



DUMFRIES AND
GALLOWAY COUNCIL

Planning Performance Framework



Annual Report

2015 - 16

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Introduction

Welcome to our Planning Performance Framework for 2015/16. This is now the 5th such Annual Report from our Planning Service, setting out our performance during the year. I am pleased to note that it demonstrates further improvements in terms of our services and outcomes, even in challenging economic times.



2015/16 saw us building on the policy framework established during 2014/15, when the first Local Development Plan (LDP) for Dumfries and Galloway Council was adopted. A full suite of statutory and non-statutory Supplementary Guidance has been produced and adopted during 2015/16, providing developers and their agents with a high degree of certainty. These documents strike the correct balance between promoting the creation of a thriving sustainable economy, creating inward investment opportunities and employment in the region whilst protecting the area's natural and built heritage assets, features which make Dumfries and Galloway so special and unique.

The continued improvement in the average timescales for dealing with planning applications is encouraging. Especially noteworthy in the way in which the combination of a restructuring of the Development Management service and the hard work and commitment of staff has resulted in a significant improvement in the turnaround of householder applications. We have gone from being one of the slowest in Scotland in this category to one of the fastest in just 2 years. This demonstrates our proactive open-for-business culture.

The Council's key priority is to grow the local economy and our Planning Service has played an important part in contributing to the delivery of this vision and objective. However, we are committed to working with stakeholders to build on this progress and I look forward to seeing continued service delivery improvements through 2016/17 to help us deliver our goals.

Cllr Colin Smyth

Chairman

Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
Dumfries and Galloway Council

Part 1:

National Headline Indicators (NHIs)

Key Outcomes	2015-2016	2014-2015
Development Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of local/strategic development plan(s) (years and months) at end of reporting period Requirement: less than 5 years Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? (Y/N) Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? (Y-earlier/Y-later/N) Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year? (Y/N) 	18 months (LDP) Yes No Yes	6 months (LDP) Yes No Yes
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established housing land supply 5-year effective housing land supply 5-year housing supply target 5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place) Housing approvals Housing completions over the last 5 years Marketable employment land supply Employment land take-up during reporting year 	9,496 units 3,890 units 2,594 units 7.5 years 397 units 2,189 units April 2010 - March 2015 258.71ha 0.0ha	9,895 units 4,499 units 2,537 units 8.9 years 660 units 2,259 units April 2009 - March 2014 258.71ha 2.0 ha
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 Number of applications subject to other project plans Percentage planned timescales met Decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application approval rate Delegation rate 	56.1% 1 0 100% 94.4% 94.5%	41.1% 1 N/A 100% 96.1% 96.3%

Key Outcomes	2015-2016	2014-2015
Decision-making timescales		
Average number of weeks to decision:		
• Major developments	31.6	26.7
• Local developments (non-householder)	12.8	13.0
• Householder developments	5.8	7.0
Legacy Cases		
• Number cleared during reporting period	20	34
• Number remaining	37	73
Enforcement		
• Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed (months) Requirement: review every 2 years	3 months	17 months
• Number of breaches identified / resolved	173 / 126	196 / 99

1.1 Development Planning

1.1.1 Following the adoption of the Local Development Plan in September 2014, a combination of rounding-off work relating to that Plan and preparation for commencement of LDP2 took place during 2015/16.

1.1.2 A full suite of Supplementary Guidance was prepared and adopted, with there being a total of 37 statutory and 10 non-statutory guidance documents.

1.2 Effective Land Supply

1.2.1 The effective housing land supply figures contained in this year's return are based on the adopted Local Development Plan. The figures in this year's return cover the full reporting period. There continues to be more than adequate housing land supply across all market areas.

1.3 Employment Land

1.3.1 The effective employment land supply figures contained in this year's return are based on the adopted Local Development Plan. The supply figure remains the same as last year. Whilst it will be noted that there was no completion during the reporting period, planning permission was granted for a total of 1.90ha on 3 allocations.

1.4 Development Management

1.4.1 The Development Management service continued with the same 3 hierarchy-based teams which were introduced in 2014/15, namely Major Projects, Local Applications, and Minor Applications and Enforcement. In general, performance continued to improve in terms of average determination timescales, with the Local (non-householder) applications going from 13.0 weeks to 12.8, and Householder applications improving from 7.0 to 5.8 weeks. Major applications determination periods increased to 31.6 weeks on average from 26.7 weeks. Further commentary on these figures is provided under Part 5 - D: Context.

Part 2:

Defining and Measuring a High-Quality Planning Service

2.1 Quality of Outcomes

2.1.1 There has been a focus on improving design quality throughout 2015/16. The adopted Local Development Plan contains a specific overarching policy on design - Policy OP2 : Design Quality of New Developments. A suite of Supplementary Guidance was adopted in 2015/16 with the aim of trying to improve architectural design quality in a sustainable manner across the region in an area that has unique qualities in both its natural landscape and historic buildings. Good design, using local materials, maintains local character and visual identity whilst supporting sustainable economic growth with high environmental quality being an important component in attracting investment into the area. The approach to raising design quality has been to produce three separate Supplementary Guidance documents which work together, namely Design Quality of New Development, Alterations and Extensions to Houses, and the Conversion of Traditional Agricultural Properties.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15342/Supplementary-guidance>

2.1.2 These documents were supported by the creation of the Dumfries and Galloway Council Design Awards Scheme which are being held for the first time in 2016 to raise awareness of design quality and to provide excellent examples in the region.

2.1.3 The Council itself was a recipient of an award in 2015. It gained an Award in the Scottish Government's Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning in the 'Development on the Ground' category for the Lockerbie High Street : Town Centre Regeneration.

The following reason for the Award was given

"The Judges were truly inspired by this story, recognising the project with an Award. They appreciated how this town centre urban realm project demonstrated the impact that a small change - done well - could unlock people's aspirations for their place. The attention to detail to create high quality sculptures, reflective of the local area, together with de-cluttering of the central traffic junction has had transformational change across a rural area. As a result, this modest scheme has turned into a local 'trail blazer' which has not only won 'hearts and minds' but has set the standards for design and community engagement. The result has been increasing interest, and demand, for more civic changes throughout Dumfries and Galloway. This would not have been achieved, however, without the leadership shown by the local authority throughout the project, as well as investing their in-house professional and financial resources into the project, to ensure it was successfully delivered on the ground."

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/11/4983>

2.1.4 One of the more innovative pieces of Supplementary Guidance adopted during 2015/16 was that on Dark Skies friendly lighting. Dumfries and Galloway has a large part of the Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park (one of only a handful of gold tier Dark Sky Parks in the world). Policy ED12 in the LDP is on the Dark Sky Park. The Dark Sky Park Friendly Lighting Supplementary Guidance was produced to support Policy ED12. The guidance was prepared in collaboration with



Forest Enterprise Scotland, and South and East Ayrshire Councils as parts of the Dark Sky Park falls within their remit.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15342/>
Supplementary-guidance

2.1.5 Furthermore, in February 2016, Moffat achieved the status of Dark Sky Town from the International Dark Sky Association. In order for them to qualify for Dark Sky status, an outdoor lighting policy affecting towns and villages needed to be established at the Council area level. The Council adopted Non-Statutory Planning Guidance Lighting Guidance in August 2015 (which covers the whole of Dumfries and Galloway) and during the consultation process, the local community made comment and their comments were included in the final version. Although Moffat had not achieved Dark Sky status when the guidance was adopted, the guidance makes a reference to work that Moffat were doing at the time to receive the award.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15342/>
Supplementary-guidance

2.2 Quality of Service and Engagement

2.2.1 As part of the start of the LDP2 process, a Call for Sites and Comments was held at the end of 2015 / early 2016. This engagement was to allow people to make a comment on the existing plan and make suggestions for the new plan. In addition to notices on the website, the Local Development Plan team use the GovDelivery system for notifying interested parties who have signed up to receive targeted emails. We currently have some 1,300 parties on our mailing list

2.2.2 For pre-application meetings for Major and other significant applications, the Council continues to invite all the key stakeholders to meetings, in order to try to provide a 'one stop shop' service. The Council's developer contributions policy is set out in one of the 3 overarching policies in the Local Development Plan, Policy OP3, and this is supported by Supplementary Guidance. This guidance has reviewed during the reporting period in collaboration with colleagues in Education, in order to ensure appropriate and timely contributions to school provision is made. The revised Supplementary Guidance will be adopted during 2016/17.

2.2.3 Increasingly, one of the most important interfaces of the Planning Service with the public is the Council's website. As set out in more detail in Part 4 below, the planning web pages were completely rewritten for a June 2016 relaunch of the website.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/planning>
<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/ldp>

2.2.4 There are strong links between the Council's Planning Service and Economic Development Service. They fall within the same Directorate and the 2 respective Heads of Service attend the Departmental Management Team (DMT) together. A Strategic Projects Leadership Board (chaired by the Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Committee and including the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services and the Head of Economic Development) operates to ensure that major projects within the region are suitably prioritised and a joined-up approach is taken.

2.2.5 During the reporting period, we published the first Business and Industry Land Audit which will be reviewed, updated and published on an annual basis. This, together with improved information of this type of land on our Geographical Information System, should enable the Council to better respond to inward investment enquiries.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15343/>
Technical-papers-and-land-use-audits

2.2.6 Dumfries and Galloway Council Planning staff attended a number of meetings and workshops with Historic Scotland in the run up to the introduction of Historic Environment Scotland in October 2015 in order to try and ensure the smooth operation of the new system in terms of secondary legislation and procedures.

2.2.7 The annual Agents' Forum meeting was held on 18 February 2016 and this year, a different format was used, to universal approval. After the usual initial presentations to set out achievements and issues over the year, together with information on forthcoming changes, a workshop in 4 separate groups, was held on registration. Registration has long been an issue of concern to both agents and the planning authority and it was considered that an improved understanding of the processes involved by the agents (together with a better

appreciation of some of the concerns from the agents) would result in an improved outcome for all concerned, and most importantly, that of the actual fee paying customer.

2.2.8 In terms of our Development Management customer satisfaction results, our survey rating dropped from 88% to 75% this year. This is probably a reflection of the fact that reduced resources means that we have had to divert our activities away from non-statutory functions which we were once able to provide (e.g. an open door drop-in service for pre-application advice) to focussing on prioritising our core statutory functions, such as the processing of fee-paying applications. However, as set out elsewhere, this refocussing has delivered significantly improved results for the customer in terms of performance. As one of our commitments for 2016/17, we will look again at our pre-application advice to see what scope there is for improving this within a time of significant austerity.

2.3 Governance

2.3.1 The Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers for Planning continues to operate effectively, with 94.5% of decisions being made under delegated powers in 2015/16.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15336/Planning-decisions>

A very similar percentage of applications (94.4%) of applications were approved over the period.

2.3.2 In terms of Committees, there are 12 Planning Applications Committee meetings each year and also 10 scheduled Local Review Body meetings. All Development Planning matters are reported to the Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Committee, which meets every 2 months. Key Local Development Plan decisions are made by the Full Council, which meets every 3 months.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15143/Committee-meetings>

2.3.3 The revised Development Management structure which was introduced in 2014/15 remained mostly unaltered during 2015/16 and has continued to allow the Council to provide the appropriate and proportionate level of skill and

expertise for each respective applications i.e. the Major Projects team included more experienced planners with specialist knowledge.

2.3.4 A project management approach is undertaken for Major applications, best exemplified where a processing agreement is used. However, despite our active promotion of the benefits to both parties in entering into Processing Agreements, many developers (particularly those in the wind energy industry) remain unwilling to enter into such agreements.

2.3.5 20 legacy cases were determined during 2015/16 (with a number of others either withdrawn by the applicant or simply removed from the back office system due to their extreme age - so-called 'zombie applications'). There remained 37 active cases of more than a year old as of 31 March 2016. This is a significant improvement on the 73 outstanding legacy cases last year, as a result of proactive case management.

2.3.6 A Project Board for Local Development Plan 2 was established, in line with one of our commitments last year and this has helped provide scrutiny from outwith the Planning Service and ensure that the programme is on target.

2.3.7 The Dumfries and Galloway Council Planning Service continues to face significant budget pressures due to both wider Council funding efficiencies and continuing low levels of planning fee income, which has never returned to pre-2008 levels. Stringent budget monitoring processes have been put in place to monitor and report on budget pressures on a monthly basis.

2.3.8 Budget and efficiency measures are considered at management team meetings of all levels and reports are made regularly to the Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Committee.



2.4 Culture of Continuous Improvement

2.4.1 Improvements in Development Management performance are set out in more detail in Part 5 - D : Context below but the notable improvement in the average Householder application determination time is particular worthy of note.

2.4.2 We have continued to see an increase in the use of ePlanning for submissions. In 2014/15, 37.1%, of applications were submitted online. During 2015/16, this figure rose to 58.8%, a 37% increase over 1 year. It is anticipated that the eBuilding Standards project will result in a further increase once it is launched in August 2016.

2.4.3 The Development Planning team undertook monitoring of identified sites in the Local Development Plan. For the first time, landowners of allocated sites being contacted directly to establish just how effective their sites were (e.g. was the site being actively marketed and promoted for development?). This was with a view to removing any demonstrably ineffective sites from potential allocation in LDP2.

2.4.4 The decision was made during 2015/16 to move from our current back office system, Acolaid, to Uniform, the product used by the vast majority of Scottish planning authorities. We also took the decision to move to a hosted service i.e. to stop using servers maintained by the Council's Business and Technology Solutions department and to go directly to IDOX's data centre at Milton Keynes. Whilst only one other Scottish planning authority has adopted this option to date (the Highland Council), there were a number of operational benefits in going down this route, especially when all 4 elements of Planning and Regulatory Services (Planning, Building Standards, Environmental Health and Trading Standards) would be sharing the same system. It was recognised that with a definite 'go live' date of 24 August 2016 for eBuilding Standards, it will be challenging to ensure that the setting up and data transfer will be complete on time (especially given that much of the preparatory work will be carried out by Planning staff in addition to their normal roles) but this is one of our commitments for 2016/17.

Case Study 1

Dark Skies Friendly Lighting Advice

Dumfries and Galloway has a large part of the Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park (one of only a handful of gold tier Dark Sky Parks in the world) and Moffat (the first Dark Sky Community in Europe) in its region.

The Dark Sky Park Friendly Lighting Supplementary Guidance has been produced to support the Dark Sky Park Policy (ED12) in the Local Development Plan. The guidance was prepared in collaboration with Forest Enterprise Scotland, and South and East Ayrshire Councils as parts of the Dark Sky Park falls within their remit.

Planning guidance which provides advice on good lighting practice for the rest of the region has also been adopted as planning guidance to the Plan. This piece of guidance complements the supplementary guidance referred to above.





Before and after



2.4.5 The Council continues to operate a practice of requiring all staff to have an annual Professional Development Review (PDR). This formalised process allows staff development needs to be identified and for useful 2 way feedback to be facilitated and recorded. 100% of Development Management and Development Planning staff completed PDRs during 2015/16.

2.4.6 Team meetings are used as a method of ensuring that all staff are aware of relevant changes both at a national and local level. Each of the managers holds regular meetings with their Team. There is a cascade process of information from the Corporate Management Team to the Departmental Management Team, the Service Management Team and the Planning Management Team meetings. These meetings are however a 2 way process, where staff are encouraged to provide feedback. In addition to these team meetings, a staff development day for all Planning staff was held in December 2015. 1-2-1 meetings are also held.

2.4.7 Benchmarking has been used as a method of sharing best practice between authorities and among staff. Meetings with Scottish Borders Council on wind energy matters of joint interest are regularly attended. The Service Manager Planning attended all the Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) Development Management Sub-Committee meetings during 2015/16 and is also a Vice-Chair of HoPS Energy and Resources Sub-Committee. During 2015/15, the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services became the Chair of HoPS and attended the High Level Group meetings with the Cabinet Minister.

Part 3: Supporting Evidence

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

- Dumfries and Galloway Council Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Committee Reports and Minutes
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Full Council Reports and Minutes
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Planning Performance Framework 2014/15
- Planning and Environment Services Business Plan 2012-15 (Refreshed 2014)
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Development Management Customer Charter 2014
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Service Customer Guidance Note 2016
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Planning Enforcement Charter (Revised December 2015)
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Local Development Plan Project Board Minutes
- Planning Services Structure Charts
- Dumfries and Galloway Council website
- Reports from IDOX Acolaid (Development Management back-office system)
- Reports from Scottish Government ePlanning portal
- Heads of Planning Scotland Meeting Minutes
- Scottish Government ECDU Meeting Minutes
- Scottish Government Planning website
- SOCITM website review

[NB - Wherever possible, weblinks have been included within Part 2 above, in order to give direct online access to the relevant evidence and thus avoiding unnecessarily duplication in the PPF. Case studies of key elements have been also provided within the PPF.]

Case Study 2

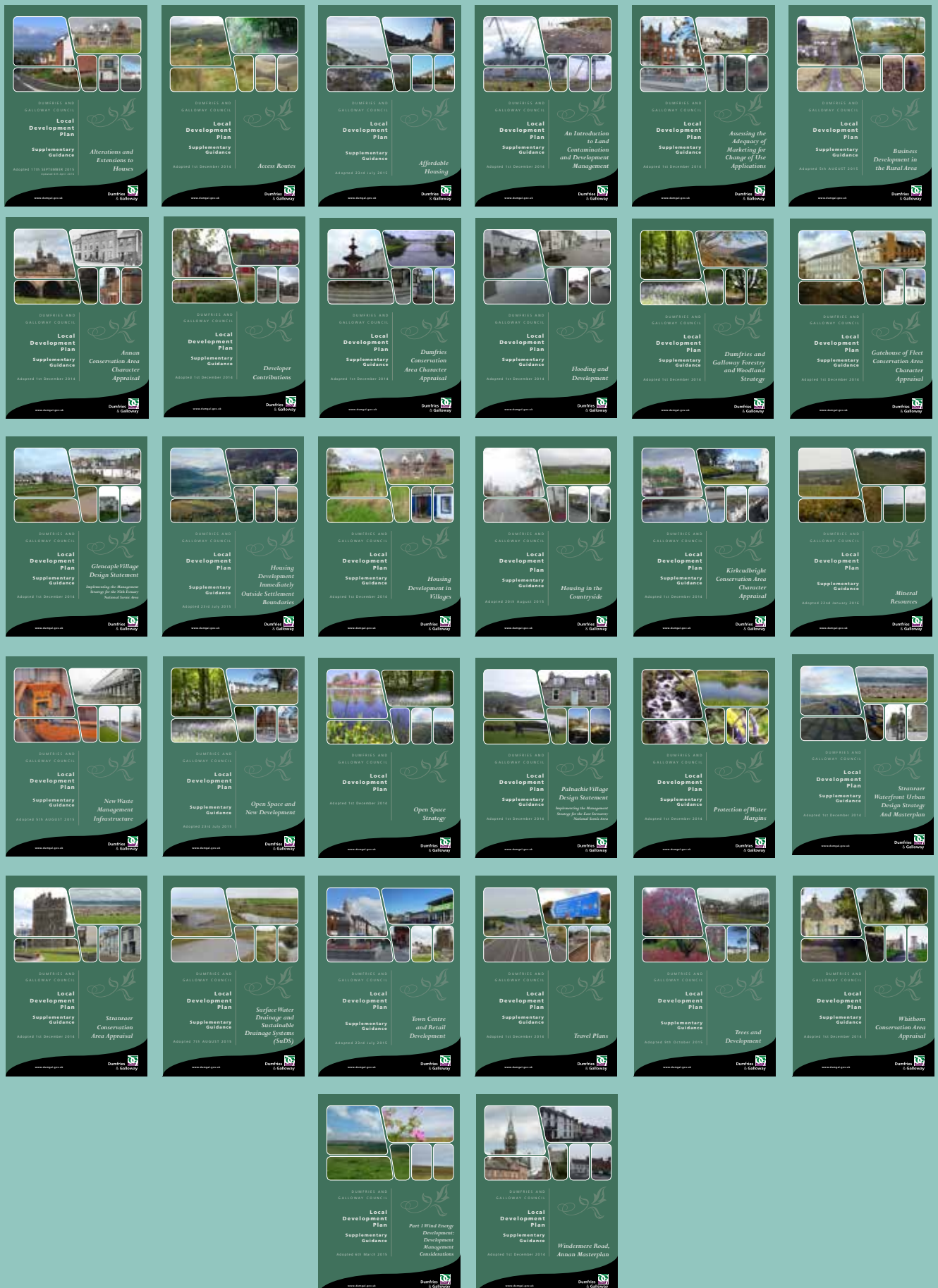
Raising Design Standards Across the Region

A suite of guidance was produced to support the Local Development Plan to improve architectural design quality in a sustainable manner across the region in an area that has unique qualities in both its natural landscape and historic buildings. Good design, using local materials, maintains local character and visual identity whilst supporting sustainable economic growth with high environmental quality being an important component in attracting investment into the area. The approach to raising design quality has been to produce three separate supplementary guidance documents that work together, namely Design Quality of New Development, Alterations and Extensions to Houses, and the Conversion of Traditional Agricultural Properties. These

documents are supported by the creation of Design Awards which are being held for the first time in 2016 to raise awareness of design quality and to provide excellent examples in the region.



Supplementary Guidance



Part 4:

Service Improvements 2016-17

In the coming year, we will:

- Commit the time and resources to introducing a new back-office computer system, moving from Acolaid to the Uniform system across the entire of Planning and Regulatory Services, allowing integration of property data with other services such as Building Standards, Environmental Health and Trading Standards
- Restructure the management of Planning and Building Standards under a single Service Manager, allowing for closer working between the services
- Hold our inaugural Dumfries and Galloway Design Awards
- Pursue closer engagement with the Community Planning team to ensure that the objectives of the Community Plan and the Local Development Plan are better aligned and positioned to deliver beneficial outcomes
- Produce customer guidance / advice notes for small to medium sized business proposals and also for self-build and small scale housing proposals
- Review our pre-application advice forms and processes
- Establish cross-service working on SUDS with a view to getting Council-wide agreement on standards, implementation and adoption
- Set up a working group with roads colleagues to explore better aligning planning permission and Roads Construction Consent processes and outcomes, in line with the recent letter from the Chief Planner.

Case Study 3




Householder Application Performance Improvement




A project was set up to improve performance, efficiency and consistency of planning application decision-making in general, but for householder applications in particular, through a restructuring the Development Management Service within Dumfries and Galloway Council. This was the result of a combination of a comprehensive Service Review and a move to agile working. Although the initial driver for the Service Review was the need to make efficiency savings, the result of moving from an area-based structure to a hierarchy-based approach has resulted in a leaner structure which has delivered significantly improved performance and outcomes. This has seen the Council going from being the 2nd slowest planning authority

in Scotland in terms of householder decision-making in 2011/12 and 2012/13 to the 3rd fastest in 2015/16.



Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2015-16:

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
<p>Commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress Local Development Plan 2 to pre-MIR stage and establish a project board <p>Evidence</p> <p>[Evidence - Minutes / Council website]</p> <p>In terms of preparation work for LDP2, a project board of senior managers was established to oversee the programme of work and ensure that the timetable for LDP2 was on track. Work with colleagues in Strategic Housing was undertaken in respect of the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment and the HNDA was submitted to the Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA) just after the end of the reporting period. A Call for Sites was undertaken at the end of 2015 / early 2016. Arrangements were also made for a series of 5 Member seminars to take place during 2016. The 7th Edition of the Development Plan Scheme was published in November 2015 and is on track for the Main Issues Report / Draft Plan to go to Full Council before the end of 2016.</p> <p>http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/ldp</p>	
<p>Commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the exception of Conservation Area Appraisals, complete the suite of statutory and non-statutory Supplementary Guidance <p>Evidence</p> <p>[Evidence - documents / Council website]</p> <p>Through the year, a steady stream of statutory and non-statutory Supplementary Guidance has been produced, been consulted upon, agreed by Committee and the Scottish Government (where statutory) and adopted. The adopted total stands at 37 statutory and 10 non-statutory Supplementary Guidance documents.</p> <p>http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15342/Supplementary-guidance</p>	
<p>Commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the closer integration of Development Management and Development Planning and Environment teams <p>Evidence</p> <p>[Evidence - Meeting agendas and minutes]</p> <p>Following the retirement of the former Service Manager Development Planning and Environment at the end of 2014, the Planning Service has operated under as single Service Manager Planning, responsible for Development Management, Development Planning and related specialists formerly within the Environment team. Far greater integration between the different aspect of planning than ever before has occurred over the last year. During the year, monthly management team meetings have been held with all the Team Leaders / Managers across the service in attendance. Similarly, the Service Manager Planning has attended the Development Planning team meetings. The first ever joint Staff Development Day for all staff within the Planning Service was held on 3 December 2015. As part of the Local Development Plan policy monitoring exercise, all Development Management staff were involved in workshops, to provide feedback regarding the effectiveness (or otherwise) of the policies and Supplementary Guidance since adoption in September 2014.</p>	

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
<p>Commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare for and use the creation of the new Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Department on 1 April 2016 (which will result in Planning and Roads staff coming together under the same Director) as an opportunity to further establish collaborative working relationships <p>Evidence</p> <p>[Evidence - emails / Planning Applications Committee minutes]</p> <p>The creation of the Team Leader Roads Planning within the Council's DG First department allowed for a single point of contact between planning and road officers and provides greater consistency of advice from the 4 area roads offices, as these comments are filtered through the postholder. The Team Leader Roads Planning also attends Planning Applications Committee meetings whenever applications with significant road safety issues are considered and he also attends Committee site visits to provide advice. Pre-application advice is also sought via the Team Leader Roads Planning.</p> <p>As of 1 April 2016, the Council's Planning and Environment Services and most functions of the DG First department were merged under the same Director. An area for further future closer collaboration will be in respect of better aligning planning permission and Roads Construction Consent processes and outcomes, in line with the recent letter from the Chief Planner.</p>	
<p>Commitment</p> <p>Review and update as necessary all the Customer Charters</p> <p>Evidence</p> <p>[Evidence - documents / website]</p> <p>Both the Development Management Customer Guidance Note and the Council's Planning Enforcement Charter were reviewed and revised during 2015/16. The revised versions are available on the Council's website.</p> <p>http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15340/Service-standards</p>	
<p>Commitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In collaboration with the Council's Web Team, review and revise the content of the Council planning web pages, in preparation for 'channel shift' and the creation of a new updated website <p>Evidence</p> <p>[Evidence - SOCITM review / website]</p> <p>All of the planning pages on the Council website were rewritten over 2015/16. In collaboration with the Web Team, the wording was simplified, made much shorter and was written in Plain English. It proved quite a challenge to achieve these aims but still provide a comprehensive and accurate resource (and importantly not to provide any unintentional misleading information by over-simplifying what can be a complicated and bureaucratic process). However, after various drafts and the use of links for more detailed information internally and also to external websites, the end result is considered to meet these objectives.</p> <p><i>[NB - The new website was launched in early June 2016.]</i></p> <p>http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/planning</p> <p>http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/ldp</p> <p>Even before the launch of the new website, SOCITM (Society of IT Managers) undertook a review of the planning pages with the task this year being seeing how easy it is to object to a planning application via our website. The Council scored 3 stars out of 4 (average Scottish score 1.9) with the only weak aspect being the result of usability issues with third party public access software, something which we are unable to control ourselves.</p>	

Committed improvements and actions

Complete?

Commitment

- Explore the possibility of establishing a Design Awards Scheme within Dumfries and Galloway

Evidence

[Evidence - Design Award Application Form]

The potential of establishing a Dumfries and Galloway Council Design Awards Scheme was explored and indeed, a Scheme was created. It was launched in March 2016 and was open for entries from 14 March 2016. There were 3 categories for submissions:- New build residential; New build non-residential; and Works to existing buildings. A judging panel of 3 external judges was set up and they are due to visit shortlisted sites at the end of June 2016, with an award ceremony in early July. The results will be reported in next year's PPF.

Yes

Commitment

- Proactively promote the use of Processing Agreements by establishing them as a normal requirement for all Major applications (with an active opt-out being required)

Evidence

[Evidence - Pre-app form on website]

Our pre-application form, which is available on our website

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15327/Planning-advice-and-enquiries>

makes it clear that "Dumfries and Galloway Council will promote a partnership protocol, or project plan, for all Major developments." Officers from the Major Project team always encourage and promote the benefits of entering into a Processing Agreement during pre-application meetings and request that applicants do so. To this extent, the commitment has been met.

However, planning authorities cannot force applicants to enter into such agreements and so, to a large extent, the actual take-up of Processing Agreements remains outwith our control. Wind farm developers in particular appear to be reluctant to enter into Processing Agreements. The reasons for this are unclear but a perceived loss of early deemed refusal rights / loss of their place in the queue for a grid connection appear to be commonly given reasons. Given that wind farms make up the majority of our Major applications, this helps explain why only 1 application with a Processing Agreement was determined in 2015/16.

Partial



Part 5: Official Statistics

A: Decision-making timescales (based on 'all applications' timescales)

Category	Total number of decisions 2015-2016	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2015-2016	2014-2015
Major developments	7	31.6	26.7
Local developments (non-householder)\			
• Local: less than 2 months	293 (46.1%)	6.6	6.7
• Local: more than 2 months	343 (53.9%)	18.1	18.1
Householder developments			
• Local: less than 2 months	450 (94.9%)	5.4	6.2
• Local: more than 2 months	24 (5.1%)	13.1	12.8
Housing developments			
• Major	0	-	-
Local housing developments			
• Local: less than 2 months	66 (7.1%)	7.1	7.0
• Local: more than 2 months	152 (20.5%)	20.5	20.1
Business and industry			
• Major			-
Local business and industry			
• Local: less than 2 months	15 (44.1%)	6.8	7.2
• Local: more than 2 months	19 (19.7%)	19.7	18.5
EIA developments	1	85.0	46.0
Other consents*	188	9.9	12.8
Planning/legal agreements**			
• Major: average time	1	84.1	48.1
• Local: average time	20	50.7	57.5
Local reviews	10	17.0	14.3

* 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 7 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

B: Decision-Making: Local Reviews and Appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2015-2016		2014-2015	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	10	8	80.0%	10	83.3
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	9	5	55.6%	14	60.9

C: Enforcement Activity

	2015-2016	2014-2015
Cases taken up	173	196
Breaches identified	*	*
Cases resolved	126	99
Notices served***	8	5
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

* Not available

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

D: Context

1. In terms of Development Management, in general, performance continued to improve in terms of average determination timescales, with the Local (non-householder) applications going from 13.0 weeks to 12.8, and most notably, with Householder applications improving from 7.0 to 5.8 weeks. Given that our average determination period for this category in 2013/14 was 9.9 weeks, this marked a significant improvement in performance (41% in just 2 years) during a time of reducing resources.

2. The only category where improvement was not forthcoming in 2015/16 was that of Major applications, which increased to 31.6 weeks on average from 26.7 weeks. However, 3 factors need to be taken into consideration. Firstly, the 2013/14 figure was 60.9 weeks so the 2015/16 outcome still represents a significant improvement in comparison to 2 years previous. Secondly, only 7 Major applications were determined during 2015/16 (accounting for only 0.63% of all applications) and 1 legacy case skewed the results. Without that 1 case, the average determination period was 22.8 weeks. Finally, the number of Senior Planners in the Major Projects team reduced

from 3 to 2 as one officer retired at the end of March 2015 and he was not replaced, due to efficiency savings. Accordingly, the capacity of the team was reduced by a during the recording period.

3. Where a legal agreement is required, it has been our standard practice for several years now for us to recommend to the Planning Applications Committee that approval is "subject to the successful completion of the appropriate legal agreements within 6 months of the date of the decision or any extended timescale as agreed by the appointed officer". This ensures that legal agreements are concluded promptly (applications can be refused under delegated powers where this is not the case) but allows flexibility where conclusion is still going to be achieved within a reasonable timescale. Examples can be found in the Minutes of the Planning Applications Committee on the webpage below (e.g. Item 4 on the 28 October 2015 meeting):-

<http://egenda.dumgal.gov.uk/aksdumgal/users/public/admin/kab71.pl?cmte=PLN>

4. Appeals and Local Review Body - There was a drop in both the number of Local Review Body and DPEA appeal decisions compared to the previous year. There were 10 Local Review Body decisions in 2015/16 (2 fewer than the previous year) and 80% of the original decisions were upheld. 9 appeals were determined by the Scottish Ministers within the period (23 in 2014/15). It is noted that of the 4 planning application appeals which were allowed, 3 (75%) were the result of Planning Applications Committee decisions made contrary to officer recommendation.

5. Consultations received by ourselves regarding applications made to the Scottish Government under Section 36 and 37 under the Electricity Act 1989 are not captured in the PPF statistics but have a very significant impact on Dumfries and Galloway Council. These type of consultations require a considerable amount of time and resources to be dedicated to them, especially where the Council decides to object, as this automatically generates a Public Local Inquiry. 6 S36 and 1 S37 consultations were determined during this period, each one requiring the production of a lengthy Committee report. The volume of EIA screening requests (35) and scoping requests (7) also has an impact on workload.

6. Another proposal which involved a lot of officer and Member time was an early consultation on a proposed upgrade of the existing electricity powerline from Auchencrosh in South Ayrshire to Harker in Cumbria, right across Dumfries and Galloway, by Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN), which resulted in considerable public concern being expressed. This particular 'strategic reinforcement' project ultimately did not result in the submission of an application to the Scottish Ministers, due to the National Grid considering that 'other reinforcement options were found to be more economic in reducing constraints'.

7. 173 Enforcement cases were taken up during 2015/16 and 126 breaches were resolved. There was a notable reduction in the number of High Hedge applications, with only 1 application submitted within 2015/16 and none actually determined. When a 0.5FTE Planning Inspector resigned during the period, it was decided that instead of re-advertising this post as a vacancy, additional hours were offered to 2 part-time Development Management Assistants to allow better monitoring of conditions.



Part 6:

Workforce and Financial Information

The information requested in this section is an integral part of providing the context for the information in parts 1-5. Staffing information

should be a snapshot of the position on 31 March. Financial information should relate to the full financial year.

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Head of Planning Service			•	

Note: Tier 1= Chief Executive, Tier 2= Directors, Tier 3= Heads of Service, Tier 4= Managers

		DM	DP	Enforcement	Other
Managers	No. Posts	3	1	See DM	1 Service Manager Planning
	Vacant	0	0	0	0
Main grade posts	No. Posts	8 (7.5 FTE)	8 (7.2 FTE)	0	4 (3.7 FTE)
	Vacant	0	0	0	0
Technician	No. Posts	7 (5.9 FTE)	2 (1.8FTE)	2	0
	Vacant	0	0	0	0
Office Support/Clerical	No. Posts	Clerical / administrative* 4.9 FTE Registration Team 2.9 FTE	0	0	0
	Vacant	0	0	0	0
Total		24.2	10(FTE)	2(FTE)	4.7(FTE)

Note: Managers are those staff responsible for the operational management of a team/division. They are not necessarily line managers.

* Pro-rata figure as Administrative staff are shared with Building Standards

Committee and Site Visits*	Number per year
Full Council meetings	0 (for planning applications)
Planning committees	12
Area committees (where relevant)	N/A
Committee site visits	6
LRB**	7
LRB site visits	0

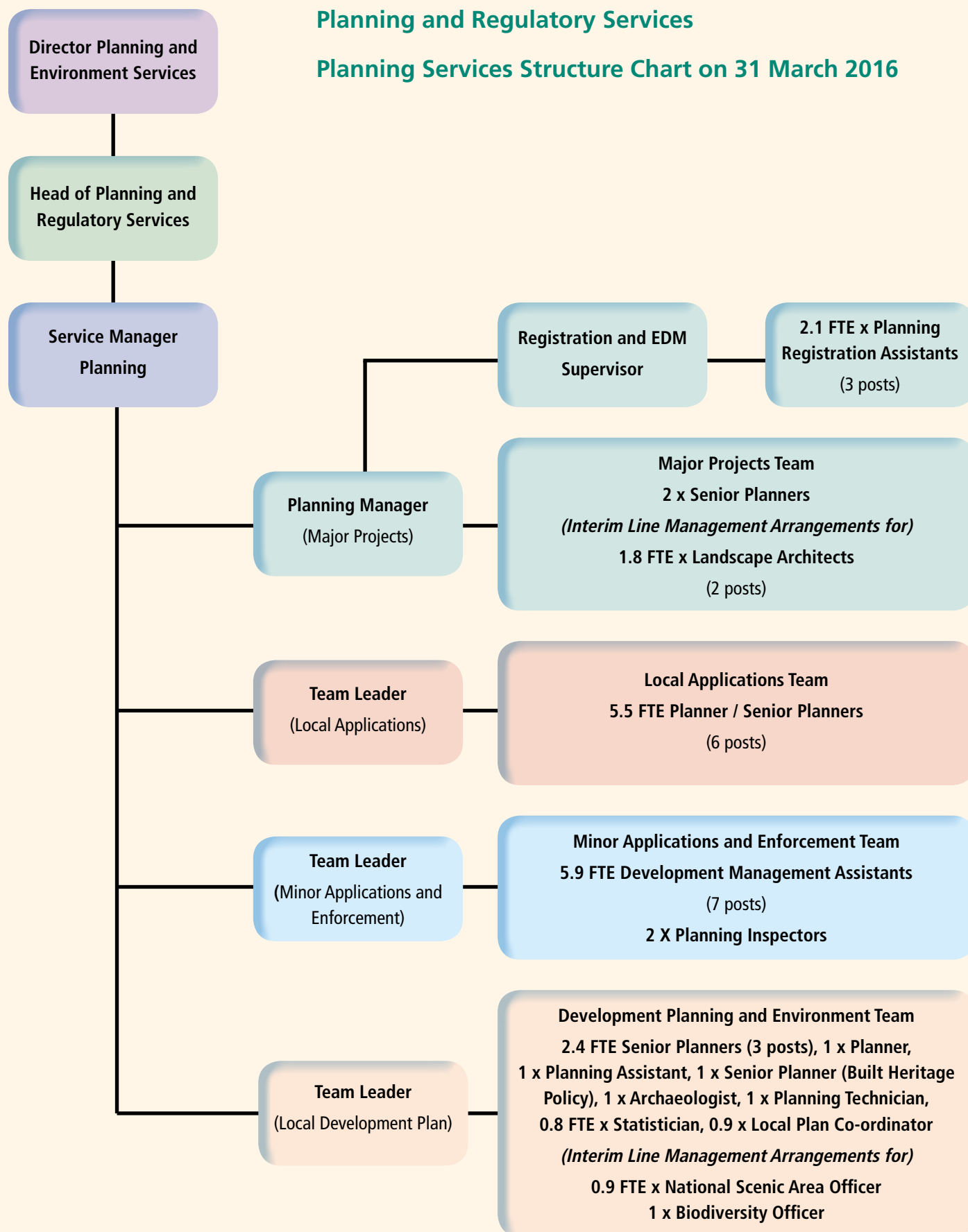
Notes:

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

** This relates to the number of meetings of the LRB. The number of applications going to LRB are reported elsewhere.

Planning and Regulatory Services

Planning Services Structure Chart on 31 March 2016



	Total Budget	Costs		Income***
		Direct*	Indirect**	
Development management	£184,332	£1,324,396	£130,987	£1,271,051
Development planning	£586,415	£553,960	£32,455	£0
Enforcement	N/A			
Other	N/A			
Total	£770,747	£1,878,356	£163,442	£1,271,051

Notes:

- * Direct staff costs covers gross pay (including overtime, national insurance and superannuation contribution). The appropriate proportion of the direct cost of any staff member within the planning authority spending 30% of 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 spending less than 30% of their time on planning.
- ** Indirect costs include all other costs attributable to the planning service. Examples (not exhaustive) include accommodation, IT, stationery, office equipment, telephone charges, printing, advertising, travel and subsistence, apportionment of support service costs.
- *** Include fees from planning applications and deemed applications, and recharges for advertising costs etc. Exclude income from property and planning searches.



Performance Markers

Driving Improved Performance

Performance Marker	Measure	Source/ Evidence	Policy Support	PPF
1. Decision making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types	Evidence of continuous improvement.	Statistics and National Headline Indicators	Official Statistics and PPF reports	NHIs; Part 5 : Official Statistics; Paras 1.4.1, 2.4.1 D: Context 1 - 7
2. 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	Y/N	PA to provide	Modernising the Planning System (Audit Scotland); SG website / template	NHIs; Quality of Service and Engagement; Paras 2.3.4, 2.3.5 Committed Improvements and Actions 2015/16
3. Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications clear and proportionate requests for supporting information 	Y/N Examples	PA to provide	White Paper; Delivering Planning Reform; Planning Reform Next Steps	NHIs Quality of Service and Engagement Paras 2.2.2, 2.2.8
4. 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)	PA to provide	Official statistics; PPF reports; evidence of delays to major developments	Quality of Service and Engagement; Governance D: Context 3
5. Enforcement charter updated / re-published	Within 2 years	PPF report	Planning Act (s158A)	NHIs; Committed Improvements and Actions 2015/16 - Evidence
6. Continuous improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	PPF report	Delivering Planning Reform; PPF Report	NHIs; Culture of Continuous Improvement; Service Improvement Plan; D: Context 1 and 2

Promoting the Plan-Led System

Performance Marker	Measure	Source/ Evidence	Policy Support	PPF
7. LDP (or LP) less than 5 years since adoption	Y/N	PPF report	Planning Act (s16); Scottish Planning Policy	NHIs; Quality of Outcomes; Quality of Service and Engagement; Para 1.1.1
8. Development plan scheme demonstrates next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on course for adoption within 5-year cycle project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale 	Y/N Y/N	PPF report	Planning Act (s16); Scottish Planning Policy	NHIs; Quality of Outcomes; Quality of Service and Engagement; Committed Improvements and Actions 2015/16; Paras 2.2.1, 2.3.6
9. Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	Evidence of activity	PA to provide		Quality of Service and Engagement; Governance; Committed Improvements and Actions 2015/16 - Evidence
10. Cross-sector stakeholders, including industry, agencies and Scottish Government, engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	Evidence of activity	PA to provide		Quality of Service and Engagement; Governance; Committed Improvements and Actions 2015/16 - Evidence
11. Production of regular and proportionate policy advice, for example through supplementary guidance, on information required to support applications	Evidence of activity	PA to provide		Quality of Service and Engagement; Paras 1.1.2, 2.1.4, 2.1.5, 2.2.2

Simplifying and Streamlining

Performance Marker	Measure	Source/ Evidence	Policy Support	PPF
12. 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	PA to provide		Quality of Service and Engagement; Governance; Paras 2.1.3, 2.2.2, 2.2.4, 2.2.5, 2.4.6
13. Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Evidence of activity to pass on and adopt good practice	PPF report	Delivering Planning Reform; Planning Reform Next Steps	Culture of Continuous Improvement; Paras 2.1.4, 2.2.6, 2.4.7

Delivering Development

Performance Marker	Measure	Source/ Evidence	Policy Support	PPF
14. Stalled sites/legacy cases: conclusion/withdrawal of planning applications more than one year old	Reducing number of applications more than one year old (from same time last year)	Statistics from SG Analytical Services		Governance; Para 2.3.5
15. Developer contributions: clear and proportionate expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan,) and in pre-application discussions 	Y/N Examples	LDP PA to provide		Quality of Service and Engagement; Para 2.2.2



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