and the fourth update of the Development Plan Scheme in October / November 2012. Some slippage has been caused by the extended timescale needed to consider the large volume of representations received to the Proposed Plan which will now be formally considered in September 2013. This is likely to delay adoption of the Plan to summer 2014.

Effective Land Supply

The figures contained in this year's return are based on the Proposed Local Development Plan housing requirements and associated Housing Land Audits and cover the period 1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013. The information provided in last year's return on housing approvals was based on completions. This information gap has been addressed during the year which means this year's return includes housing approvals.

Employment Land

The figures contained in this year's return are based on the effective employment land supply contained in the Proposed Local Development Plan. The figure is substantially higher than last years as it includes approximately 170 hectares of business and industrial land that has been identified adjacent to the A74(M) corridor, a key strategic location. Between the period 1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013 planning permission was granted for employment related developments on 25.09 hectares, 3.32 hectares of this has been developed so far.

Commercial

In Dumfries and Galloway, there are no commercial sites allocated in the existing Local Plans or the Proposed Local Development Plan. However, there are areas identified where mixed use policies apply which would include some commercial development. In the past, some commercial development will have been included as part of the employment land monitoring. To date, we await a final definition of commercial land from HOPS as it is more challenging to define such within rural regions such as Dumfries and Galloway.

Development Management

A more formal method of recording pre-application discussions was introduced along with the provision of online forms for people to download and complete. Although no applications which were the subject of a Processing Agreement were determined within 2012/13, the 1st one was produced and entered into during this period. As further legacy cases are determined, the average determination period for Major has decreased. The Enforcement Charter was reviewed and amended again during the period.

2. Defining and measuring a high-quality planning service

Open for business

During 2012/13, further progress was made in developing a more joined up approach to providing an improved service to customers. Operational links between Building Standards and Development Management were improved with the joint development of Customer Charters and Service Standards. Within the wider Department, a Special Projects Board was established bringing together Planning, Economic Development, Infrastructure, Transport Strategy and Housing on a monthly basis to co ordinate involvement with key projects such as Stranraer Waterfront regeneration and the new Acute Services Hospital in Dumfries. In response to concerns expressed by developers, better co ordination between Planning and the local Roads service has been introduced with a new Roads Development Hub. This includes co-locating a Roads Development co-ordinator alongside Development Management together with improved e-consultation systems. This will become fully operational during 2013/14.

Our overall approval rate for all applications was 91.6%, demonstrating a continued positive attitude to development. The improvement in our turnaround times for planning applications is also a positive signal to investors and developers.

High quality development on the ground

To support and promote high quality development, draft Supplementary Guidance was prepared and published for public consultation in January 2013, including housing development in villages, housing in the countryside, Conservation Areas and a village design statement for Palnackie. It is intended to adopt these once the LDP has been adopted.

The Proposed LDP was also published for consultation in January 2013, containing a new overarching policy **OP2 Design Quality of New Development**, setting out our expectations of new development.

During the year, a number of high quality developments were completed including the full completion of the new Stena ferry terminal at Cairnryan following official opening in November 2011 (a national project identified in NPF2), successful public realm works at Castle Square, Stranraer, Work started on a major regeneration of Dock Park in Dumfries following a successful Heritage Lottery Fund bid. The park is adjacent to the town centre and waterfront, forming an important strategic facility which will ultimately link with the proposed Whitesands Regeneration project. The regeneration of Dumfries Town Centre also received a boost with the opening of Debenhams department store in the High Street. Work started on a major new Business Park at Stapleton Road in Annan, a partnership project supported by the Council with significant investment from Scottish Enterprise.

Certainty

The new LDP and associated Supplementary Guidance will replace the existing Structure and Local Plans once adopted during 2014. This will help provide greater certainty to the development industry who can expect decisions to be taken in line with an up-to-date policy framework.

Our improved turnaround times, delegation rates and the publication of a Customer Charter and Service Standards all help to improve certainty of timescale and outcome. There has been a significant increase in Local Review Body and planning appeal cases, but the rate at which the original decision has been upheld is very high (88% of Local Review Body cases and 80% of appeal decisions) which is a good indicator that the quality of decision-making is currently high. The modernisation of decision-making processes undertaken in the previous year with a single Planning Applications Committee has been a key factor in improving certainty and reducing risk to all parties.

The Council has started to use Processing Agreements which also helps provide certainty. The first one was produced during 2012/13 (although the actual decision fell just outwith this period). The processing agreement was drawn up for the proposed development of a major new acute services hospital for Dumfries and Galloway. This was entered into early on in the pre-application phase. This helped facilitate constructive pre-application engagement of key stakeholders including Transport Scotland, Scottish Water, Scottish Natural Heritage, SWESTRANS and the Roads service. An open and transparent approach to timetabling of key milestones both pre- and post-application enabled all parties to contribute to ensuring that the planning application was determined within 4 months of validation, in line with the Agreement.

A similar proactive approach to pre application engagement also ensured that the major planning application for the Star of Caledonia at Gretna was dealt with inside 4 months helping to provide the project promoters with the certainty needed to take the next steps in seeking to secure a funding package for this important landmark denoting the Scotland/ England border crossing.

Communications, engagement and customer service

A number of service improvements have been introduced over the year including the publication of Customer Charters and Service Standards. Customer feedback continues to be important, and in response to feedback from our local planning agents, we have added Development Management into existing Building Standards local Agents' Forums to provide a single point of engagement locally. We continue to host a major Planning Agents annual forum with input from Scottish Government as well as the Planning Authority, this is well received by our customers.

A new innovation introduced during the year was the introduction of a more systematic approach to pre-application enquiries, which provides a standard level of service and ensures greater consistency of advice. Applicants are required to provide a minimum level of information

to enable a fuller more formal response to be given. This also helps to improve certainty and through early engagement will help to achieve better quality development. The wider use of Processing Agreements will also contribute to this for larger developments.

A detailed Development Management FAQ section was added to the Council's planning webpages and this allows members of the public to obtain a far greater degree of self-service as to whether or not their proposals may require a formal grant of planning permission. This allows the public to obtain basic information at any time of day, providing an enhanced service and also assists in freeing up officer time for dealing with submitted applications.

Engagement and communications were successfully undertaken in connection with our Proposed LDP which was published for consultation in January 2013. A number of drop in sessions were held across the region, and the assistance of Planning Aid Scotland provided capacity building support to our Community Council networks with a series of training workshops delivered at the start of the consultation period. There was a high response level to the consultation, with 1,141 individual representations being received. The latest edition of the Development Plan Scheme was published in October 2012 setting out the updated project plan for the LDP. This was widely distributed and included feedback forms seeking public views on the publication. The majority of responses received thought the document was easy to understand, that the information contained in the document was useful and that the consultation methods suggested in the document would be useful.

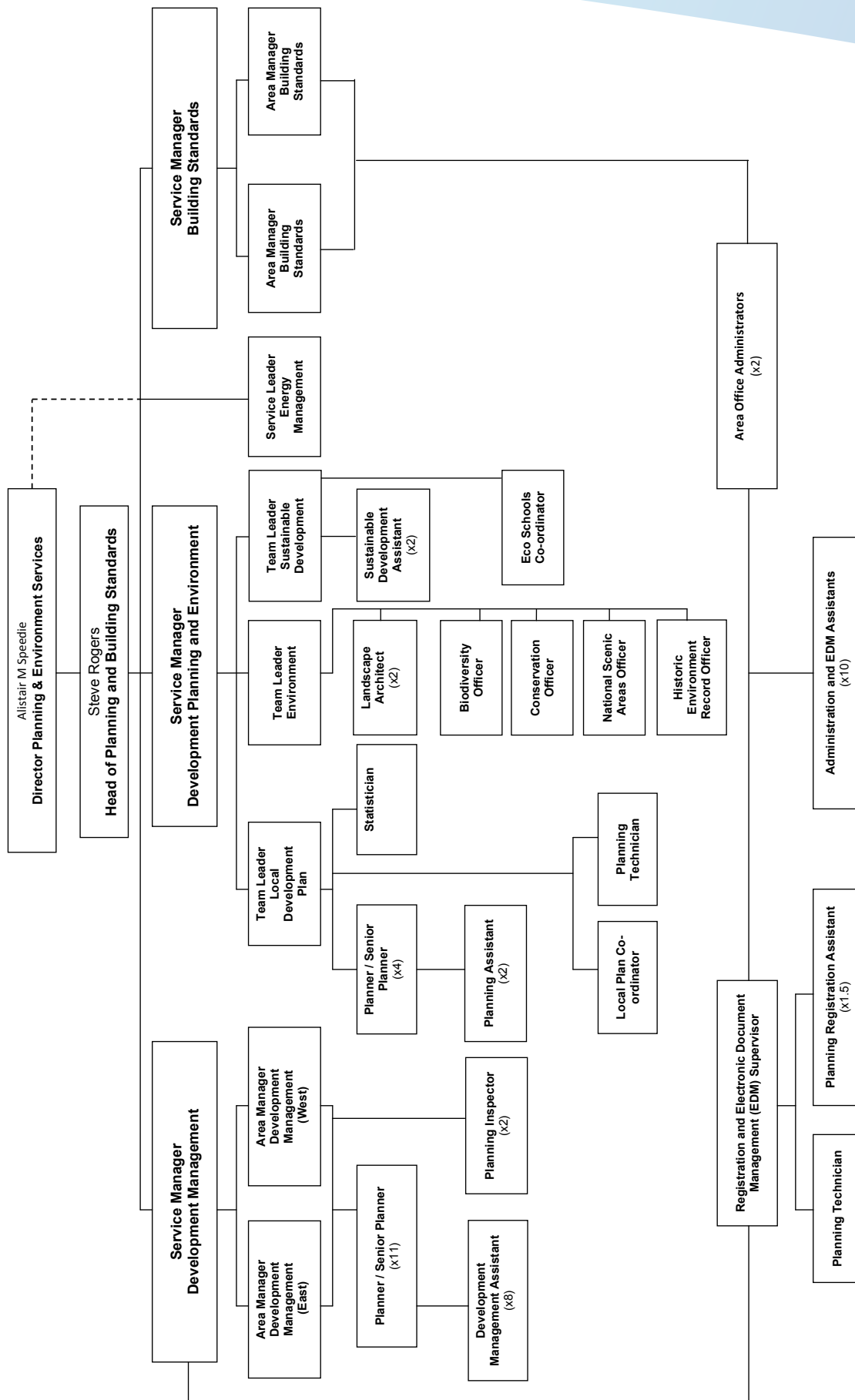
Efficient and effective decision-making

The improvement in average timescales for deciding planning applications, together with the high level of original decisions upheld on appeal / at review, is evidence of efficient and effective decision-making. There is still scope for further improvement, and we will be looking closely at how effective our new management structure has been as part of a comprehensive series of Service Reviews to be undertaken during 2013/14.

Effective management structures

The management structure of the Service as at 31 March 2013 is shown below. Planning and Building Standards forms part of a wider Planning and Environment Services Department. Planning and Building Standards managers meet on a monthly basis. The formal scheme of delegation is kept under review, and within the Service a delegation scheme setting out the key decision-making responsibilities at each staff level is in place. There is a 3 year Business Plan in place, and individual Team Plans are produced in line with this. The Council's priorities include a number of commitments to improve the planning service locally, and these are reflected in the Business Plan. There are also robust arrangements in place for managing Health and Safety through a service level Health and Safety Plan, and a Business Continuity Plan identifies critical activities outlining business recovery plans.

PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS (August 2013)



Financial management and local governance

There are robust financial management processes in place which enable continuous monitoring of expenditure and income through the Council's financial management system, Integra. A key focus continues to be monitoring fee income levels as the region continues to suffer the economic downturn consequences. This has resulted in decreased fee income. With close monitoring of income, adjustments were made to expenditure lines across the wider department to offset the loss of fees, although this will not be sustainable in future years. The budget pressure was recognised corporately with a £400k downwards adjustment to fee income targets for Development Management and Building Standards in 2012/13. More detailed work looking at our actual costs for processing applications will be undertaken in 2013/14.

Culture of continuous improvement

During the year, an initial Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) strategic assessment was undertaken as an initial stage of a more detailed PSIF review to be undertaken next year. This identified some key areas to focus on in the detailed review including areas of customer interaction and understanding where more evidence is needed.

Work started last year in reviewing our Development Management processes was concluded during 2012/13, with an agreed Improvement Action Plan highlighting 17 operational improvements which have now largely been implemented. An annual cycle of customer satisfaction surveys feeding into improvement plans has been established. The network of Agents' forums provides the opportunity for us to feedback to customers in relation to these improvements. Our Business Plan includes customer satisfaction targets.

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3. Supporting evidence

Part 2 of this report was compiled, drawing on evidence from the following sources.

Planning and Environment Services Business Plan 2012-15
Planning and Building Standards Revenue Budget 2012/13
Activity Based Budget Analysis 2012/13
Local Development Plan Proposed Plan
Development Plan Scheme
Development management Service Improvement Action Plan
Planning and Environment Services PSIF Strategic Assessment Findings Nov 2012

4. Service improvements: 2013-14

In the coming year we will:

- implement the 'Roads Development Hub' with colleagues in DG First in order to improve joint working between Development Management and local Roads officers;
- request an external assessment of customer service processes within Development Management by G4S as the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) assessing body in preparation for a full formal CSE submission for accreditation during 2014;
- Undertake a full Service Review of all activities with a view to identifying the potential for further efficiencies and improvements;
- Continue to support culture change internally with improved customer focus, the adoption of proactive approaches and a focus on outcomes as well as timescales;
- Benchmark our activities with our peer group of larger, rural authorities with support from Heads of Planning Scotland and the Improvement Service, focussing on performance, resources and outcomes.

Delivery of our 2011-12 service improvement commitments in 2012-13:

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
<p>Customer Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish a Customer Focus Team to design and deliver customer service improvements including a Customer Charter, customer surveys and undertake Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditation preparatory work. <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Charter and Service Standards prepared and published. • CSE team established for Development Management, with initial gap analysis work undertaken. • Customer feedback was sought as part of the publication of the 4th edition of the Development Plan Scheme in November 2012. Each edition of the DPS includes a response to issues raised by the previous feedback exercise. 	<p>[Yes/No] Yes</p>
<p>Efficiency and Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete and implement our Development Management Service Improvement Plan with a focus on improving our timescales for determining applications. <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the 17 point Improvement Plan has largely been implemented. • The installation of the IDOX 'Enterprise' package was carried out during the year, resulting in enhanced case management and tracking capability. • A number of administrative processes were streamlined as a result, creating time and monetary savings. 	<p>[Yes/No] Yes</p>

<p>Staff Development and Culture Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve project management of major (and significant local) planning applications through the use of processing agreements (Planning Partnership Protocol). <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of a Processing Agreement enabled the Major application for the proposed new hospital to be determined within 4 months. Extensive pre-application engagement enabled the Major planning application for Scotland's largest public artwork installation, the Star of Caledonia at Gretna, to be determined within 4 months. All Major planning applications are now monitored as part of the management teams regular meetings. 	<p>[Yes/No] Yes</p>
<p>High Quality Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> review and improve our communications with customers and the wider public including LDP engagement processes, on line Development Plan, joint local Agents' Forums with Building Standards, e-planning processes and updated Planning pages on the Council web site. <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LDP consultation and engagement plan delivered, with high response levels. Regular meetings of Local Agents' Forums held E-planning uptake has improved during 2012/13 compared with the previous year (28.4 % of applications submitted online compared with 15.4% in 2011/12) Engagement ongoing with regard to the development of Supplementary Guidance relating to open space, working with Greenspace Scotland to develop a more appropriate approach to open space provision for a large rural area. 	<p>[Yes/No] Yes</p>
<p>Data Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve data collection and monitoring to address gaps identified in section 1 National Headline Indicators to inform future Annual Reports <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data gaps in respect of pre-application discussion rates, enforcement cases and housing approvals have been addressed during the year and these figures are now included in this year's statistics. The only unresolved issues relate to the definition of commercial floor space and recording of enforcement breaches. 	<p>[Yes/No] Yes Partial</p>

APPENDIX I

Planning Performance Framework Official Statistics

Decision Making Timescales

Category	Total number of decisions 2012-2013	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2011-2012	2012-2013
Major developments	19	95.1	51.3
Local developments (non-householder)			
• Local: less than 2 months	297 (36.6%)	7.5	7.4
• Local: more than 2 months	515 (63.4%)	22.8	19.8
Householder developments			
• Local: less than 2 months	294 (64.5%)	7.2	7.1
• Local: more than 2 months	162 (35.5%)	13.2	14.5
Housing developments			
• Major	3	64.9	124.7
Local housing developments			
• Local: less than 2 months	80 (27.6%)	7.7	7.6
• Local: more than 2 months	210 (72.4%)	25.9	21.2
Business and industry			
• Major	2	N/A	29.4
Local business and industry			
• Local: less than 2 months	115 (50%)	7.5	7.3
• Local: more than 2 months	114 (50%)	22.2	16.8
EIA developments	7	41.0	43.0
Other consents*	147	13.3	8.1
Planning/legal agreements**	24	* Not available	66.7
Local reviews	6	13.1	16.0

* 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 & relating to agricultural and forestry development and applications for prior approval by Coal Authority or licensed operator under classes 60 & 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			
		2011-2012		2012-2013	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	17	6	100	15	88.2
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	30	7	78	24	80.0

Enforcement activity

	2011-2012	2012-2013
Cases taken up	205	153
Breaches identified	*	*
Cases resolved	**	45
Notices served***	14	19
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

* Not available

** Not provided in 2011/12

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



Context

The improvement in turnaround times for planning applications which was anticipated in last year's report has started to materialise with 12 months of relative stability in terms of the new structure and budgets. We have now been able to focus on operational improvements and the implementation of a number of these during the year has helped to improve average timescales. There continue to be significant pressures which are not fully reflected in the official statistics. This includes screening and scoping requests and other pre-application activity associated with wind energy developments. This was recognised during the year with an additional funding allocation of £60k from Scottish Government to assist Planning Authorities with dealing with these pressures. This has enabled additional case officer capacity to be dedicated to wind energy applications and we are tracking the impact of that over the full 12 month period from January 2013.

There has been some slippage with the LDP timetable. Preparation of the Proposed Plan had already been delayed by the additional round of public consultation carried out in relation to sites and policies as required by Scottish Government following Main Issues Report stage. Work on the Proposed Plan was also disrupted when new guidance on Wind Energy was released by Scottish Government requiring Spatial Frameworks to be incorporated into LDPs rather than contained in Supplementary Guidance. As this is such a key issue locally, a significant amount of work was required to ensure this was fully addressed within the Proposed Plan. The Proposed Plan was endorsed by the Council in November 2012 and consultation carried out January- March 2013. The previous target of having the Plan adopted by the end of 2013 will not now be met but we are working to ensure that the Minister's express wish to see that LDPs stay on track for adoption can be met during 2014



WORKFORCE AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Appendix 2 is an integral part of the Annual Performance Assessment. It is designed to be a snapshot of staffing at 31 March 2013.

As at 31 March 2013

Please note - The figures do not have to be exact - we are looking for a snapshot of each authority

Head of Planning Service (1)	Tier?				Managers (2)		Main Grade Posts		Technician Posts		Office support/Clerical		Totals
	1	2	3	4									
Development Management	3				No. Posts	Vacant	No. Posts	Vacant	No. Posts	Vacant	No. Posts	Vacant	30.25
Development Planning	1.5						6		3				10.5
Enforcement Staff							2						2
*Cross Service/Other Planning	1.5						6						7.5

*Note- does not include staff from other Departments involved in the Planning process.

Staffing profile	Number
Under 30	n/a
30-39	
40-49	
50 and Over	

	No. per year
Committees & site visits (3)	
Full Council committees	1
Planning Committees	12
Strategic Committees	8
Area Committees (where relevant)	N/A
Committee site visits	4
LRB (4)	8
LRB site visits	2

Budgets	Budget	Costs (actual)		Income (7)
		Direct (5)	Indirect (6)	
Planning Service				
Development Management	2 030 850	1 088 538	853 320	1 018 447**
Development Planning	597 790	465 078	137 749	0
Enforcement*	n/a			

*Note: enforcement is part of the Development Management budget and is not recorded separately. The costs above refer only to Planning staff and not staff in other Departments.

** Note: planning application fee income was £960 462

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 were visits 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 planing 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, Adminstration; 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

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

