

As the Chair of the Planning, Environment and Development Committee I am particularly pleased to submit our Planning Performance Framework (PPF) for 2012/13.

We have a strong commitment to sustainable economic growth through our Council Programme – *Working Together for the Highlands*. We see the important role planning has to play in the delivery of our ambition and aspiration for the Highland area.

Our ambition is to have the best planning service in Scotland and through this PPF I believe that we are demonstrating that we are well on our way to realising that ambition. As a Council we have a strong set of core values: listening, open, valuing, improving, supporting, partnering and delivering. I believe that this PPF demonstrates that our planning service is at the forefront of delivering and demonstrating these values which will have significant benefit for Highland.

While we are very proud of our achievements to date, we recognise there is room for improvement and we feel that we are well placed to deliver these improvements over the coming year and I look forward to reporting on these in the 2013/14 PPF.

Cllr Thomas Prag  
Chair of the Planning, Environment and Development Committee  
The Highland Council

## National Headline Indicators

Key outcomes	2012-2013	2011-2012
<b>Development Planning</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• age of local/strategic development plan(s) (full years)</li> </ul>	0	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development plan scheme: on track?</li> </ul>	Y	Y
<i>Note - Highland-wide LDP adopted in April 2012. Before that 8 Local Plans were in force, some being relatively recent and 1 or 2 being over 10 years old. The average age of these Local Plans was 6 years.</i>		
<b>Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Housing Land: Years Supply</li> </ul>	Y	Y
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• effective housing land supply</li> </ul>	31495 units	31518 units
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing approvals</li> </ul>	673 units	819 units
<i>Note - Not including Cairngorms National Park. These figures are based on draft figures taken from our emerging Housing Land Audit - as such their effectiveness has not yet been confirmed.</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective employment land supply</li> </ul>	3752ha	4181ha
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment land take up</li> </ul>	286ha	429ha
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective commercial floor space supply</li> </ul>	Figures not available	Figures were not supplied for 11/12
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial floorspace delivered</li> </ul>	Figures not available	Figures were not supplied for 11/12
<b>Development Management</b>		
<b>Project Planning</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice</li> </ul>	19.9%	12.3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• number of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan</li> </ul>	0	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• percentage planned timescales met</li> </ul>	0%	50%
<b>Decision - making</b>		

• application approval rate	93%	93.2%
• delegation rate	94.3%	93.8%
Decision – making timescales		
Average Number of weeks to decision:		
• major developments	29.4	79.9
• local developments (non-householder)	15.0	17.1
• householder developments	7.4	7.9
<b>Enforcement</b>		
• time since enforcement charter published / reviewed (months)	22	24
• number of breaches identified / resolved	Not Available	Not Available

#### Further information on Adopted Local Development Plan / Local Plans

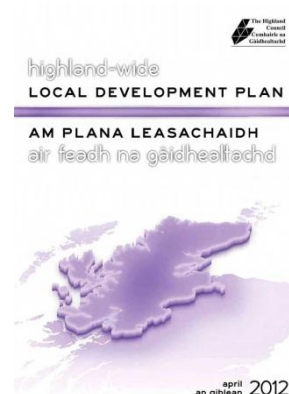
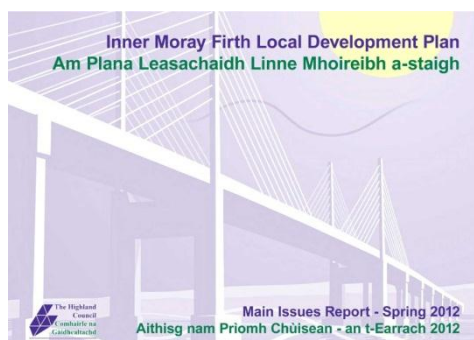
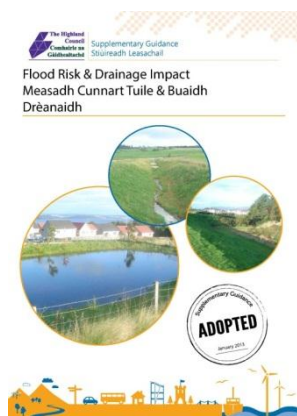
Plan	Status at 31 March 2013	Date adopted/ approved	Number of full years passed
<b>Adopted Local Development Plans/Local Plans</b>			
Highland-wide Local Development Plan	Adopted	5 April 2012	0
Badenoch and Strathspey Local Plan (as continued in force)	Adopted	11 September 1997 (Retained in force 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2012)	15
Nairnshire Local Plan (as continued in force)	Adopted	21 December 2000 (Retained in force 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2012)	12
Caithness Local Plan (as continued in force)	Adopted	12 September 2002 (Retained in force 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2012)	10
Inverness Local Plan (as continued in force)	Adopted	2 March 2006 (Retained in force 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2012)	7
Wester Ross Local Plan (as continued in force)	Adopted	29 June 2006 (Retained in force	6

				5 <sup>th</sup> April 2012)	
Ross and Cromarty East Local Plan (as continued in force)	Adopted			8 February 2007 (Retained in force 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2012)	6
Sutherland Local Plan (as continued in force)	Adopted			24 June 2010 (Retained in force 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2012)	2
West Highland and Islands Local Plan (as continued in force)	Adopted			9 September 2010 (Retained in force 5 <sup>th</sup> April 2012)	2
<b>Emerging Local Development Plans</b>					
Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan	Main Report	Issues	-		-
Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan	Pre publication - Call for sites	MIR - Call	-		-
West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan	Pre commencement		-		-

### Open for Business

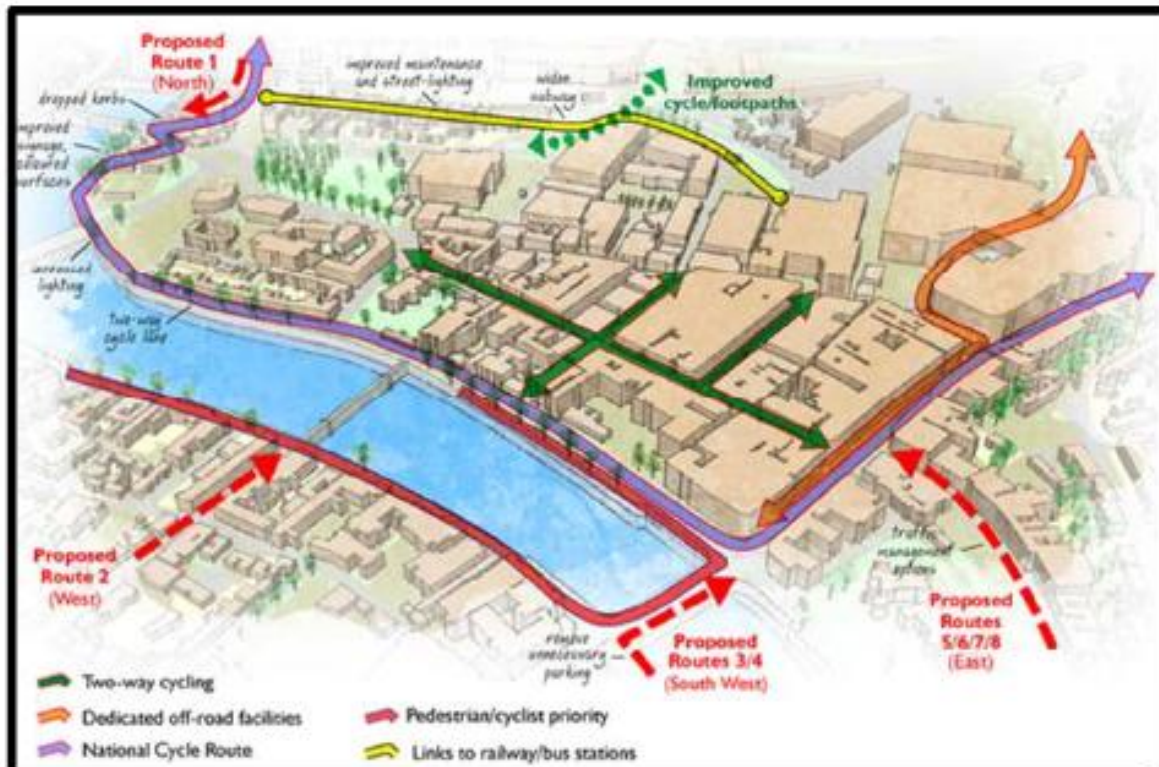


Following adoption of the Highland-wide Local Development Plan in April 2012 we have an up to date planning policy framework upon which to base planning decisions. The Highland-wide Local Development Plan received a commendation at the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2012. A number of key aims detailed in its action program have been delivered in partnership with stakeholders to allow priorities in the plan to be brought forward. This includes the statutory adoption of 16 Supplementary Guidance documents, both general policy topic guidance and area/site specific briefs. A number of key projects are also moving towards delivery; in particular we are minded to grant permission (subject to legal agreement) for the Tornagrain New Town and construction of the 87 hectare Inverness Campus began (and is now substantially complete). Significant progress has also been made on the Inner Moray Firth Local Development with the publication of the Main Issues Report in spring 2012.





## Case Study 1 – Inverness City Centre Development Brief



The **Inverness City Centre Development Brief** was produced to help deliver the aspirations set out in the Inverness City Vision by identifying and promoting areas for redevelopment and enhancement. A key component of the brief will be effective partnership working. Proposals focus on: the built and natural heritage and environment; movement and transport, including connectivity of the city centre; tourism; the economy, and living in the City Centre. Many projects are underway with more commencing throughout 2013.



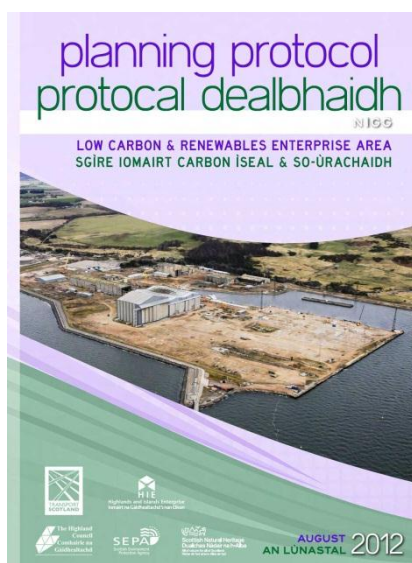
We have prepared an Economic Recovery and Development Plan for the period 2013-2018. It sets out our strategy for growth for the public and private sectors to ensure Highland climbs out of recession with a stronger and more sustainable economic base and potential for growth. Planning has to play a key role in the implementation of this plan.



In partnership with key agencies we have prepared Planning Protocols for the three Enterprise Area strategic sites within Highland – Inverness Campus, Nigg and Scrabster. These commit all partners to work together to facilitate the planning process in these designated areas.

We recognise that delays in dealing with development proposals for new or expanding businesses can have a negative financial impact and can effect local employment and economic growth. As such a Planning Advice Note and Planning Protocol are in place to ensure that these types of applications dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible.

We statutorily adopted supplementary planning guidance on Developer Contributions in March 2013. It provides details of the instances where improvements or financial contributions are likely to be sought and, where possible, an indication of the scale of those contributions towards affordable housing, education, transport, green and community infrastructure and public art. The Highland-wide Local Development Plan also identifies key infrastructure likely to be required to support developments allocated in the plan. The Council's Planning Gain Negotiator continues to provide a single point of contact for contributions which injects improved certainty, consistency and speed into the system.





We have continued to deliver an effective and efficient pre-application advice service for Major Development and Local Developments. These services are resourced and delivered in partnership with other Council services and public bodies. The proportion of planning applications subject to pre-application advice is continually rising, with 20% receiving formal pre-application advice in 2012/13. At pre-application and post-decision stages applicants are provided with contact details for relevant officers and external agencies that can provide further advice. We are resourcing a restructured planning enforcement team to more effectively monitor post-decision activity.

Planning Application Submission Checklist	
If there is a tick next to one of the following documents then we will require you to submit it along with your application for planning permission. If you choose not to follow our advice and do not submit one of the required documents then we will expect a justification for this. A form for this which should be submitted with your application is available to download from <a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/">http://www.highland.gov.uk/</a>	
Natural Heritage	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
	Landscape Design Statement
	Landscape Maintenance/Management Plan
	Protected Habitat Survey
	Protected Species Survey
Design	Tree Survey
	Proposed and Existing Levels
	Design Brief and/or Master Plan
	Design and Access Statement including site/layout analysis
	Sustainable Design Statement
Amenity	Contaminated Land Report
	Dust Survey
	Noise Impact Assessment
	Waste Strategy
	Travel Plan Framework
Transport and Wider Access	Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG)
	Transport Assessment
Water	Flood Risk Assessment
	Sustainable Urban Drainage System Plan
Built and Cultural Heritage	Archaeology watching brief/Site investigations
	Historic Building Recording
	Structural Survey
Public Consultations	Pre-application Consultation Report
Miscellaneous	Minerals (mitigation and restoration management plan)
	Retail Assessment
Any other appropriate document	Construction Environment Management Document

**Environmental Impact Assessment**

Screening

The Council is obliged to screen development proposals that may require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Unless specifically requested it is not the Council's intention to automatically screen proposals and issue a formal Screening Opinion.

The Highland Council Screening response was issued on.....	
The Highland Council Screening response is attached	
The Highland Council Screening response is not attached because it was not requested.	✓

Scoping

Where a proposal has been determined to require an EIA, and therefore will require the production of an Environmental Statement, we aim to give a Scoping response at this stage if we have not already been approached to do so.

The Highland Council Scoping Response was issued on....	
The Highland Council Scoping Response is attached	
The Highland Council Scoping Response is not attached because it was not requested.	✓

As part of the written feedback to customers using our pre-application advice services the level of supporting information to accompany a future planning application is made clear. This allows requests for supporting information from applicants to be reasonable and proportionate, helping to save time and costs for all. We are also working on a validation checklist for applicants.

On receipt of a planning application being delegated to a case officer all relevant consultees are consulted in the first instance regardless of the likely acceptability in principle of proposal.

As far as possible the case officer providing pre-application advice will be the allocated officer for any future related applications and post-decision advice. Area managers and team leaders delegate advice requests appropriately amongst their teams to reflect officers level of experience with the scale and complexity of advice requested. All decisions and advice are signed by senior management before being provided to applicants.

We are committed to the delivery of high quality customer service. Our newly implemented Shared Business Support service allows telephone calls to be channelled effectively and for quick responses to meeting requests to allow meetings to take place as soon as practically possible.

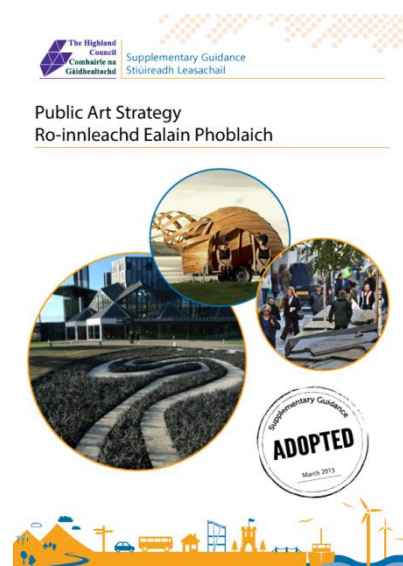
Due to these systems being in place we have received feedback through our customer survey which indicates over 65% of our customers think our service is good or excellent.



## High Quality Development on the Ground

The Highland-wide Local Development Plan contains policies on Sustainable Design and Design Quality and Place Making. A number of supplementary guidance documents related to design have also been statutorily adopted including Public Art, Historic Environment Strategy, Housing in the Countryside Siting and Design and a Sustainable Design Guide. Preparation has begun on Residential Design and Layout Supplementary Guidance which will provide detailed guidance and developer requirements related to quality placemaking.

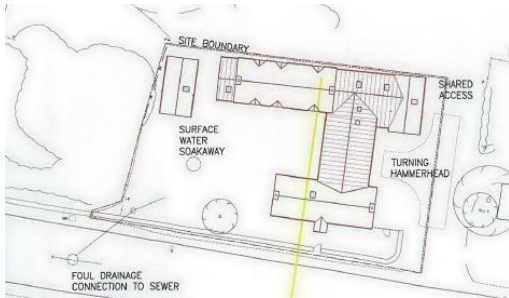
Our planning and development service has a range of specialist officers, including conservation and landscape officers. We frequently negotiate with applicants to reach improved design solutions for all levels of development (see case study 2).



We continue to support PLACE – the Design Review Panel in Inverness. It recently considered a Council led affordable housing scheme in Inverness and it is hoped that this will reinvigorate the process. We supported and provided sponsorship to the Inverness Architectural Association Awards 2012. We have ‘added value’ to and promoted developments that were winners and commended in these awards well as the Saltire Housing Society Design Awards 2012 and the 2012 RIAS Andrew Doolan Awards.

## Case Study 2 – Ensuring Quality Development on the Ground

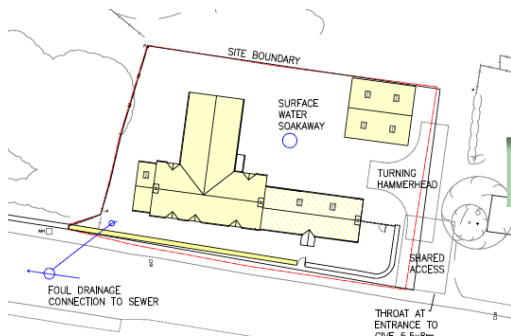
Below are examples of enhancements to the design of proposals brought forward through negotiation between development management officers and applicants.



Before



Coylum Cottage, Coylumbidge



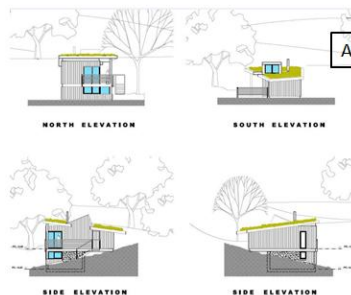
After



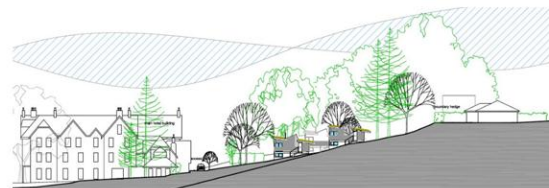
As submitted



Ben Wyvis Chalets, Strathpeffer



As amended





Architecture and Design Scotland have provided Master Planning training for our planning officers. We held specific training sessions for our Councillors and Community Councils following elections in 2012. This helped these groups to gain a better understanding of the planning system and their remit within it.

Investment in a number of strategic development sites has delivered benefits for communities. For example the first phase of Inshes District Park in Inverness opened in August 2012, part of which was funded by developer contributions.

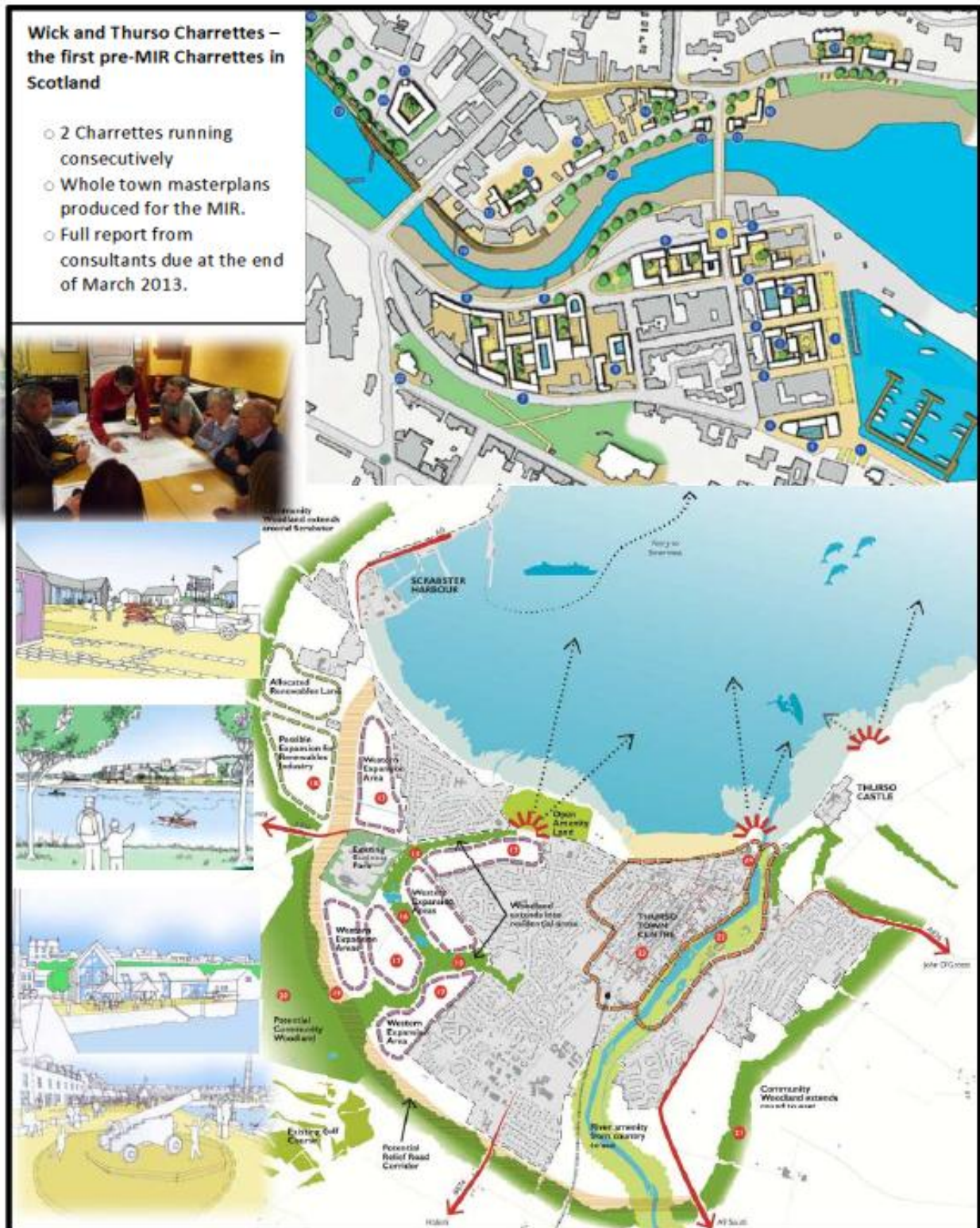


Two Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes were operational during 2012/13. The Wick scheme ended in March 2013; it invested in five large grant projects and over 30 smaller grant projects which have contributed to preserving and enhancing the Pulteneytown Conservation Area and delivered a range of education and training events. The Dingwall scheme aims to support regeneration through investment in the historic environment. A number of regeneration projects are planned including the repair and conservation of Dingwall Townhouse; small building repair grants, training in traditional building skills and engagement with local schools to raise pupils' awareness of the town's historic built environment.

We seek to put local people at the heart of the process of designing their communities. In doing this we held a Charrette to gain a general consensus on the land uses the Torvean and Ness-side expansion area of Inverness, the outcome of which was an outline masterplan which influenced the content of the Development Brief.

As part of the Scottish Government supported Charrette Mainstreaming Programme charrettes were held in Wick and Thurso to give their communities a unique opportunity to shape the future of their community and influence future development decisions in the area. The aim of the Charrette events was to prepare whole-town masterplans that focused on creating design and quality of place to feed into the Caithness and Sutherland Main Issues Report.

## Case Study 3 – Using Charrettes to engage people in the Planning System



## Delivering Certainty

The Highland-wide Local Development Plan Action Programme was prepared in conjunction with key agencies. It names the lead agency involved in the delivery of each action and progress is reviewed on a regular basis. As detailed in the 'open for business' section a number of key aims detailed in the action plan have been delivered.

Detailed project management plans are in place to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of our four local development plans. These plans are regularly discussed at section meetings and updated to reflect progress. Our development plan scheme contains a timetable of key milestones for preparing our development plans, this is updated every six months and reported to Committee.

Our up to date development plan provides a robust and defensible development planning policy framework. During the reporting period 27 applications were approved that were advertised as contrary to the development plan; equivalent to 0.7% of all applications. Furthermore, during the reporting period no applications were reported to Committee that were recommended for approval significantly contrary to the development plan.

Our Local and Major Pre-application Advice Services provide a broad statement stating whether we are likely to support proposals based on the evidence provided. Weekly team meetings are held in all development management area offices to discuss cases and all pre-application advice is signed off by Area Managers or Team leaders to ensure consistency and reliability of officer advice. A total of 10 applications were determined contrary to officer recommendation at planning committees held during the reporting period.

Regular liaison meetings are held with other Council services and key agencies to discuss the level, detail and reliability of advice expected to be provided on development proposals. These partners are aware of the importance of meeting specified timescales for providing advice to development plans and development management for both pre-applications and applications. Standard planning conditions that cover a range of different disciplines were drawn up with input from other Council services and key agencies. These are now being used and help to avoid delay and provide greater certainty. We have been working with our solicitors to set defined timescales for the preparation of Section 75 Agreements following decisions on applications being taken. As detailed in the 'open for business' section, in partnership with key agencies we have prepared Planning Protocols for the three Enterprise Area strategic sites within Highland. These commit all partners to work together to facilitate the planning process in these designated areas and are being actively implemented.

Regular major application monitoring meetings continue to be held which aim to identify likely decision timescales. Processing agreements have been prepared by the Council for all outstanding major applications that specify clear and realistic timescale for actions and decisions.



Our website provides clear guidance on expected standards for application submissions, including links to eplanning guidance notes. Our Pre-application Advice Services provide clear information on any assessments required to support an application. We are actively progressing the implementation of a validation checklist for applicants, this will be the subject of further discussion amongst team leaders prior to implementation.

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The Highland Council  
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

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## Planning Guidance and Advice by Development Type

To be directed to the relevant advice and guidance for your proposal please choose the type of development you are intending to carry out from the list below:

- [House Extensions/Alterations](#)
- [Single house or small group up to a maximum of 3 houses](#)
- [Developments of 4 or more houses](#)
- [Small scale business development](#)
- [Large scale industrial and business developments](#)
- [Small scale wind turbine development](#)
- [Large scale renewables projects](#)

If your proposal falls outwith the above development types then please [contact us](#) for more information.

Considering this guidance before you submit a planning application should give you a better understanding of some of the factors that guide the decision making process, and help you to provide the information that we are likely to need to ensure your proposal is line with Council policy. Ultimately this should make for speedier and more efficient decisions.

We also have a [protocol for handling planning applications for people with disabilities \(pdf 35kb\)](#) and aim to fast track applications to improve access to public buildings or to improve the access, safety, health or comfort of a person with a disability at their home.

### Pre-Application Advice

If would you like to seek pre-application advice from us before applying for permission please see our [pre-application advice page](#).

### House Extensions

If you are proposing to build an extension to your property please first read our [do I need planning permission](#) page for advice on whether or not you will require formal consent for the works you want to do.

#### In This Section

- Advice and Guidance
- Appealing a Planning Decision
- How do I apply for Planning Permission?
- Definitions of Major Developments
- Do I need Planning Permission?
- Enterprise Areas
- Planning Application Forms and Guidance
- Map Extract Scheme
- Consents Dealt with by the Planning Authority
- Planning Advice and Guidance
- Planning Guidance and Advice by Development Type
- Pre-Application Advice Service
- Guide to Commenting on a Planning Application
- View or comment on a Planning Application?
- Historic weekly lists of planning applications and delegated decisions
- What happens after you have submitted a Planning Application
- What's New!
- Planning Enforcement

#### Current Documents



## Communications, engagement and customer service

We have an Enforcement Charter and Development Plans Customer Service Charter in place which sets out the standards customers should expect. We are working to produce a joint Development Plans and Development Management Customer Service Charter, this will be reported in our 2013/3014 PPF.

Our Customer Migration project, whereby first-time contact with the Service is processed by a central call centre has now been rolled out across our area Development Management Offices. Basic advice, forms and guidance notes can be issued by the call centre team. More detailed enquiries are passed to the duty Planning Officer. This helps us target resources effectively and efficiently, and ensures that a consistent level of service is offered.



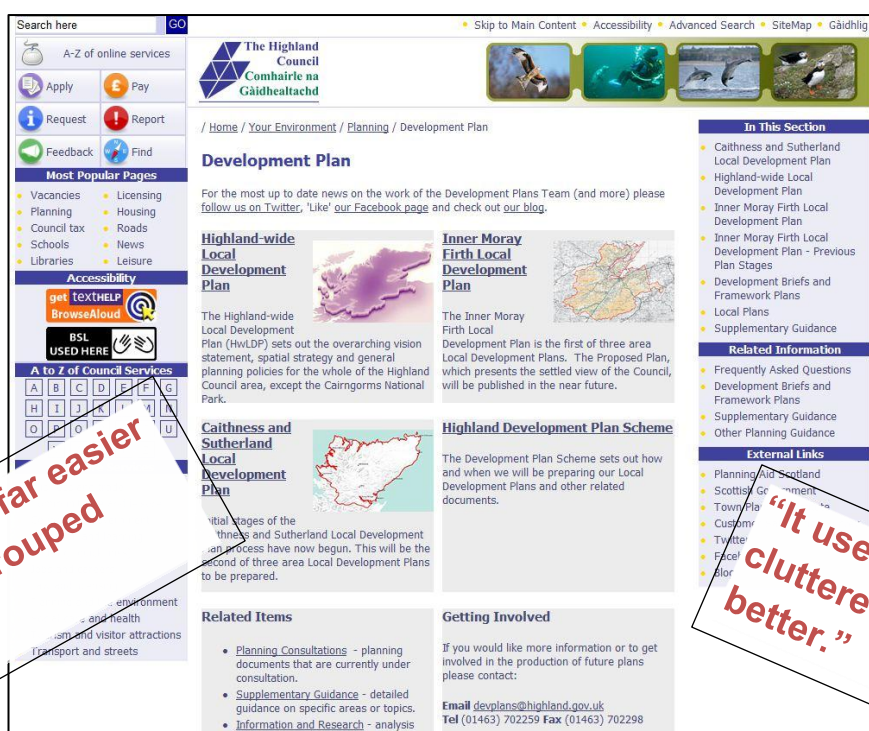
We appointed a dedicated Customer Services Officer for the Planning and Development Service and implemented a new two stage complaints procedure in 2012. Our Customer Services Officer attended area office team meetings to train planning officers on the new procedure.

A link to our Planning Service Satisfaction Survey is included at the foot of all outgoing emails from Planning Service staff and a customer feedback form is attached to all completed Local and Major Pre-application advice packs. The results of completed feedback forms and surveys are collated by our Customer Services Officer and reported to senior management and officers. The results help to inform improvements to the service.

Five Focus Groups attended by over 60 agents were held across the Council area in 2012. This allowed us update agents on policy and procedures and to gather feedback on performance suggestions for improvement.

Approximately 147 complaints were received in connection with the Planning and Buildings Standards Services in 2012/13. Due to the change in the complaints procedure during the reporting period the number of complaints upheld is not currently available, this will be reported in our next PPF. Where complaints are upheld a 'Lessons Learnt' paper is prepared and distributed to relevant officers. Dependant on the nature of the complaint a meeting may be held between officers and senior management and policy or procedure may be changed and/or additional training given to officers.

Significant improvements have been made to our website during the reporting period to make it more user friendly and to provide a wider range of information. Feedback on the website redesign received via an online survey found that all users rated it much better, better or the same in terms of ease of use, time spent looking for information of services and how it looks. Customer hit rates are analysed regularly and show a high number of page views on the planning pages of our website. We provide regular planning related updates on Facebook and Twitter, both of which experienced a considerable increase in the number of 'likes' and 'followers' respectively.



The proportion of applications submitted electronically in Highland in 2012/13 was 64%. This figure has increased each year since implementation and is much higher than the current Scottish average of 45%. In 2012/13 approximately 10% of representations to planning applications were submitted online, this is almost double the amount in 2011/12. We proactively encourage the use of ePlanning and our facility for online representations as the easiest and most efficient way to submit or comment on planning applications.

Our Development Plans Team is increasingly making use of online consultation methods. Comments could be received by email on the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Main Issues Report and various pieces of Supplementary Guidance and an online form was developed for comments on the Inverness City Centre Development Brief. More innovative methods are currently being trialled and will be reported in next PPF.

We held numerous consultation events during the reporting period on development plan documents and supplementary guidance. These took the form of exhibitions, workshops and charrettes. To allow for meaningful and balanced engagement for the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan Main Issues Report we held over 35 widely publicised consultation events in each of main settlements in the Inner Moray Firth Area. As a result, we received comments from almost 1000 individuals and organisations.

We continue to have Crystal Mark Status on our Development Plan Scheme and have been working with our graphic designers to make our development plan documents easier to read. We also provide all headings in our publications in English and Gaelic and can provide copies of documents, on request, in audio, large print and other languages. We have made progress in engaging with hard to reach groups by producing protocols and implementing protocols for working with access panels.



## **Efficient and Effective Decision Making**

We have two area planning committees, North and South, which meet once a month, The Planning Review Body meets every 6 weeks. In 2012/13, committee dealt with 150 applications, 16% were council applications. The meetings are webcast and archived.

Decisions on development planning documents are made by Planning, Environment and Development Committee. In 2012/13 we have been successfully utilising the new local area committee structures to debate the content of planning documents where they are of significant interest and may have a greater interest for a particular area giving a more local voice on planning issues without slowing down the process.

In 2012/13 we have worked with our legal team to bring forward changes to the scheme of delegation to bring more proportionality to the decision making process for planning applications, enforcement issues and development planning.

We have made a concerted effort to proactively reduce the number of planning applications which have been in the system for a number of years. This has led to a number of these cases being determined and reduction in these type of cases to only 29, while still high this is being addressed by development management officers.

Recognising the significant benefits of processing agreements, we now encourage all major developments to be accompanied by a processing agreement and we have delivered training to our staff to ensure that the benefits can be realised. We have prepared processing agreements for every major application which is currently in the system in Highland to aid a project management approach to the determination of these complex applications. During 2012/13 we adopted a procedure that once the Proposal of Application notice is submitted the case officer will contact the applicant to begin preparing the processing agreement.

We have regular liaison with many of the agencies which contribute to the delivery of a high quality planning service to ensure that there is mutual understanding over policy, procedures and service delivery. This has been particularly important in bringing forward the production of development plan documents and understanding new approaches to planning liaison from key agency.

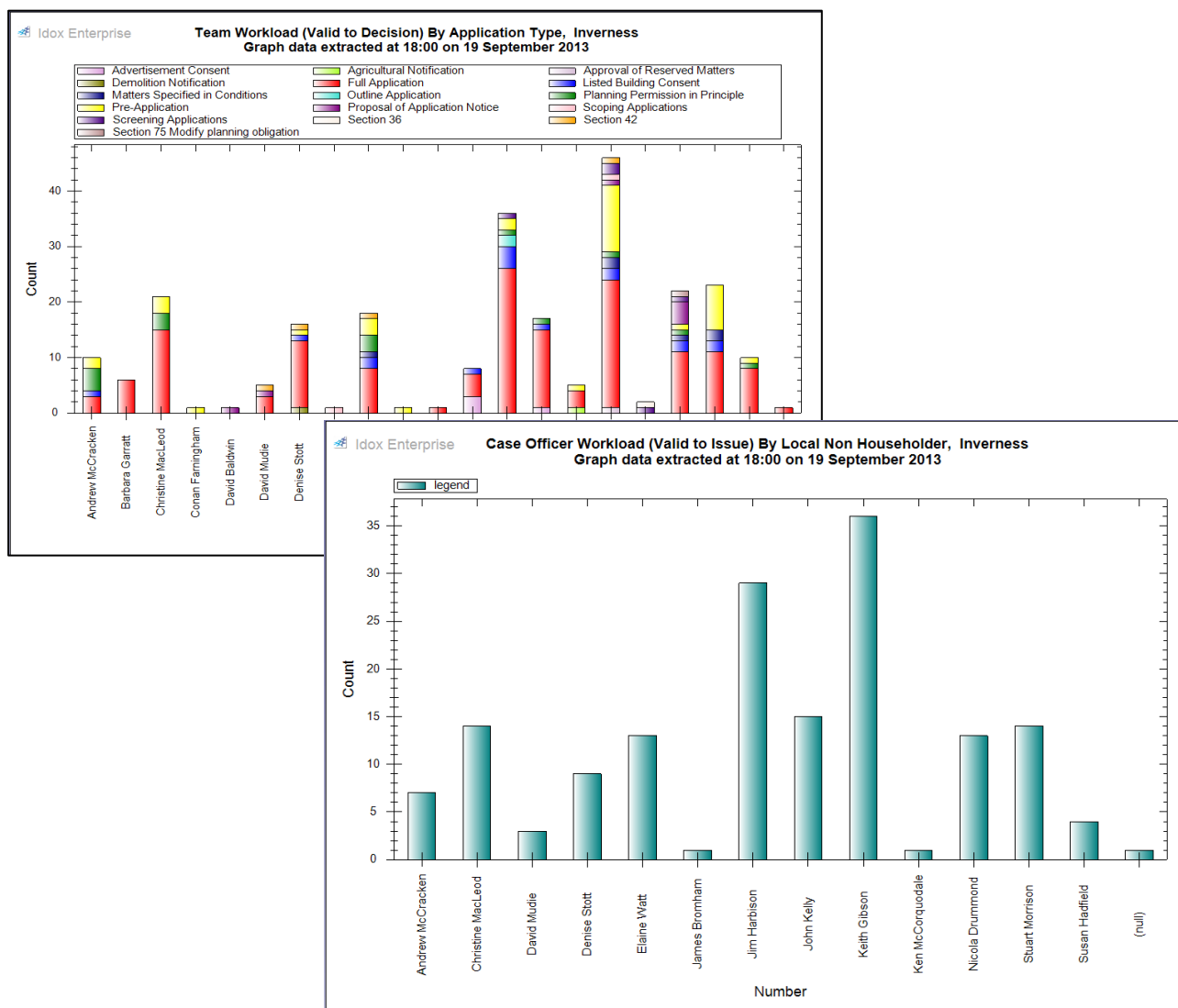
We offer a comprehensive time management course which all staff are encouraged to attend.



## Effective Management Structures

The development management function is based across 8 locations: Headquarters, Inverness, Kingussie, Fort William, Portree, Dingwall, Golspie and Wick. The development planning and enforcement teams are based at Headquarters.

The introduction of Idox Enterprise has enabled us to more closely monitor performance and workload issues which has led to improved management of performance in particular determination of planning applications. This has ensured that resources can be targeted to areas of need at the correct time.



Over the course of 2012/13, the Council has revisited its PDP process and now undertakes a more comprehensive Employee Review and Development, which was introduced in March 2013. This will enable to us to create a comprehensive training plan for the service, meeting the needs of our staff in an effective and efficient manner. We also continue to support the delivery of CPD to our staff by working in partnership with the RTPI Highlands and Islands Chapter to deliver free CPD events. We are currently supporting six Graduate Planners through their Assessment of Professional Competence.



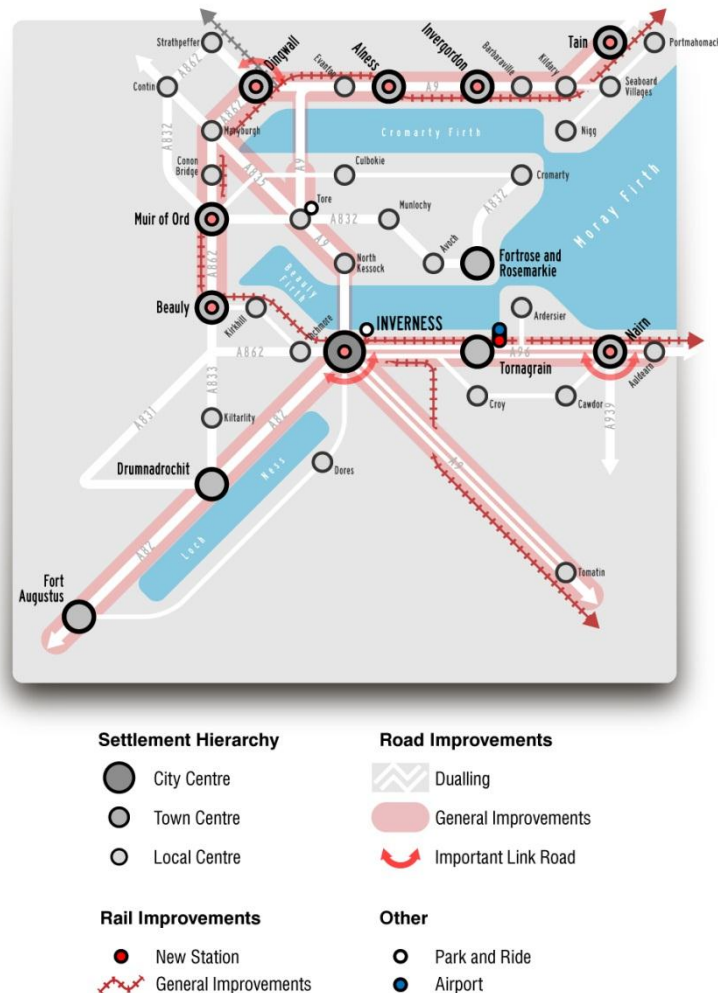
We have worked in partnership with neighbouring local authorities to share best practice through the North of Scotland Development Plans Forum. Our development management teams have held regular liaison with SEPA and SNH to gain better understanding of policies and procedures used in delivering an effective development management system which protects and enhances the natural heritage. We continue to work in partnership with Inverness BID in finding plan led solutions specific issues within Inverness City Centre and in the last year we have also helped to support the work to bring forward other BIDs in Highland.

## Financial Management and Local Governance

The Planning and Development Service identifies the key actions required to meet the Council's corporate objectives as set out in our Corporate plan and the Programme for Administration.

Following an Employee Survey carried out in September 2012 we have established an Action Plan and Employee Forum to create a dialogue and exchange of views on matters of mutual concern.

We continue to utilise a Consultancy Framework contract in partnership with other local authorities in the north of Scotland. This contract allows call-offs to be made against three preferred suppliers. This has been used to deliver a range of work in the period 2012/13 but most notably an update to the Inner Moray Firth Traffic Model which is a key piece of supporting evidence for the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan.



## Culture of Continuous Improvement

We continue to strive to improve every aspect of our service and through initiatives which have been put in place such as processing agreements we are becoming even more accountable for our own performance.

As set out elsewhere in this Framework we are committed to Continuous Professional Development for our staff, elected members and community councils and we have developed a service wide training plan to address the needs of the service to ensure we can deliver the best planning service in Scotland.

Looking back at the Service Improvements we identified for 2012/13 we are proud that we have continued to improve our service in the majority of areas

Open for Business		
Deliver to the timescales set out within the Development Plan Scheme	Progress with Development Plans is good with various items of Supplementary Guidance progressing towards adoption and/or consultation. Work on the Wick and Thurso Charrettes as part of the Caithness & Sutherland Local Development Plan has been successful. The timescales for the Inner Moray Firth Plan has been pushed back by a few months but it is hoped that time can be saved later in the process.	
Improve our processes and procedures to continue to deliver 100% of Major Development Pre-application advice service within 4 weeks	During 2012/13, 100% of major application pre-application packs were delivered within 4 weeks.	
Improve our processes and procedures to deliver 90% of local Pre-application advice packs within 6 weeks (and work towards a 4 week determination timescale for implementation 2013/14)	The figures for pre-application packs at the end of the year stood at 74% delivered within a 6 week period. Further discussion required in respect of whether 4 week target should be implemented in 2013/14	
Improve our processes and procedures to determine 65% of all Planning Applications determined within 2 months	Performance against this target has been reached for the year as a whole with 65% being delivered within 2 months - an improvement of 2% on last years performance and a 9% improvement on the 2010/11 figure..	
Improve our processes and procedures to determine 85% of householder planning applications within 2 months	Performance is well above target in respect of this measure with the year end figure standing at 88%, an improvement of 7% over the 2011/12 total and a 12% improvement from the 2010/11 period.	



High Quality Development on the Ground		
Work with partners to ensure the effective operation of the PLACE Design Review Panel in Inverness	The PLACE Review panel has recently met to discuss a Council development scheme, and it is hoped that this will reinvigorate the process.	
Provide evidence of high quality designs being approved and implemented	The year end achievements include a range of good examples.	
Carry out a formal review of the Enforcement Charter and put in place processes and procedures to support implementation.	This review is now underway. A revised charter is being considered by the May 2013 PED Committee. Further resources have been agreed by Council to ensure that this part of the Service is fully staffed.	
Certainty		
Implement the protocols for Enterprise Areas and assist in the delivery of development on the ground in these areas	The protocols are being actively implemented, with development interest on all three sites at pre-application stage.	
Ensure that all Major Development proposals are accompanied by Processing Agreements by end of 2012	This work has not been completed, and there is a revised timescale of end of March 2013.	
Develop a Protocol with other services/agencies for delivery of joint consents e.g. Road Construction Consent or Hydro Scheme CAR Licence applications	Although meetings have been held with SEPA, an initiative to link the planning application and CAR Licence procedures has not been taken forward to date.	
Provide better information to developers on the standards of information expected to accompany planning applications (validation checklist)	This was actively progressed, and will be the subject of further discussion amongst the team leaders prior to implementation.	

Monitoring database to be further developed for employment and commercial developments	No progress to date.	
<b>Communications, engagement and customer service</b>		
Increase number of planning applications submitted electronically by actively promoting the e-planning system	Numbers of planning applications being submitted electronically stands at 63%	
Provide evidence of efforts to engage with hard to reach groups	The protocols for working with access panels have been produced and are being implemented.	
Deliver Focus Groups for Planning across the Highland area during 2012/13	Focus Groups were held during 2012/13	
<b>Financial Management and Local Governance</b>		
Put in place a procedure for time recording of 5% of planning applications to be implemented in last quarter of 2012/13	No progress to date, although the lead on this may be taken at a national level.	
<b>Culture of continuous improvement</b>		
Ensure that all staff have PDPs delivered and the Service Training Plan produced and implemented.	All staff have been given up to date PDPs and a training plan is being implemented.	

**Much of the evidence to support The Highland Council's performance and achievements is documented in committee reports and papers.**

**A full list of our key publications, customer guidance, planning policies and procedures can be found on our website:**

**[www.highland.gov.uk/planning](http://www.highland.gov.uk/planning)**

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Search for 'HighlandLDPs'

Our Service Improvement Plan for 2013/14 is set out below, and this Plan implements many of the issues set out in the Key Performance Markers produced by Scottish Government. These Service Improvement targets were agreed by the Council's Planning Environment and Development Committee on 14 August 2013

### **Open for Business**

We will deliver 100% of Major Pre-application packs within 4 weeks.

We will deliver at least 80% of Local Pre-application packs within 6 weeks.

We will ensure that all Major Development proposals are accompanied by Processing Agreements by end of June 2013.

### **High Quality Development on the Ground**

We will prepare and publicise a presentation of high quality developments supported by the Service by March 2014.

We will prepare a Development Plans Scheme by April 2013 and prepare a progress report by September 2013.

We will prepare our Plan documents in line with the timescales set out in the Development Plans Scheme.

We will deliver the actions within Development Plan Action Programmes to stated timescales.

### **Certainty**

We will deliver at least 70% of Scoping Opinions within 5 Weeks.

We will deliver at least 60% of Screening Opinions within 21 Days.

We will implement the Protocols for Enterprise Areas and deliver development to stated timescales.

We will put in place more effective Monitoring Systems for Development Plans (audits) during 2013/14.

### **Communications, Engagement and Customer Service**

We will deliver Focus Groups for Planning across the Highland area during 2013/14.

We will provide Community Council planning training during 2013/14.

We will provide evidence of efforts to engage with hard to reach groups during 2013/14.

We will carry out a comprehensive customer survey during 2013/14 and prepare an action plan from the results.

### **Efficient and Effective Decision Making**



We will achieve at least an average of 24 weeks for determination of major planning applications.

We will achieve at least an average of 11 weeks for determination of local planning applications.

We will achieve at least an average of 9 weeks for determination of Other applications.

We will determine at least 68% of all Planning Applications within 2 Months.

We will determine at least 90% of Householder Planning Applications within 2 Months .

We will determine at least 60% of Non Householder Planning Applications within 2 Months.

We will put in place procedures to ensure that legal agreements are concluded within 4 months following a minded to grant decision.

### **Effective Management Structures**

We will ensure that all staff have Employee Review and Development Plans delivered by end June 2013 and the Service Training Plan produced and implemented by end August 2013.

### **Financial Management and Local Governance**

We will contribute to a national project on costs of delivering the planning service.

### **Culture of Continuous Improvement**

We will implement a new Enforcement Charter by June 2013.

We will prepare and implement a Validation Checklist for use by October 2013.

We will implement Development Management for Enterprise by March 2014.

We will implement the Uniform Module for Enforcement and new processes for Enforcement by December 2013.

We will design and implement new systems for gathering, administering and analysing Development Plan responses by March 2014.

We will carry out a benchmarking exercise with other rural planning authorities (Aberdeenshire/Dumfries and Galloway/Scottish Borders/Argyll & Bute) during 2013/14.

We will prepare our Planning Performance Framework for submission to Scottish Government by end September 2013.

This Planning Performance Framework sets out the progress made in delivering a number of key improvements over the last year. The Service Improvement Plan has also been developed following feedback from last year's report, and takes forward a number of actions that we feel will help us to deliver improved performance over the coming year.

## Decision-making timescales

Category	Total number of decisions 2012-2013	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2012-2013	2011-2012
<b>Major developments</b>	20	29.4	79.9
<b>Local developments (non-householder)</b>	1727	15.0	17.1
• Local: less than 2 months	58.3 (%)	6.8	6.6
• Local: more than 2 months	42.9 (%)	26.3	29.3
<b>Householder developments</b>	730	7.4	7.9
• Local: less than 2 months	88.4 (%)	6.0	5.9
• Local: more than 2 months	11.6 (%)	17.5	17.7
<b>Housing developments</b>			
<b>Major</b>	2	51.9	138.7
<b>Local housing developments</b>	924	14.6	20.2
• Local: less than 2 months	53.6 (%)	7.0	6.8
• Local: more than 2 months	46.4 (%)	30.7	32.5
<b>Business and industry</b>			
<b>Major</b>	6	14.7	64.4
<b>Local business and industry</b>	233	9.8	12.6
• Local: less than 2 months	67.0 (%)	6.4	6.4
• Local: more than 2 months	33.0 (%)	16.8	25.5
<b>EIA developments</b>			
• Local Developments subject to EIA	8	28.2	19.5
• AMSCs (Subject to EIA)	1	14.1	
<b>Other consents*</b>			
Listed Building & Conservation Area Consents	138	13.6	12.0 (This is for all other consents)
Advertisements			
Hazardous substances consents			
Other Consents and Certificates	98	8.9	

	2	13.4	
	112	6.0	
<b>Planning/legal agreements**</b>	51	36.1	75.8
<b>Local reviews</b>	21	10.0	NA

\* 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.

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

### Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions  2012-2013	Original decision upheld			
		2012-2013		2011-2012	
		No.	%	No.	%
<b>Local reviews</b>	21	9	43	28	67
<b>Appeals to Scottish Ministers</b>	20	4	20	9	26



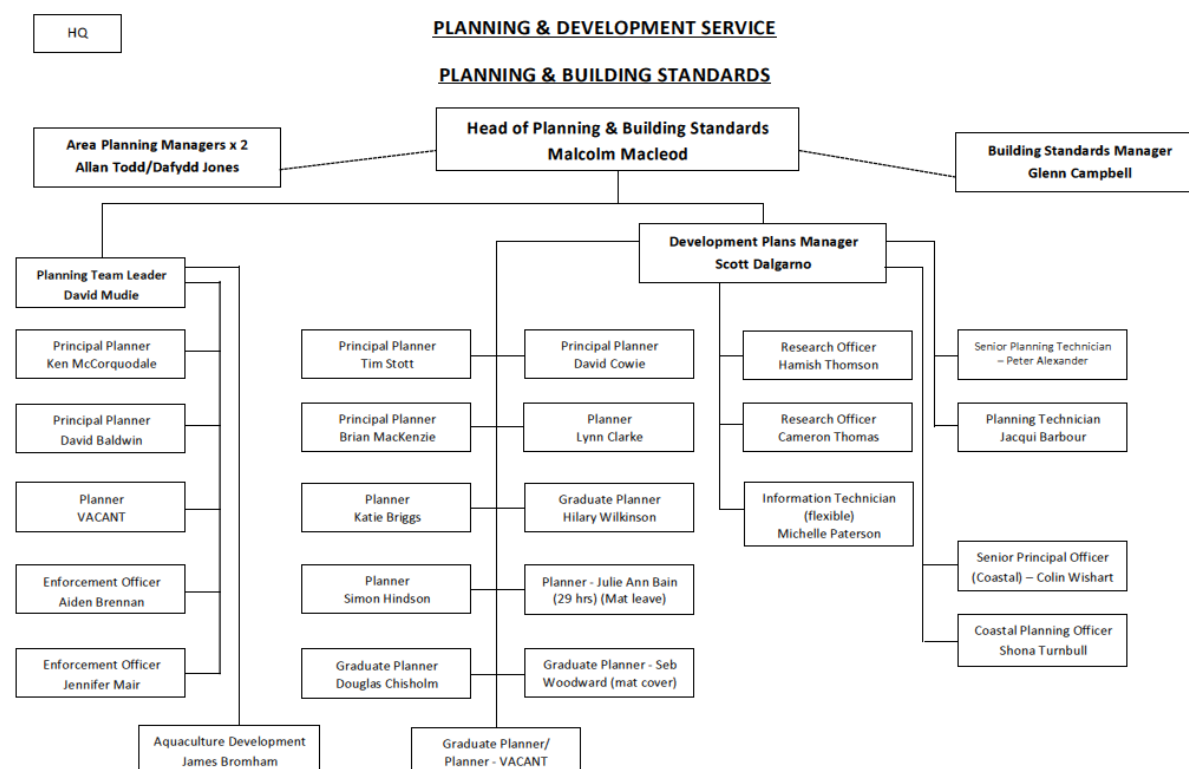
## Enforcement activity

	2012-2013	2011-2012
<b>Cases taken up</b>	139	330
<b>Breaches identified</b>	NA	NA
<b>Cases resolved</b>	NA	NA
<b>Notices served***</b>	39	37
<b>Reports to Procurator Fiscal</b>	None	None
<b>Prosecutions</b>	None	None

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

## Appendix 2 – Workforce and Financial Information

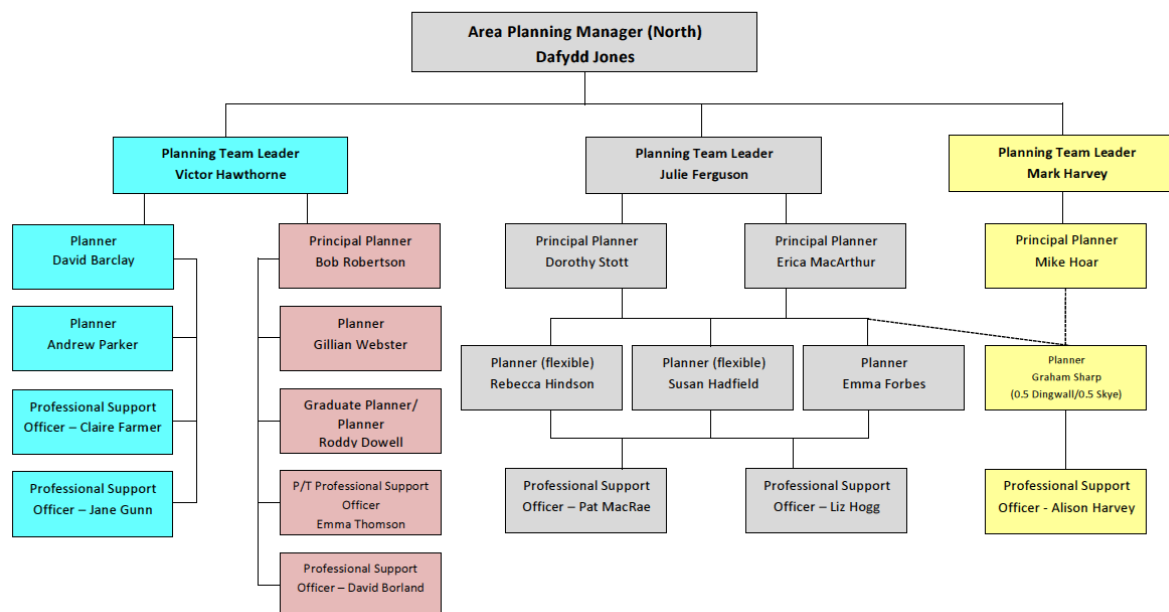
Below are the team structures which operate across our Planning Service:



Wick	Dingwall
Golspie	Skye

## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

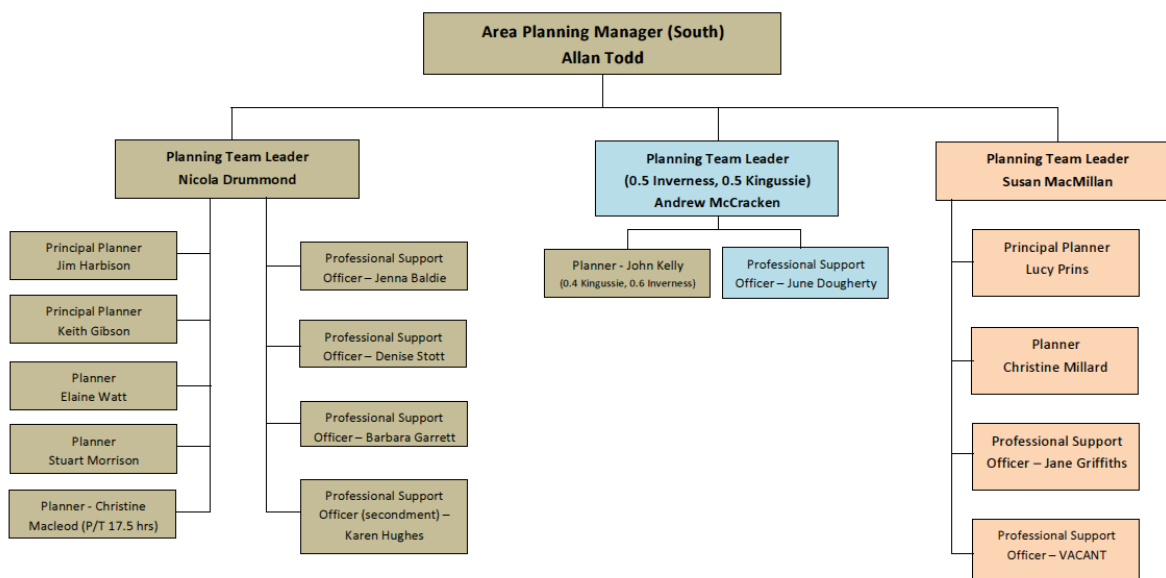
### CAITHNESS, SUTHERLAND, ROSS, SKYE & LOCHALSH



Fort William	Kintail House
Kingussie	

## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

### INVERNESS, NAIRN, BADENOCH & STRATHSPEY, LOCHABER



## Staffing Profile

Staffing age profile	Number
Under 30	10
30-39	14
40-49	24
50 and Over	16

## Committees

Committees & site visits (3)	No. per year
Full Council committees	7
Planning Committees	
Planning, Environment and Development Committee	5
Planning Applications Committee (North)	9
Planning Applications Committee (South)	10
Area Committees	
City of Inverness and Area Committee	6
Caithness and Sutherland Area Committee	4
Committee site visits	6
LRB	8
LRB site visits	0



## Budget Information for 2012/13

Gross Revenue Budget - £12.083m

Breakdown by section

Section	Gross Budget (£m)
<b>Planning and Building Standards</b>	
Development Plans Team	£0.628
Development Management and BS Team – HQ	£0.315
Development Management and BS Team – Areas	£3.263
Public Local Inquiries	£0.050
<b>Environment and Development</b>	
Economy and Regeneration	£4.609
Countryside and Natural Resources	£2.330
<b>Business Support</b>	£0.888
<b>Total</b>	<b>£12.083</b>

Breakdown by Staff and Other Costs

Section	Gross Budget (£m)
Staff costs (205 staff members)	£7.340
Other Costs	£4.743
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>£12.083</b>
Income (Planning and building warrant fees)	£3.501
Other income	£0.697
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>£7.885</b>

The Planning and Development Service also lead on a number of small capital projects through the Environment and Development side of the Service. Out Capital budget for 2010/11 – 2012/13 is set out below:

Year	Net Budget (£m)	Gross Budget (£m)
2011/12	£1.317	£1.565
2012/13	£0.915	£1.134