



Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

# Planning Performance Framework

## ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017







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## Outer Hebrides Planning Context

This is the sixth Planning Performance Framework Report prepared by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar for its Planning Service and covers the reporting period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. The framework highlights activities and achievements, focusing on the work being undertaken to improve the quality and design of development being built, how we are helping to protect and enhance the special heritage and environmental assets of the Islands, and it demonstrates how Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is contributing to sustainable economic growth and meeting the Scottish Government's wider targets and objectives for planning and the environment. The framework also sets out a clear strategy for continuous improvement within the Service.

Delivering development in the Islands is distinct from that in other areas. The type and extent of constraints are different: aspects such as increased costs and difficulties for infrastructure and materials delivery require a distinct approach, with a flexible locally responsive policy framework. Equally the context of development is different: the local economy does not operate like a conventional private sector market, with the leverage of Plan allocations and competing land uses not applying. In the Outer Hebrides the largest element of development, housing, is not delivered by speculative volume house builders, but by a single RSL and largely by individual householders. From a planning perspective, the high incidence of individual self builds, are often project managed by individual clients themselves without professional agent input, which can result in the need for extensive pre-app discussion with planning officers.

### Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – Outer Hebrides Planning Context

- **Approved 99.2%** of all planning applications in 2016/17;
- Decision time for local development has **improved** from **8.9 weeks** in 2015/16 to **7.6 weeks** in 2016/17;
- **On track** to deliver a **new Local Development Plan in 2017**;
- Office of National Statistics **wellbeing survey** finds that the Outer Hebrides is the **happiest place** in the UK;
- Outer Hebrides **placed 3<sup>rd</sup>** in **Bank of Scotland Children's Quality of Life Survey**;
- **Isle of Harris Distillery** wins the **Chairman's Award** in the **Scottish Civic Trust My Place Awards 2017**;
- **Lews Castle** project **finalist** in **Great British Buildings: Restoration of the Year** competition.



# The Outer Hebrides



### 1. Quality of Outcomes

#### High Quality Development on the Ground

In 2012 the Comhairle adopted its first Local Development Plan incorporating a Development Strategy to direct development to the right places. Over the course of the 2016/17 year the Development Plan Team has worked with communities, stakeholders and elected members to formulate a [new Plan](#) that places Design and Placemaking at the heart of development, by encouraging developers to make considered decisions about siting and design. Incrementally, by negotiating details on each planning application, Development Management officers are consistently raising the quality standard on design. The Comhairle recognises that good design can integrate with, and enhance the natural and built environment and continues to keep Design high on the planning Agenda by:



- holding biennial [Design Awards](#) to celebrate the most exceptional developments completed within the last two years. The Outer Hebrides Design Awards are part of an ongoing commitment to raising the design standards of development in the Outer Hebrides. The Design Awards have been held three times so far, and celebrate the high levels of achievement in quality design in the Outer Hebrides. The Comhairle is committed to promoting and recognising good design in new developments – the planning of new houses in particular needs careful consideration for the future. Images of the Award winners are featured as an online resource and provide some ideas and inspiration for people considering your own development;

- developing an [Outer Hebrides Design Guide](#) in partnership with Architecture and Design Scotland which is available on the Comhairle website and is given to clients at pre application stage;

- using [Supplementary Guidance](#) to guide development at Melbost Farm East around three themes: Designing Places; Designing Streets and Designing Homes.
- formulating a new Development Strategy which depending on the respective area category requires applicants to consider good design; quality of place-making; and exceptional quality of design and integration with the surrounding landscape;
- new Design and Placemaking Policy states that all applications in Development Strategy categories Outwith Settlement; Remote Areas and Off-shore Islands should be supported by a design statement.



The Comhairle Planning Service promotes high quality design across the Outer Hebrides that respects and reflects the local context – whether in a rural or urban setting, whether it is a new building or works to an existing property. These efforts are now being rewarded, as the Islands are recognised for their innovative new buildings that respond to and integrate with the sublime Hebridean landscape. Last year Lewis and Harris featured in Charlie Luxton’s ‘Homes by the Sea’ series on Channel 4 and one of the featured houses was a winner in the Outer Hebrides Design Awards 2016.



*8 Borrisdale, Harris features in Charlie Luxton’s ‘Homes by the Sea’ (Channel 4)*



SOUND of HARRIS

*8 Borrisdale at night*

## Designing a Better Future - meeting the Housing Challenge in the Outer Hebrides

Contributing to the delivery of well-designed, affordable housing in places where people want to live and providing homes that meet the present and future needs of communities throughout the Outer Hebrides is a key challenge for the Planning Service in the Outer Hebrides.

### CASE STUDY 1: Affordable Rural Housing at Barvas and Habost, Ness in Lewis



*New Housing at Barvas, Isle of Lewis*

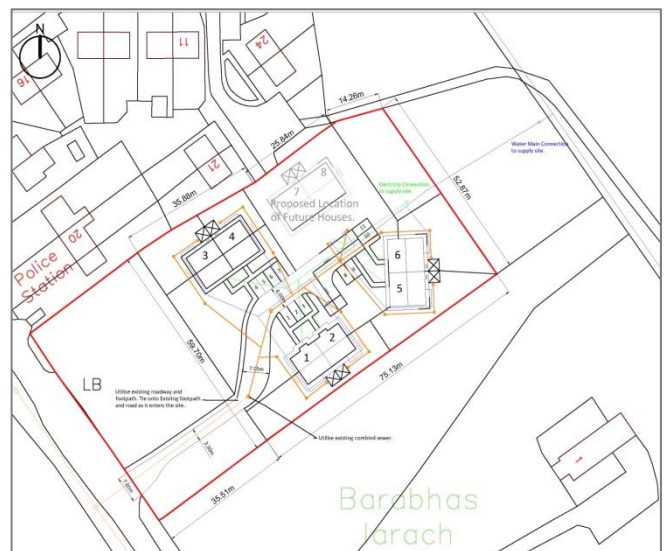
Obtaining land for affordable housing has been a problem in rural Lewis previously. However two recent projects in the Rural Housing Market Area (HMA) have redeveloped two brownfield sites at Habost in Ness, and at Barvas, in west Lewis.

### New Housing at Barvas

The Barvas site, a former primary school building, came through the Comhairle's disposal of corporate assets programme, and has enabled the construction of eight social housing units adjacent to an established 1950s housing development. The initial development proposal sought to access six units from through the original school access road and two others from the 1960s housing development to the rear. However discussions with the developer convinced them that this would create a disjointed approach to a modern development and compromise its qualities as a place. Further, the developer submitted a planning application for six units in a linear layout; again not conducive to creating a good place and again through negotiations the developer was persuaded to think about making better use of the site area. By re-visiting the layout the developer was able to create a plot for two additional units with all eight served by a single access.



Initial Plans for Housing development at Barvas, Lewis



Approved Plans for housing development, Barvas, Lewis

### Affordable Housing, Habost, Ness



Opening of Housing Development at Habost, Ness





*Habost Superseded Plans*



*Habost Approved Plans*

The opportunity to develop four housing units at Habost in Ness came about following the demolition of a semi-derelict former knitwear factory. The site is on the junction of the main settlement road with a side road to the district cemetery, and is opposite working agricultural buildings. The site has a narrow road frontage on the main road which is the main artery from the Butt of Lewis to Stornoway, determining the strong and distinct linear settlement pattern. Again discussions and negotiations were required with the developer as the original application proposed house siting set back down the site with no presentation to the public road and directly facing farm buildings. This raised amenity objections from neighbouring residents and the agricultural operator. A revised siting was pitched to the developer who was not initially persuaded due to minor cost increases. However the prospect of refusal on grounds of non-compliance with siting and design policy and further negotiations led to the developer exploring and taking forward the officer recommendations.

Both these projects have contributed to meeting housing demand in the rural HMA and helping to sustain these communities by providing social rented general needs housing, and contributing to better and more considered placemaking.

**“These 4 new homes are a great example of partnership working between the Scottish Government, Hebridean Housing Partnership and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. This will not only deliver warm, energy efficient, affordable homes but also help local people remain in their community helping sustain it.”**

**Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government and Housing  
speaking about the Habost development.**

## CASE STUDY 2: Community Hub, Rubha Romagaidh, Horgabost



*Community development, Rubha Romagaidh, Horgabost*



*Affordable Housing under construction, Rural Design Architects*

New community development on the West Coast of Harris is a good example of how the Planning Service is working in partnership with new organisations such as community land owner, the West Harris Trust, and the Islands only RSL, Hebridean Housing Partnership to create great places where people want to live, work and visit.

One of the West Harris Trust's flagship projects is the Community Enterprise Centre in Horgabost. The centre, called 'Talla na Mara', will provide 120 square metres of office/business/studio space, an exhibition area and a performance venue with full catering facilities together with three campervan pitches.

The mixed-use development combines new business opportunities, affordable homes and community facilities in a desirable rural location where it is becoming increasingly difficult for new families to find affordable housing due to the high level of second homes and holiday lets. The plans include a community enterprise centre, affordable housing, plots for self-build, community horticulture and hook-ups for camper vans; all potentially powered by a 50kw wind turbine.

This development opportunity tested the Local Development Plan, as the site was located within an 'outwith settlement' area in terms of the Plan's Development Strategy. Policy required the Trust to include an assessment that incorporated a clearly justified and demonstrated need for the proposed development. A locational need was demonstrated through community consultation which identified a severe lack of opportunities for new housing, business and community enterprise in the area. Identifying land for the project within townships was also problematic and the Crofting Reform Act (2010) lays greater responsibility on the Crofting Commission to consider the importance of keeping quality land in crofting tenure. During pre-application discussions, officers directed the design process by reiterating the requirement for a sensitive approach to the siting and design of the new development in view of the out of settlement location within a National Scenic Area.

Following a Feasibility study and further Community Consultation, the Trust appointed Rural Design Architects to design a Community Enterprise Centre. Their brief was to meet the community's needs by designing an outstanding multi-purpose centre incorporating first class community, business and visitor facilities. Options for the 3ha site include business/community space, housing and community horticulture. Rural Design have worked with the Trust and the local community to develop a scheme that addresses community needs while also respecting the local landscape and National Scenic Area within which the development is sited. The Trust sought the highest quality of design and Rural Design have a track record of producing quality designs in sensitive locations.

Having undertaken an extensive site identification exercise and five potential sites were discussed with the planning department, the Trust was able to demonstrate that the preferred option offered a number of advantages:

- Its relatively large size gave flexibility for arranging the different proposed uses in a way that worked best with the landscape;
- The combination of topography and location meant it was possible to design a scheme with a low visual impact;
- By combining multiple uses on one site the Trust was able to share service costs between the different elements. This has the effect of making each of the elements more financially viable than if they were delivered as a series of stand-alone projects. The complete scheme is deliverable in a way that separate schemes would not be.

In March 2016, a funding package was secured for the project from the Scottish Government, The Big Lottery Fund, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Coastal Communities Fund, the Robertson Trust, Scottish Hydro Electric Community Trust and the West Harris Trust in kind contribution.



*'Talla nan Mara', Horgabost, Harris Photo: West Harris Trust*

**"As the population of Harris in general has been declining we need an injection of young people, and families to the area. This could be encouraged by affordable housing and more full time employment; otherwise the up and coming generation will drift away. We hope that the Rubha Romagaidh development [community building and houses at Horgabost], for instance, will come to fruition."**

**Roddy and Dolina, retired  
Members of the West Harris community**



### CASE STUDY 3: Lews Castle Restoration



Lews Castle, Stornoway, Photo: Natural Retreats

After a generation of uncertainty, and time spent on the Buildings at Risk Register, the Lews Castle vision has become a reality. [Lews Castle](#) has been reinvented as a new cultural and heritage hub for the area. Identifying an economically sustainable end use for the Castle was a vital requirement in securing external funding for the project which combines heritage development, public access to a major historic environment asset and top quality hospitality and accommodation facilities. In March 2017 the £19.5 million development was officially opened by the First Minister.

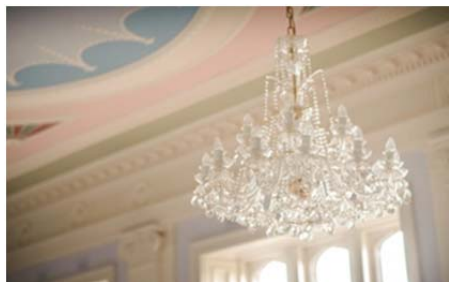
“I’m pleased the Scottish Government and its agencies could provide funding to help restore this iconic castle to its former glory as well as providing a key cultural and heritage hub for the area. The Comhairle and its partners must be congratulated on developing what is now a beautiful venue for both local residents and visitors to the island to enjoy, telling the unique story of the islands in an amazing setting. It will also be a fantastic boost for the local economy, increasing tourism, creating jobs and bringing additional revenue to the islands.”

Nicola Sturgeon  
First Minister

The event marked the completion of a flagship cultural and economic regeneration project led by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. The project, undertaken in phases over five years has fully restored Stornoway’s main landmark building as a visitor and hospitality destination. At the heart of the scheme is a new Museum nan Eilean and Tasglann nan Eilean - the first public archive for the Islands. Consistent with the National Indicator of seeking to reduce the percentage of Category A listed buildings at risk, the project has

also regenerated a key part of Stornoway conservation area, creating 15 new jobs and since public opening in July 2016; over 45,000 people have visited the museum and archive.

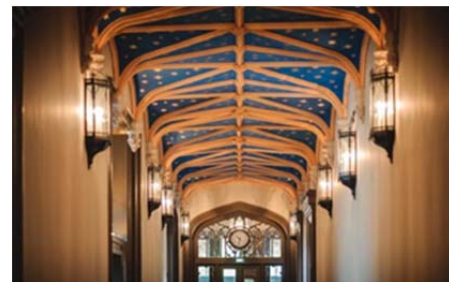
The incredible restoration of Lews Castle was recently showcased by Kevin McCloud and Dr Anna Keay in Great British Buildings: Restoration of the year. Lews Castle was named joint winner of the Victorian category, alongside Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland by judges from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and featured on Channel 4.



*Ballroom*



*Bar*



*Hallway*

During the final project phase, planning and conservation officers were closely involved at pre-application stage. The renovation of the upper floors respected and in many cases reinstated much of the original room layout with Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent conditions imposed to protect and retain original features such as Sir James Matheson's safe, fireplaces, doors, cornicing, skirting, ironmongery and wall paper. Non-original partitions were removed to create well-proportioned rooms. Twenty-three bedrooms were designed in a flexible configuration of individual suites and apartments, retaining the unique layout of the castle and blending traditional features with contemporary boutique hotel style.



*Original wallpaper preserved*



*'Matheson' 2 bed apartment*



*Nicola Sturgeon visits Museum nan Eilean*

#### CASE STUDY 4: The Social Distillery, Isle of Harris



*Staff at Harris Distillery with Chairman's 'My Place Award'*



*Harris Distillery under construction, architect: John Coleman*

The Comhairle Planning Service recognises that well planned places are the key to inclusive, sustainable economic growth. In March, new development, the Isle of Harris Distillery won the [Chairman's Award](#) which is part of the Scottish Civic Trust 'My Place Awards 2017'. The award is unique in Scotland as a celebration of good local design and recognises projects or buildings that have had a positive impact in a local neighbourhood and have delivered tangible benefits to that community.

The distillery is built on reclaimed land at the head of West Loch Tarbert. The shore site was reclaimed in 2003 to aid the stimulation of new business and commercial opportunities in Harris. This site provided much needed economic development land in Harris and was identified as a Local Development Plan Economic Development proposal site. As this is a prominent Gateway site and lies within a National Scenic Area, achievement of a high level of design was required, especially along road and sea frontages.

The final design outcome has overcome a number of challenging constraints: subtle design features have been employed in the building to disguise the heavy industrial nature of the distillery buildings. In massing, proportion, scale and choice of materials attempts have been made to reflect local design characteristics and ensure a sympathetic existence within the settlement of Tarbert. Key design features of the design include 45 degree roof pitches, an ecclesiastical dimension to the design of the main gable facing the village, introduction of natural light at high level within the buildings, extending gable rooflines to minimise light spillage. Low energy consumption and environmental efficiency were also important considerations in the build. Pre-application advice was provided on a range of designs and that ultimately considered was granted followed negotiation on design details. The design of the bottling hall was changed to be complementary in design to the main building and the window and doors were changed from the proposed oak coloured uPVC to black which helped consolidate the colour scheme, and accentuate other high quality design features such as the copper cladding panels at the main entrance. This national award acknowledges the distinctive distillery design and its economic and social contribution to Harris.

**"The distillery has created 18 high quality, permanent well-paid jobs in a place where they were badly needed. The distillery works canteen is now well used by local people looking for a place to meet and blether. It has created a renewed sense of spirit on the island. It is truly The Social Distillery."**

**Colin McLean**  
**Scottish Civil Trust Chairman**



## Conservation Grants

### CASE STUDY 5: Mount Pleasant, 7 Matheson Road, Stornoway

Continuing to build on the Stornoway Townscape Heritage Initiative, and to encourage property owners to use traditional materials and repair methods in the Islands' four Conservation Areas, the Comhairle continues to provide two [built heritage grant schemes](#) to encourage property owners to maintain their buildings in good order in accordance with established conservation practice.

Category B Listed villa, 7 Matheson Road, has been brought back to its original splendour with the assistance of a Conservation Area Grant from the Comhairle. These grants have been established to try to bridge the cost gap between using traditional building methods and techniques and materials to repair buildings and using modern methods and materials which are often not appropriate for, or sympathetic to older buildings. In this case, the existing UPVC windows have been replaced with timber framed sash and case windows.



7 Matheson Road,  
Stornoway, before  
conservation works



7 Matheson Road,  
Stornoway, after  
conservation grant to  
replace UPVC windows  
with hardwood sash and  
case windows.



The Conservation Area grant is part of the Comhairle's policies for the historic environment to assist in the preservation of this part of the Islands' cultural heritage and offers an intervention rate of 50% up to the value of £3,000 per application for eligible works. The grant is designed to either cover the additional cost of using traditional materials and methods rather than modern materials, for restoring historical/architectural detail. A separate grant with an intervention rate of 75% up to the value of £3,000 is available in the Townscape Heritage Focus Area and this is aimed at encouraging property owners to maintain the appearance of their buildings. As Stornoway is the major gateway to the Outer Hebrides it is important to create a good impression for residents and visitors alike. This reporting year eight conservation grants were approved and out of a total of £20,276 committed, £19,798 was paid out. Possibly reflecting the impact of austerity locally only two painting grants were submitted this reporting year with £4,500 approved and claimed.

## Thatching Grants

### CASE STUDY 6: Partnership model with Historic Environment Scotland (HES)

The Comhairle has a Scheme of Administration in place to deliver HES's grant monies for the maintenance of thatched buildings. The Scheme of Administration provides the Comhairle with delegated powers to determine grants where the estimated cost of works is up to £5,000. The grant supports the maintenance of a small (a total of approximately 20 buildings regularly get support) but important number of thatched buildings mainly within the Uists. The buildings are thatched using the local thatching style and materials sourced within the islands. The grant contributes to keeping the islands traditional thatching skills alive, whether the skills of a professional thatcher or local residents are used and irrespective of the buildings' listed status.



*Cnoc an Dudain before rethatch*



*Cnoc an Dudain Completed work*

In the financial year 2016/17 a total of £20,504 of grant aid was paid out on 6 properties in the Uists. One of the properties is at Cnoc an Dudain, which is an unlisted building within the Ruigarry Conservation Area in Berneray, North Uist.



*9 Locheport, 1980, RCAHMS*



*9 Locheport 2016, CnES*

## **Review of Listed Buildings**

As part of the monitoring system to maintain an up to date Local Development Plan, and to ensure that designations are proportionate, and the GIS data set is precise and up to date, a Review of Category A Listed Buildings was carried out and a number of buildings were identified and recommended for review by Historic Environment Scotland (HES). The Comhairle is liaising on this issue with Historic Environment Scotland who are currently undertaking reviews of dual designations and thatched buildings across Scotland. HES officers are now visiting these buildings and assessing proposals for delisting and consulting on amendments to the list.

## **2. Quality of service and engagement**

### **a) Open for business**

The Comhairle Planning Service is proactive and officers are accessible to members of the public. While appointments are encouraged, officers continue to provide the public with pre-planning advice on demand. [Planning Service](#) and [Planning Enforcement Charters](#) aligned with current legislation are in place to provide guidance and set out the Planning Service's responsibility to customers. An [Advice Note for Small and Medium Businesses](#) has been published to assist customers who are considering developing a new business that may require planning consents. Following retirement of the Planning Manager (Development Plans), who was based in Balivanich, Island wide coverage for Development Planning was not available. Since then, this was the first full reporting year that a Development Planning Officer post is filled in the Southern Isles and an officer is available to engage with these communities. This improvement will hopefully result in increased public participation in the development planning process in the Uists and Barra.

### **b) Certainty**

The Planning Service continues to seek consistency in its decision making that is based on an up to date Development Plan and planning guidance. The Service's willingness to engage in pre-application consultation at no cost to prospective developers also helps reduce uncertainty and stimulate confidence in the planning process.

### **Supplementary Guidance for Wind Energy Development**

Confidence in a robust, credible and up to date policy framework was strengthened by the adoption of revised statutory Supplementary Guidance for Wind Energy Development in December 2016. This was a complex piece of guidance to collate, and involved taking on: the latest spatial framework approach from Scottish Planning Policy; negotiating with the Ministry of Defence on sensitive radar issues and incorporating the outcomes of these discussions; and extensive environmental constraints and issues. Having statutory contemporary policy in place which covers all scales of development for this complex and technical policy area provides certainty for all developers, the community and stakeholders.

### **Emerging new Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan.**

Whilst the preparation of a new Local Development Plan has deviated slightly from that anticipated in the 2016 Development Plan Scheme, the Proposed Plan remains on course to replace the current LDP around



the 5 year mark. This new Plan has been subject to monitoring of the current Plan, which has initiated a revised and extended spatial strategy and amendments to some other policies.

A series of workshops with Council Members, Key Agencies and Planning Stakeholders to inform, test and evolve the revised spatial strategy and other policy areas promoted ownership and understanding of the new Plan policy framework. This engagement with Key Agencies in particular, along with an Agencies' final review of the Proposed Plan pre-publication paid dividends with minimal comments or amendments sought through the Proposed Plan consultation process by most Key Agencies. This is evidenced by some quotes below.

**"We welcome the detailed consultation the Comhairle undertook with us prior to publishing the Proposed Plan. This has resulted in the majority of our requirements and recommendations being included and therefore we are pleased to confirm that we support the policies and allocations within the Plan."**

**Scottish Environment Protection Agency**

Further, a programme of engagement with Development Management colleagues through all stages of the Plan preparation has enabled more timely policy revision and valuable critique of actual policy wording to test its robustness and application. Wider Plan engagement continues to be mixed, with limited general community participation though this was improved through the 'Call for Sites and Issues and Sites' process at the Main Issues Report stage facilitating a wider Plan contacts database. The need to resource direct engagement with the growing number of community land owning trusts is recognised and will be a measure to take forward.

**"We are pleased with the revised Policy as drafted. The fact that fish farming is included in the Economic Development section, and is recognised to be 'a significant contributor to the economy of the Outer Hebrides' is to be welcomed."**

**Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation**

**"It is an amazingly thorough document, well structured, well illustrated and generally easy to understand. My comments are mostly minor tweaks."**

**Kate Dawson  
Representative Local Development Plan Consultation**

## c) Communications, engagement and customer service

### Customer survey

This reporting year, performance in planning remained strong and survey results continue to evidence high levels of customer satisfaction with most respondents indicating that they were either 'Fairly Satisfied' or 'Satisfied' with the service received from Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Planning Service. The Planning Service continues to encourage feedback from Customers and welcomes comments which may highlight both strengths and weaknesses in the Service.

The Customer Survey can be completed electronically but a paper version is available if required. An invitation to complete the Customer Survey is provided with Decision Notices along with a 'strap line' in emails. The results of the Customer Satisfaction Survey are recorded and the results are published annually on the [Comhairle website](#).

### Engaging with Stakeholders

The Planning Service provides regular updates on any changes relating to Development Management and Development Planning and also incorporates updates on Building Standards issues. The updates provide information on changes at both national and local level, and encourage customers to engage with the Planning Service if they have any queries or general feedback on any of the issues highlighted. These updates are issued internally in the Comhairle to Stakeholders such as Directors and Heads of Service for dissemination to employees, as appropriate. Externally the update is issued to stakeholders such as Agents, Architects, Estate Agents, Business Gateway, Community Councils, and Consultees.



**BUILDING STANDARDS AND PLANNING SERVICE UPDATE**  
Number10 May 2017

**In this issue:**

- Building Standards**
  - eBuilding Warrant Submissions
- Planning Service**
  - Development Plan and Marine Planning
    - Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan 2 – Proposed Plan Stage
- Development Management**
  - Updated Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations
  - Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
  - Validation of Planning Applications
  - Increased Fee Levels for Major Planning Applications
  - Increase of Neighbour Notification Fee
  - Tell Me Scotland
  - Changes to Comhairle Website
- Performance Information**
  - ePlanning
  - eDecision Notices
  - Customer Survey
- Staff Change**
- Contact us at:**
  - Planning Service**  
planning@cne-siar.gov.uk  
01851 822690 (Stornoway)  
01870 604990 (Balivanich)
  - Building Standards**  
BuildingStandards@cne-siar.gov.uk  
01851 822692 (Stornoway)  
01870 604990 (Balivanich)

**Building Standards**  
**eBuilding Warrant Submissions**  
The BuildingStandards service encourages applicants to submit their Building Warrant applications through the [eBuildingStandards.scot portal](#). Documentation can be submitted online in a variety of file formats and a comprehensive [User Guide](#) is available to ease applicants through the online process.  
Building Warrant approval documentation is made available through a file transfer website. For more information on electronic submissions please contact the Building Standards team.

**Planning Service**  
**Development Plan and Marine Planning**  
**Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan 2 – Proposed Plan Stage**  
The consultation on the Outer Hebrides Proposed Local Development Plan closed in March and the Development Plan and Marine Planning team are currently considering the consultation responses received. We have received comments from a range of organisations, developers, members of the public and others with an interest in the development of the Islands. Once the Comhairle reviews the proposed responses to the comments received these will be assessed by a Scottish Government appointed Reporter to examine and make recommendations. The Comhairle anticipates submitting the Proposed Plan and comments received to Government for examination in July 2017.

**Development Management**  
**Updated Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations**  
Following an amended [EIA Directive](#) coming into force across Europe in 2014 the updated Scottish regulations which transpose the Directive into Scots Law has now been laid before Parliament and will come into force on the 16 May 2017. [The Town & Country Planning \(Environmental Impact Assessment\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2017](#) will supersede the 2011 Regulations.  
The main changes to the Regulations relate to:  
a) the process for [requests for EIA Screening](#) (the written statement of the opinion of the planning authority as to whether development is, or is not, EIA development); and  
b) [cases](#) where an Environmental Impact Assessment is required and in particular increasing transparency of assessment and decision making process and the content of the Decision Notice (to include a schedule of mitigation measures and where necessary a schedule of Monitoring requirements. The term Environmental Statement will cease and be replaced by EIA Report. EIA Scoping remains virtually unchanged.  
The Government host information on <https://www.mygov.scot/eia/> and they shortly plan to host an IEMA SEMINAR on the proposed changes. A further update will follow in the next Stakeholders newsletter.

To ensure that Stakeholders are kept up to date, other updates may be circulated separately if the timing does not coincide with the issue of the regular Stakeholder update.

“Very helpful, personal service.”

“Our Planning Officer was a pleasure to deal with.”

“First class service and left me feeling well informed...”

“Very professional.”

“We are very satisfied with the handling of our application and wish to thank those involved for a professional but engaged approach throughout the process.”

“The Planning Officer was very helpful, taking time to deal with the application at short notice.”

Customer Survey Comments

### Processing Agreements

The service has promoted the use of processing agreements as an application management tool for all major applications. As a rural island authority the number of major applications received is negligible with only one major application in the current reporting period. This case 16/00146/PPPM was subject to a processing agreement and determined at 76 days well inside the statutory time of four months. The development was for Construction of a High Voltage Direct Current Converter Station and ancillary infrastructure (incorporating a 132kV/33kV substation) on land at Arnish Point. A NPF3 Project, strategically important in terms of wind energy development in the Outer Hebrides. It was subject to pre-application discussion, PAC and a project managed approach to deliver a decision to meet the developer's timescale. The development is located on prepared land allocated for industrial uses. Part of the site includes a significant area of rock outcrop which would be removed as part of the development and the proposed use of the land has resultant implications for the development of Stornoway Port. The service continues to develop its project management approach to the determination of major and complex planning applications, utilising the skills and expertise within the service. Information on [processing agreements](#) and an [on-line form](#) are available on the Council's web site.

### Delivering New Telecommunications in Hard-to Reach Areas

This reporting year Development Management have had an enabling role with regard to the introduction of new communications technology, by dealing with pre-application consultation enquiries, processing and approving consents in time, for delivery of the infrastructure for superfast broadband throughout the Islands as part of a £146m investment project by HIE and Digital Scotland to roll out a fibre network across the Highlands and Islands. At the same time an ambitious plan was developed by Government to extend the 'blue-light' Emergency Services Network and provide 4G telecommunication coverage across some of the hard-to-reach areas of the Outer Hebrides which also involved pre application consultation and planning consents for a large number of sites.

To ensure efficiency and build expertise on the requirements of the sector and the local, national and emerging policy on Communications Infrastructure a single planning officer was assigned to deal with all telecoms applications in Lewis and Harris and another in the Southern Isles. This approach allowed these officers to build up knowledge of the drivers and challenges facing the sector, the environmental impacts typically associated with this nature of development, and to build constructive relationships with agents



acting for the developers. By doing so the Planning Service has helped to facilitate the delivery of these new services to dispersed communities and remote areas in the Outer Hebrides. One hundred and eighty-five telecommunications applications (notifications and full applications) were managed during the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

The Service was under considerable pressure from developers to turn around applications swiftly and with the arrangements put in place was able to be responsive and highlight issues at a very early stage while ensuring due process in seeking and welcoming public and consultee engagement. Effective project management by planning staff enabled high community expectations to be met and the necessary consents were delivered in time to enable the developers to achieve delivery of their respective projects on time and within budget.

**“Feedback from developers on the entire process has so far been positive, even in instances where pre-application advice has been negative from officers, as in most instances, said advice has been eventually incorporated into formal submissions, thereby speeding up the decision process, by reducing any requirement for negotiation during the application process or refusals. On a number of occasions, the Service has been thanked by developers for our commitment to dealing with projects and applications in a timeous and professional manner.”**

**Iain Macleod  
Planning Officer, Development Management**

#### **CASE STUDY 8: Bringing Broadband to the Island of Scalpay**

This year, high speed broadband arrived on the small island of Scalpay which lies off the East coast of Harris. A wireless link provides access to the same mainstream fibre based services as is available on the mainland, without the need for subsea cabling. Wireless To The Cabinet (W TTC) technology has been installed as part of the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband (DSSB) project.

To bring superfast services to Scalpay, a radio mast with dishes was installed by Openreach engineers at North Harbour. The dishes send and receive radio signals from a site more than 6km away at Tarbert, on the Harris mainland. These signals are then relayed to green cabinets which serve local homes and businesses. There are two on Scalpay, one at the exchange and the other at Outend. The radio monopoles used at each end of the link required special planning permission before they could be installed.



*Broadband Cabinet, Scalpay, Isle of Harris, Photo: Highlands and Islands Enterprise*

### 3. Governance

#### a) Efficient and effective decision-making

- The average decision time for local development has improved from 8.9 weeks in 15/16 to 7.6 weeks in 16/17.
- The average decision time for householder development has improved from 7.1 weeks in 15/16 to 6.1 weeks in 16/17.
- Only one major application was determined during the reporting period, and it was subject to a processing agreement and determined in 76 days.
- Our delegation rate stands at 97.2 % comparing favourably with the rate of 98% in the previous year.
- We worked hard to ensure against legacy cases. We have only one case over one year old, an extension to a windfarm where the clock is stopped to allow the MoD and Developer to reach a position over mitigation such that a MoD holding objection can be dealt with by Condition.
- During this reporting year, the Comhairle established a new committee structure which included a new committee, a dedicated Planning Applications Board. Planning applications were previously dealt with by the Environment and Protective Services Committee that also considered matters such as Police and Fire; Fuel Poverty and Housing which met five times a year with the option of the Planning Service seeking an additional meeting during summer recess if there were planning decisions requiring committee determination waiting to be considered. The new Committee will meet six times a year with the option of additional meetings being called if required between those six timetabled. It is envisaged that the establishment of this dedicated Committee will enable more responsive timescales, better meeting the needs of developers and the community, more committee time to devote to more complex planning applications and ultimately better decision making.
- The Local Review Body meets as and when required in line with the Council Committee cycle (due to costs and geography of elected members).
- In 2016/17 the Development Plan and Marine Planning Team has had an on-going project management system in place which includes a Project Board to assist with progressing the new LDP schedule, with focused fortnightly meetings to ensure that the team stay on track and that the

timescale for each element in the process will be achieved in good time and is aligned with the DPS.

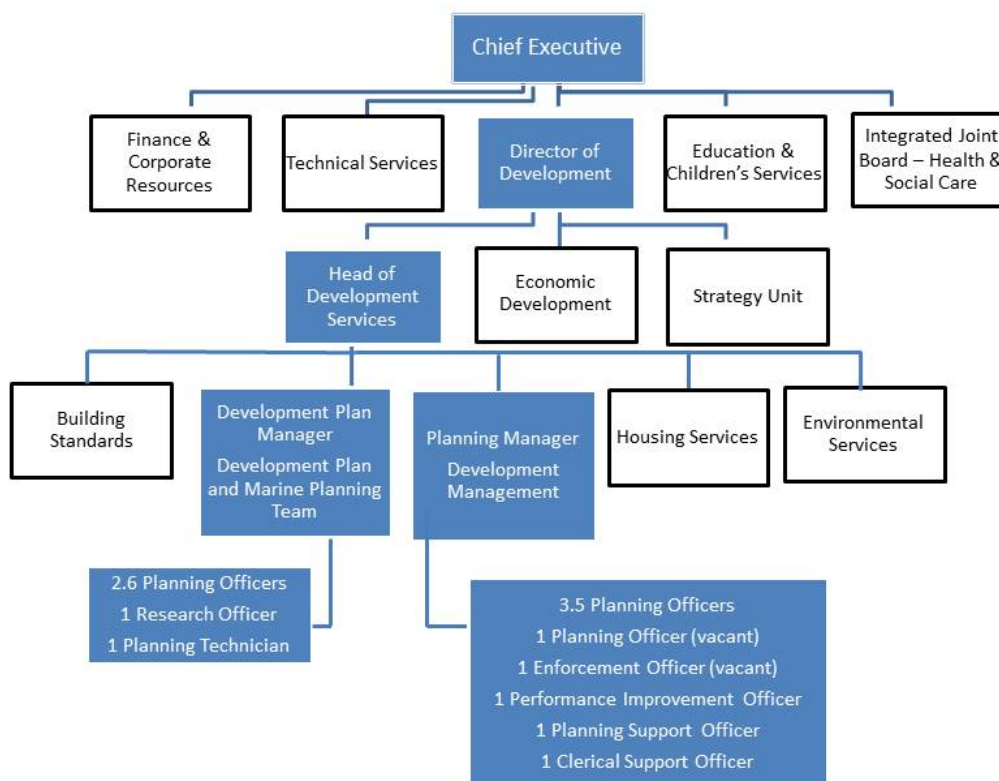
- Planning and marine planning policy issues report to the Sustainable Development Committee which also meets 5 times per year and the Development Plan and Marine Planning Team have a Member Officer Working Group as a forum to discuss Policy development issues and guide the strategic direction and policy approach of the Plan.



*DP & MP Team Meeting, New Community Facilities, Lews Castle*

## b) Effective management structures

### Development Department Organisational Chart 2016/17



### **c) Financial management and local governance**

Budget setting is on an annual basis and team budgets are monitored on a monthly basis. The Planning Service finances are monitored on a monthly basis by the service managers. If income or expenditure deviates significantly from the budgeted amount, this is reported on. Planning fee income is recorded in the case management system. The service manager is able to query the database via a standard set of reports to enable an ongoing monitoring of income.

With increasing financial pressures, an additional quarterly check to risk manage budget deviations has been brought in by the Director of Finance with figures to be collated and sent/discussed with the Service accountant.

Corporate procurement policies ensure value for money. To enable the Comhairle to monitor and report its performance it has adopted 'Interplan' as its electronic performance management system. Since August 2009, Interplan has been used to track the progress of the Comhairle service business plans/performance indicators and to report on progress made. Because it provides a real time integrated business planning and performance monitoring system within the Comhairle, it facilitates more responsive and flexible reporting. Quarterly reporting of business plans and performance are now presented to Committee, as noted above. Service improvements put forward in the PPF are monitored through the Interplan performance management system.

### **4. Culture of continuous improvement**

In the Comhairle, Planning Officers follow a structured career path and are encouraged to develop their potential. The Planning Service continues to ensure there is sufficient budget for staff training; this ensures that officers are assisted in meeting their continuing professional development obligations, through attendance at courses and conferences. For example, Hannah Morrison, planning officer based in Benbecula, will be attending Historic Environment Scotland's Conference on Thatched Buildings this year, as the Outer Hebrides has the largest concentration of surviving thatched buildings in Scotland.

The Comhairle has also provided opportunities for staff to undertake longer term study which is funded in full, or in part by the Comhairle. It has been able to support Isla Macarthur, who began work with the Service as a research officer, and was awarded the degree of Master of Arts in Town and Country Planning and has achieved RTPI Chartered Membership this reporting year; Iain Macleod began as an enforcement officer and is now a career grade planner working towards Associate Membership of RTPI; Susan Rabé, initially employed as a technician, was awarded the degree of Master of Arts in Town and Country Planning and is now a career grade planner working towards Chartered membership of RTPI. Anne MacKenzie, currently seconded into the post of Planning Service Improvement Officer is undertaking the final year of a Bachelor of Arts in Business and Management with top up funding by the Comhairle targeted at her studying units in Project Management and Quality management.

The Comhairle's Development Department promotes an ethos of openness and continuous improvement and the staff development appraisal process is well established and this has enabled managers to reinforce



the performance culture at all levels of the service. Through this management tool, as well as addressing individual training needs, staff are given goals and projects which contribute to the delivery of the aims set out in this Planning Performance Framework, but also meet broader departmental and corporate objectives.

### **Historic Environment Policy Support**

The Comhairle Planning service has undertaken effective engagement with other authorities and organisations to consider best practice and shared learning. As the service no longer has a Conservation Officer post, the Comhairle has developed an innovative Historic Environment policy support arrangement with Orkney Islands Council in order to provide the necessary conservation expertise required to deal with assessing Listed building Consent applications; Conservation Grants; Building Condition Survey, Conservation Areas and Historic Environment Policy. This arrangement has also enabled staff to benefit from CPD sessions on the Historic Environment and on guidance for signage in Conservation Areas.

### **North of Scotland Development Plan Forum**

The Comhairle is a member and active participant in the North of Scotland Development Plan Forum, which comprises Highland, Moray, Argyll and Bute Councils, Cairngorm National Park Authority and the three Island Authorities: Orkney; Shetland; and the Outer Hebrides. The forum shares good practice on specific planning issues around delivering development and policy approaches in island and rural environments, reflecting its diverse geographical coverage, and is able to form collective views on consultations and significant legislative changes. The group convenes 3 to 4 times a year and tries to schedule meetings around RTPI, Government, or other relevant events or training opportunities to optimise professional development and effective resourcing, whilst maintaining year round electronic communications. It also provides other planning stakeholders e.g. Scottish Government, HoPs etc. with a sounding board for a range of pertinent issues.

## Part 2: Supporting Evidence

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

- [Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan November 2012;](#)
- [Outer Hebrides Monitoring Report 2015](#)
- [OHLDP Development Plan Schemes 2016 and 2017;](#)
- [Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan Action Programme Second Review;](#)
- [Customer Satisfaction Survey 2016-17 Results;](#)
- [Planning Service Charter 2016;](#)
- [Enforcement Charter 2016;](#)
- [Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Planning Performance Framework Annual Report 2015-16;](#)
- [Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Housing Land Audit 2015;](#)
- [Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Planning Service Web information pages and public access;](#)
- [Service Business Plan: Development Department Management Plan 16/17 – 20/21;](#)
- Development Department Management Structure 2016-17;
- Stakeholder Engagement Newsletters;
- Uniform Data Management System.

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## Part 3: Service Improvements 2017-18

In the coming year we will:

- Further refine the content and accessibility of planning information on the Comhairle website;
- Implement a plan with individual professional staff for each officer to develop greater expertise in a particular topic or subject and for that officer to be the lead adviser on that topic/subject for the rest of the team and developers;
- Building on the work of Development Management, the Development Planning Team will take the lead on the promotion and delivery of the Outer Hebrides Design Awards 2017/18;
- Implement the use of electronic correspondence and digital filing aligning with the broader e-agenda for Conservation, Thatching and Painting Grants;
- Respond to the conclusion of withdrawal of Historic Environment policy support arrangement supplied by Orkney Islands Council, and due to end in August 2017, through further in-house training and expertise sharing.

## Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2016-17:

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
<p><i>[During the reporting period the Comhairle Planning service committed to a range of Service Improvements to deliver more certain, proportionate and speedy planning decisions]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b><i>Review and implement a new look and more user-friendly web site for the Comhairle Planning Service</i></b> - A review of the planning pages content on the Comhairle web site has been completed and adjustments made to information making sure that it is relevant and up to date. The service continues to monitor and update this information, when necessary. Customers are encouraged to self-serve and utilise the benefits of the web site and Public Access. Development Management officers gave further consideration to how customers would navigate through the planning information pages to determine how easy content was to find and subsequently the currency and ease of interpretation of the website. Following this exercise a revised 'Sitemap' of Planning information was developed in order to improve navigation by customers and in parallel the content stripped down to aid interpretation. These changes have yet to be made on the Live website as corporately the Comhairle are launching a new website and therefore changes (other than crucial changes) to the existing have been stalled to allow IT to direct their resource to the new site which is operating in 'Test' mode internally. The changes will provide a more linear, ordered structure and the customer will be able to identify more easily where information is located on the site. Corporately content maintenance will be assigned to each Department Service and in the coming year two members of the Planning Service will undertake training on how to edit, update and delete information from the corporate website. </li> </ul>	<p><i>[Yes]</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b><i>Rolling out tablet technology across the service</i></b> </li> </ul> <p><i>Following the introduction of the new e-Development Portal nationally, including the refreshment of e-planning and a review of e-processes the Planning Service in tandem with the Building Standards Service introduced mobile technology to allow plans to be viewed in the field through use of tablet technology as opposed to having to print these. This development is in line with Scottish Government expectations for e-delivery of services.</i></p> <p><i>A pilot was initially set up to trial the use of Surface 3 and Surface Pro tablets. These were chosen over iPads or Android devices because of the increased compatibility with existing operating</i></p>	<p><i>[Yes]</i></p>

systems, in particular Uniform and Idox which operate through Citrix. Having 'full blown' windows 10 on the Microsoft tablets meant easier configuration for network access and also allows the tablets to function like desktop PCs. USB and auxiliary video ports mean peripherals such as a mouse or external hard-drive or a second monitor could be easily connected.

During trials with the tablets it became apparent that, due to technical (firewall) constraints, and PSN compliance, connecting to the 'back office' systems on-site was not straightforward. In the interim a workable solution was put in place by the IT department, although some further work remains to be done. As 4G and Wi-Fi hotspots are rolled out across the Outer Hebrides, it is expected that tablet technology use can be developed further.

Although we have not yet achieved our final destination in terms of seamless and easy connection to back office systems, we do have a workable solution that marks another step in the journey towards end to end e-working. The flexibility offered by the tablets will guarantee future proofing of the service in the years ahead and give the building standards and development management teams the opportunity to modernise service delivery in line with customer expectations.



Using tablet technology in the field

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Appoint a Development Plan Manager following a two year absence of that role within the service</b> – in November 2016, Mairi Maciver, a planner with the Development Plan and Marine Planning team for nearly 10 years was appointed to the role of Development Plan Manager. This as a result of the 'grow our own' approach with Mairi having undertaken a distance learning MA in Town and Country Planning and having achieved full chartered membership of the RTPI.</li> </ul> | <p>[Yes]</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Continue to resource a performance Improvement Officer Post</b></li> </ul>  | <p>[Yes]</p> |



***and maintain the momentum of improvement of internal administration systems and increase the efficiency of processes by using e-technology within Development Management -***

*In the 2016/17 year, the Planning Service Performance Improvement Officer position, due to the synergy of its duties with the requirements of the e-building standards project was effectively seconded to the Building Standards Service for a period of six months to ensure successful implementation of that project. The Planning Service improvements achieved were therefore restricted to a six month period but the lessons learned through e-building standards were brought across to planning and vice versa with some further refinements to the e-planning process, in particular a process map for the issue of e-decisions. The processing of planning applications in a fully electronic format has been implemented and refinements are ongoing. To facilitate this, an in-house e-tracker system was developed. Significant template work was carried out by removing obsolete templates from our casework system, and updating others as appropriate. Most templates are now e-enabled, improving overall efficiency.*

*As part of the improvement project, guides were created for the use of staff training, particularly for the use of new staff.*

*Prior Notification processes and templates were reviewed with new processes and templates put in place to reflect any new regulatory requirements. New processes and templates were also put in place for Listed Building Consent applications. The existing suite of standard conditions has also been updated. Website content and structure was reviewed and is being updated in line with a corporate update of the existing website.*

*In light of the time that was dedicated to e-building standards a decision was made to extend the post of Planning Service Improvement Officer into 2017/18 and for the Planning Service Enforcement Post to be held vacant to fund this additional period.*

- ***During the year complete a review of the Development Management Service and associated staffing to provide greater focus on quality of e-services and based on the outcomes of the work achieved by the employment of a Performance Improvement Officer – the review has only partially been carried out due to the vacancy for one FTE planner in Development Management being held vacant pending a structural review of Services and posts corporately, and the temporary re-assignment of the Planning Service Improvement Officer to the e-building Standards Project. The review has therefore been postponed till December 2017.***

[Yes]

## PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

### Part 4: National Headline Indicators (NHIs)

Key outcomes	2016-17	2015-16
<b>Development Planning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>age of local/strategic development plan(s) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i></li> <li>Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?</li> <li>Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?</li> <li>Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?</li> </ul>	<b>4 years and 6 months</b>   <b>YES</b>   <b>NO</b>   <b>YES</b>	<b>3 years and 6 months</b>   <b>YES</b>   <b>NO</b>   <b>YES</b>
<b>Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs<sup>1</sup></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established housing land supply</li> <li>5-year effective housing land supply</li> <li>5-year housing supply target</li> <li>5-year effective housing land supply (<i>to one decimal place</i>)</li> <li>Housing approvals</li> <li>Housing completions over the last 5 years</li> <li>Marketable employment land supply</li> <li>Employment land take-up during reporting year</li> </ul>	<b>1270 units</b>  <b>633 units</b>  <b>360 units</b>  <b>8.8 years</b>  <b>112 units</b>  <b>441 units</b>  <b>30.28 ha</b>  <b>0 ha</b>	<b>1270 units</b>  <b>633 units</b>  <b>360 units</b>  <b>8.8 years</b>  <b>77 units</b>  <b>538 units</b>  <b>51.2 ha</b>  <b>0.1644 ha</b>

<sup>1</sup> The most up to date approved figures are to be supplied

<b>Development Management</b> <b>Project Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice</li> <li>Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement</li> </ul> <b>Decision-making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application approval rate</li> <li>Delegation rate</li> </ul> <b>Validation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of applications valid upon receipt</li> </ul>	<b>58.1%</b>  <b>0.25% (1)</b>  <b>99.2%</b> <b>97.2%</b>  <b>We don't analyse this</b>	<b>51%</b>  <b>0</b>  <b>99.1%</b> <b>98.4%</b>  <b>We don't analyse this</b>
<b>Decision-making timescales</b> Average number of weeks to decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major developments</li> <li>Local developments (non-householder)</li> <li>Householder developments</li> </ul>	<b>N/A</b> <b>8.1 weeks</b> <b>6.1 weeks</b>	<b>N/A</b> <b>8.9 weeks</b> <b>7.1 weeks</b>
<b>Legacy Cases</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number cleared during reporting period</li> <li>Number remaining</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>  <b>1</b>	<b>0</b>  <b>1</b>
<b>Enforcement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>time since enforcement charter published / reviewed <i>Requirement: review every 2 years</i></li> </ul>	<b>1 Year, 1 Month</b>	<b>1 Month</b>

*Decision making timescales improved over the course of the year while application approval rate and level of delegation remained fairly constant. The main factors of relevance were a fully resourced Development Management Team to the end of August 2016, and the absence of large scale, EIA or complex applications in Q2 and Q3.*

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

Category	Average timescale (weeks)		
	2016-2017	2016-2017	2015-2016
<b>Major developments* (Non Processing Agreement cases)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Local developments (non-householder)</b>	<b>273</b>		
• Local: less than 2 months	<b>(63.4%)</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>6.8</b>
• Local: more than 2 months	<b>(36.6%)</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>12.7</b>
<b>Householder developments</b>	<b>87</b>		
• Local: less than 2 months	<b>(88.5%)</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>5.9</b>
• Local: more than 2 months	<b>(11.5%)</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>11.2</b>
<b>Housing developments</b>			
Major	<b>0</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Local housing developments	<b>112</b>	<b>8.4</b>	
• Local: less than 2 months	<b>(61.6%)</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.7</b>
• Local: more than 2 months	<b>(38.4%)</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>11.8</b>
<b>Business and industry</b>			
Major	<b>0</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Local business and industry	<b>25</b>		
• Local: less than 2 months	<b>(52%)</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>6.9</b>
• Local: more than 2 months	<b>(48%)</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>11.5</b>
<b>EIA developments</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>21.5</b>
<b>Other consents<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>64</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>Planning/legal agreements<sup>3</sup></b>			
• Major: average time	<b>0</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>
• Local: average time	<b>1</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Local reviews</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15.86</b>	<b>16.4</b>

<sup>2</sup> 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 & 7 relating to agricultural and forestry development and applications for prior approval by Coal Authority or licensed operator under classes 60 & 62 of the GPDO.

<sup>3</sup> 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			
		2016-17 No.	%	2015-2016 No.	%
Local reviews	1	0	0%	1	50%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	1	1	100%	0	0%

## **C: Enforcement activity**

	2016-17	2015-16
Complaints lodged	28	–
Cases taken up	4	4
Breaches identified	14	12
Cases resolved	12	8
Notices served <sup>4</sup>	4	4
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

## **D: Context**

*Performance during the 2016/17 financial year improved across all sectors. The Service was fully resourced in the early part of the year and the absence of any Major or EIA applications in the second part of the year and the allocation of certain sectors of work to individual officers e.g. Telecommunications applications, Scottish Water applications, householder and Agricultural sheds to dedicated officers enabled efficiency and a focus on decision making timescales for the regular casework. The vacant post of Planning Officer was not filled during the business year and with a spike in more complex applications including EIA towards the end of the financial year, there have been greater challenges in maintaining this level of performance.*

<sup>4</sup> Enforcement notices; breach of condition notices; planning contravention notices; stop notices; temporary stop notices; fixed penalty notices, and Section 33 notices

## Part 6: Workforce 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.*

	<b>Tier 1</b> <i>Chief Executive</i>	<b>Tier 2</b> <i>Director</i>	<b>Tier 3</b> <i>Head of Service</i>	<b>Tier 4</b> <i>Manager</i>
<b>Head of Planning Service<sup>5</sup></b>			<b>1</b>	

		<b>DM</b>	<b>DP &amp; MP</b>	<b>Enforcement</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Managers/Team Leaders<sup>6</sup></b>	No. Posts	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>		
	Vacant	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Main grade posts</b>	No. Posts	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2.6</b>		
	Vacant	<b>1</b>			
<b>Technician</b>	No. Posts	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>		
	Vacant				
<b>Office Support/Clerical</b>	No. Posts	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>		
	Vacant				
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>8.5</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>1</b>	

<sup>5</sup> Please note only the tier in which the most senior member of the planning service falls under

<sup>6</sup> Managers are those staff responsible for the operational management of a team/division; in addition please log staff that are identified as team leaders or line managers under this heading.

*Text box: short contextual statement – please describe the staffing set up if this differs from the above structure e.g. if support staff are used from a central resource.*

*The Planning Service Structure is as above noting that the Planning Service Improvement Officer Post is reported within the Office Support/Clerical category above. In addition 1.4 FTE administration support staff input is secured for professional officers based in Balivanich by Service Level agreement with another Department.*

<b>Staff Age Profile</b>	<b>Number</b>
Under 30	0
30-39	5
40-49	4
50 and over	6

<b>Committee &amp; Site Visits<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>Number per year</b>
Full council meetings	5
Planning committees	5
Area committees (where relevant)	N/A
Committee site visits	1
LRB <sup>8</sup>	2
LRB site visits	0

<sup>7</sup> References to committees also include National Park Authority Boards. Number of site visits is those cases where visits were carried out by committees/boards.

<sup>8</sup> This relates to the number of meetings of the LRB. The number of applications going to LRB are reported elsewhere.

	Performance Marker	Source/Evidence
1	Decision making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types	Outer Hebrides Planning Context (see page 1 of PPF Report); Part 4, Statistics and National Headline Indicators of PPF Report (see page 29 of PPF Report); c) Communications, engagement and customer service, Delivering New Telecommunications in Hard to Reach Areas (see Case Study 7, page 17 of PPF Report); 3 Governance (see page 19 of PPF Report).
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	Processing agreement templates are publicised on Comhairle website and promoted at pre-application stage: <a href="http://intranet/internet/planningservice/majorandnationaldevelopments.asp">http://intranet/internet/planningservice/majorandnationaldevelopments.asp</a>  The Planning Service has also included a document by the Scottish Government Planning and Architecture Division on the Benefits of using <a href="#">Processing Agreements</a> on their website. (See page 17 of PPF Report).
3	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	Officers encourage pre application discussion and the Planning Service provides a free pre-application advice service for all applicants. This is promoted on the Comhairle website in the <a href="#">Planning Service Charter</a> (page 14 of PPF Report).  The availability of the free pre-application service is also promoted to potential commercial developers in the <a href="#">Advice Note for Small and Medium Businesses</a> , (See page 1 of Advice Note and page 14 of PPF Report).  Pre-application discussions will help clarify the extent and standard of information required within an application ensuring that information requests will be proportionate and reasonable; page 4 of the <a href="#">Planning Service Charter</a> revised February 2016, (see page 14 of PPF Report and Planning Context see page 1 of PPF Report). See evidence provided in High Quality Development on the Ground, Case Study 1, pages 4-6; Case Study 2, pages 7-8; Case Study 3, pages 9-10; Case Study 4, page 11.
4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications within 6 months of 'resolving to grant' <sup>9</sup>	See Official Statistics (page 29 of PPF Report).

5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published	Within 2 years  Yes	The <a href="#">Planning Enforcement Charter</a> was revised in February 2016, (see page 14 & page 28 of PPF Report)
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<sup>9</sup> This will require production of supporting guidance, following wider stakeholder input



<b>6</b>	Continuous improvements: - 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	See progress on National Headline Indicators (pages 27 & 28 of PPF Report) and note progress achieved on 2016-17 service improvement actions: (pages 24-26 of PPF Report); also see next years' service improvement commitments on (page 23 of PPF Report).
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### **PROMOTING THE PLAN-LED SYSTEM**

	<b>Performance Marker</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Source/Evidence</b>
<b>7</b>	LDP (or LP) less than 5 years since adoption	Y	PPF report, National Headline Indicators (page 27 and cross referenced in narrative page 14 of PPF Report).
<b>8</b>	Development plan scheme demonstrates next LDP: - on course for adoption within 5-year cycle - project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale	Y  Y	PPF Report National Headline Indicators (page 27 and page 14 in PPF Report).
<b>9</b>	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	Evidence of activity  Workshops held Record of attendance by Councillors	Members Seminar organised at pre-MIR stage to define and agree the policy approach; refine new Development Strategy and to take ownership of the Plan (see page 15 of PPF Report).
<b>10</b>	Cross-sector stakeholders, including industry, agencies and Scottish Government, engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	Evidence of activity  Meetings, workshops and email correspondence	Stakeholders, including the fish farming industry, (e.g. Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation see quotation on page 15 of PPF Report); Key Agencies and Scottish Government were engaged at the pre-MIR stage of the Plan. The Comhairle sought to undertake one to one meetings with Key Agencies, Internal and External Stakeholders and Scottish Government (e.g.in person at North of Scotland Forum in Inverness in June 2015, (see page 22 of PPF Report) In addition a round table discussion with key agencies was held in Oct 2015. Although this 2016-2017 PPF Report is out with the reporting period pre-MIR stage of the emerging Plan, early engagement helped inform and direct thinking on the main issues and other emerging Plan policies, (Page 15 of the PPF Report discusses the later stage of engagement on the proposed LDP).
<b>11</b>	Production of regular and proportionate policy advice, for example through supplementary	Evidence of activity <a href="#">Supplementary Guidance for</a>	SG for Wind Energy Development was revised and strengthened in December 2016 (see page 14 of PPF Report).

	guidance, on information required to support applications	<a href="#">Wind Energy Development</a> <a href="#">Advice Note for Small and Medium Businesses</a>	In collaboration with Business Gateway, the Planning Service published an Advice Note for Small and Medium Businesses which provides information on the planning process and consents that may be required when developing a new business enterprise (see page 14 of PPF Report).
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## **SIMPLIFYING AND STREAMLINING**

	<b>Performance Marker</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Source/Evidence</b>
<b>12</b>	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	<p>A new corporate working process was initiated this year with the establishment of a new committee structure was established which includes a dedicated Planning Applications Board which will enable more responsive timescales, better meeting the needs of developers and the community and leading to better decision making (Page 19 of PPF Report).</p> <p>As the Planning Service no longer has a Conservation Officer post, an innovative joint working arrangement with Orkney Islands Council has been in place to provide Historic Environment policy support (see page 22 of PPF Report).</p> <p>To ensure efficiency, and island wide coverage, Development Management assigned a single point of contact - one planning officer to deal with Telecoms applications in Lewis and Harris and another in the Southern Isles (see page 17 of PPF Report).</p> <p>The Planning Service has a streamlined planning protocol in place at <a href="#">Arnish Low Carbon/Renewable North Enterprise Area site</a>.</p> <p>The Planning Service and the Comhairle's web technicians are working in partnership to produce a better self-service web pages and public access facility for customers (see page 24 of PPF Report).</p> <p>The Planning Service and Building Standards Services are working in tandem to introduce mobile technology to enable plans to be viewed in the field through the use of tablet technology (see pages 24-25 of PPF Report).</p>
<b>13</b>	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Evidence of activity to pass on and adopt good practice	<p>The Comhairle is an active participant of the North of Scotland Development Plan Forum (Page 22 of PPF Report).</p> <p>The Historic Environment policy support arrangement with Orkney Islands Council has enabled CPD sessions on the Historic Environment (see page 22 of PPF Report).</p>

## **DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT**

	<b>Performance Marker</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Source/Evidence</b>
<b>14</b>	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)	One legacy case was cleared during the reporting period and one remains (see National Headline Indicators page 28)
<b>15</b>	Developer contributions: clear expectations - set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan,) and - in pre-application discussions	Y/N Examples	<p>LDP</p> <p>Developer contributions are set out in the current LDP (Policy 2 Assessment of Development, page 13) and are set out in the emerging LDP.</p> <p>To date there has been limited intervention in developer contributions, due to the limited economy in the Outer Hebrides (see Planning Context, page 1 of PPF Report). However, the emerging Plan has a specific stand-alone policy on Developer Contributions which references Circular 3/2012 and how policy aligns with this. We will monitor the effectiveness of this policy, once the Plan is adopted (see EI 12 Developer Contributions, page 49 of the <a href="#">Proposed LDP</a>).</p> <p>In view of the potential community benefit from large scale Wind Energy Development, the <a href="#">SG for Wind Energy Development 2016</a> has a section on Developer Obligations (page 16 of Supplementary Wind Energy Development).</p>



email: [planning@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:planning@cne-siar.gov.uk)

<http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planningservice/>

Stornoway Office: 01851 822 690

Balivanich Office: 01870 60 4990

**The Planning Service  
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
Council Offices  
Sandwick Road  
HS1 2BW**

