



the moray council

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

2014/15

**PLANNING PERFORMANCE
FRAMEWORK**



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Introduction

Over the last twelve months there has been some significant major development proposals approved and commenced in Moray. The continued investment in the Whisky industry has seen the opening of Dalmunach Distillery in Carron, and work has started on a new visitor centre for Macallan Distillery with an associated Biomass plant securing new employment and tourist opportunities. In terms of education Elgin has a new High School approved which will provide enhanced education and sporting facilities for the area and work is due to commence later this year. There has been a significant increase in the take up of employment land and that is continuing to increase which is a positive sign that the economy in Moray is growing.

The fourth planning performance framework has given Moray the opportunity to showcase and demonstrate the continued improvements that have been made to its planning service and our commitment to seek continuous improvement. Moray continues to be open for business and the planning service has a vital role to play in supporting the Scottish Government's economic strategy by ensuring that the planning application process is streamlined, customer focused and able to deliver the certainty that developers and investors require.

Progressing the Moray Local Development Plan through the examination phase has been a priority throughout 2014/15 and as the Reporter's recommendations have now been received. This is now being progressed through the final stages to adoption, which is anticipated to be by the end of July 2015. The Council in 2015 will have an up to date Local Development Plan giving developers the certainty that sites that are to be forthcoming in future planning applications will be supported by an up to date Local Plan.

In 2014/15 all Moray's major planning applications are covered by a processing agreement and this has assisted in resources being managed more effectively and provided developers with the certainty that they need to ensure their development is delivered on the ground to meet their timescales and financial deadlines.

A significant amount of work throughout 2014 has taken place to promote higher quality design through the preparation of master plans and a joined up approach between all services to front load proposals and ensure that developments conform to the key principles of place making and create a unique character making Moray a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

A Charrette for the re-development of Elgin town centre has now progressed to the final stages with a week long event engaging a number of businesses, local people, groups and schools in preparing a plan for the future of Elgin. An action plan which supports the regeneration of the town centre will be a major area of work in 2015/16 and will assist in prioritising the way Elgin develops over the next 10 years. Taking part in the town centre pilot project and working with Elgin BID has produced a Town centre Food & Drink trail for Elgin as well as a short media film supporting the Scottish Government's town centre first principle during the year of Food and Drink.

Significant improvements have been made over the last 12 months in further reducing average timescales for the determination of planning applications for major, local development proposals to a level that is below the Scottish national average for 2013/14. Maintaining these performance levels will be at the heart of the service delivery for 2015/16.

PART 1

NATIONAL HEADLINE INDICATORS (NHIS)

The table below provides performance figures for key indicators within both Development Management and Development Planning.

KEY OUTCOMES	2014/2015	2013 - 2014
Development Planning - Age of local/ strategic development plan(s) (full years) - Will the local/strategic development plan be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? (Y/N) - Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past Year? - Where development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year? (Y/N)	6 years (local) N Yes, earlier Yes	5 years (local)
Effective land supply and Delivery of outputs - Established housing supply 5-year effective housing land supply 5-year housing supply target 5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place) - Housing approvals - Housing completions over the last 5 years - Marketable employment land supply - Employment land take-up during reporting year	6,421 units 2,474 units 1,900 units 6.5 years 709 units 1815 units 56.29 ha 3.83 ha	2 ,630 units 7 years 309 units 1.83 ha
Development Management Project Planning - Percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice - Number of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan - Percentage planned timescale met	35% 1 100%	27% 1 100%
Decision Making - Application approval rate - Delegation rate	93.6% 97.9%	94.1% 94%
Decision – making Timescales Average number of weeks to decisions: - Major developments - Local development (non-householder) - Householder developments	13.1 7.7 5.8	92.7 11.6 7.1
Legacy Cases - Number cleared during reporting period - Number remaining	0 0	0 1
Enforcement - Time since enforcement charter published/reviewed - Number of cases identified/resolved	13 months 168/188	6 months 199/236

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The Moray Local Development Plan was approved in December 2008. Due to the downturn in the economy completion rates have been lower than forecast. However, a number of large affordable housing projects and investment at the Enterprise Park, Forres have supported growth in the housing and business sectors. The gradual recovery of the housing market has been evidenced by the need for the Council to release housing land designated as LONG under Policy H2 of the Local Plan to ensure a 5 year effective land supply is maintained.

Significant progress has been made in moving the new Local Development Plan towards adoption. The Development Plan Scheme (DPS) 2014 aimed to report representations to the Proposed Plan to the Council's Planning and Regulatory Services Committee in September 2014 and submit the Plan for Examination in November 2014. This target was met with objections reported to Committee in September 2014 and the Plan was submitted for Examination at the end of September 2014.

The DPS was further revised in January 2015 to reflect the Plan being submitted earlier than anticipated with the Council exceeding the target timescales set out in Circular 6/2013 for the stages of "Submission to Ministers" and "PA considers representations". The DPS 2015 anticipates adoption of the new Plan in Quarter 3/2015.

The average decision-making timescales are continuing to be reduced and are below that of the Scottish National average. The approval rate is slightly down on the previous year whilst the level of delegation has increased slightly.

Performance Markers Report 2014/15

No.	PERFORMANCE MARKER	EVIDENCE/COMMENTS
1.	Decision-making Continuous reduction of average timescales for all development proposals (Q1-Q4)	Official stats in the PPF There has been continued improvements in decision making for both householder and local developments. Major timescales have also been reduced and all current major applications are now covered by a processing agreement.
2.	Project management: Offer of processing agreements (or other agreed project plan) made to all prospective applicants in advance for all major applications availability publicised on the website.	Processing agreements continue to be offered to all applicants submitting major planning applications and publicised on the website is a standard template and guidance.
3.	Early Collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications: - Availability and promotion of pre-application discussion for all prospective applications; and - Clear and proportionate requests for supporting Information	Pre-application advice is recorded in uniform and the figures show that 35% of applications were subject to Pre-application advice. Major Pre-application advice offered, link on the web site to form, guidance and calendar of meeting dates. Pre-application advice for local development is provided in a template form similar to major applications which has provided a more consistent level of advice. Regular engagement with developers has been established before the pre-application stage, with a specific emphasis upon promoting the Council's new Primary Policy on Placemaking, which supports Creating Places and Designing Streets.
4.	Legal Agreements: - Conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission - Reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting period).	Official Statistics. Improvements in timescales for applications with legal agreements and targets set for them to be signed within 4 mths from date instructions are issued to legal agreed by committee in March and targets will be monitored over 2015/16.
5.	Enforcement Charter Updated/re-published within last two years.	Link to website to revised Enforcement charter revised in March 2014.
6.	Continuous Improvement: - Progress improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; and - Progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report.	Significant improvements have been made to reducing average Timescales shown in the NHIS and official statistics. Service improvements progress have been detailed in the Section on service improvements.
7.	Local development plan Less than 5 years since adoption	A strict Development Plan timetable has been agreed with the latter stages of the process ahead of schedule and ahead of the recommended timescales set out in Circular 6/2013. The DPS looks ahead and identifies key milestones in the early preparation of the next Local Development Plan, including an early start on the Housing Need and Demand Assessment.

No.	PERFORMANCE MARKER	EVIDENCE/COMMENTS
8.	Development Plan Scheme – next LDP: - On course for adoption within 5 years of Current plan(s) adoption; and - On course for adoption within 5 year cycle - Project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale	The Council has an agreed Development Plan Scheme approved in January 2015. Links to minutes and report on Development Plan Scheme.
9.	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in Development plan preparation – if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year	Not relevant during 2014/15.
10.	Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early (pre-MIR) In development plan preparation – if plans has been at Pre-MIR stage during reporter year.	Not relevant during 2014/15.
11.	Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on: - Information required to support applications; - Expected developer contributions	Pre-application guidance and form for all developments – available on website. Open for business section include case study. Supplementary Guidance on Developer Obligations prepared and presented to committee before being put out to consultation and final version should be approved by the end of 2015.
12.	Corporate working across services To Improve outputs and services for customer Benefit (for example: protocols; joined up Services; single contact arrangements; joint Pre-application advice)	Planning Management meetings are held regularly between Development Management, Development Plans and Economic Development. The Pre-application meetings held bring together all internal departments. A protocol with the CNPA ensures a consistent approach by all 5 authorities from pre-application stage through the application process including enforcement. Planning & Transport liaison meetings have also been held regularly.
13.	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Benchmarking meetings - SOLACE family Group 2 and Group 1 (neighbouring authorities). CNPA Liasion meetings (twice a year). Attendance at HOPS DC-Sub Committee & Active participation and chairing of meetings on a rotational basis of the North of Scotland Development Plans Forum, HOPS representative on SPSO Working Group.
14.	Stalled Sites/legacy cases: Conclusion/withdrawal of planning applications	No new legacy cases over 12 months more than one year old in the system.
15.	Developer Contributions: Clear and proportionate expectations - Set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); - and In pre-application discussions	Draft supplementary guidance agreed by P & RS Committee in March 2015 and issued for consultation between March and end June 2015 and final version to be approved by end of 2015.

PART 2

DEFINING AND MEASURING A HIGH QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE

Part 2 of the PPF provides the planning service an opportunity to showcase within eight specific areas of activity how the planning service provides a high quality service. These activity areas cover:

- › **Open for Business** – positive actions to support sustainable economic growth and social needs;
- › **High Quality Development on the Ground** - creating and shaping places of which we can all be proud;
- › **Certainty** – consistency of advice, process, engagement and decision making;
- › **Communications, Engagement and Customer Service** – communications strategy for engagement and positive customer experience;
- › **Efficient and Effective Decision Making** – ensuring structures and processes are proportionate;
- › **Effective Management Structures** - ensuring management structures are effective and fit for purpose;
- › **Financial Management and Local Governance** – demonstrating effective governance and financial management; and
- › **Culture of Continuous Improvement** – demonstrating a culture of learning and improving.

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

During 2014/15 the Moray Economic Partnership continued to hold quarterly meetings at the premises of Moray Businesses. These meetings provide the business community with an insight into the work of the partnership to grow and diversify the local economy and an opportunity for business to meet with partners advising them about their operations and development plans. This fosters closer working and understanding not limited to planning and physical development but can be used to help identify and address training and skills deficits, facilitate access to labour, which can then lead to more employment.

These were held in the following locations:

- › May 2014 - Gordon & MacPhail (drinks processor and distributor);
- › September 2014 - Accunostics (life science research and development);
- › December 2014 - Diageo (distiller);
- › February 2015 – Forsyths (fabricator)

Accunostics, a host business during 14/15 unfortunately entered administration at the beginning of 2015. However, due to excellent relationships MEP members and in particular the local business community were able to respond and have been able to help staff made unemployed into work within the area.

In November 2014 the Moray Business Community held the inaugural Moray Business Week, a programme of events, seminars and engagement. In November it is proposed to include a seminar for Small and Medium Enterprises outlining the pre-application planning service for businesses considering development.

Facilitating Development

During 2014-15 planning and other departments within Moray Council have been involved in the following projects to facilitate the provision of employment land for industrial and business development enabling business growth and diversification creating employment opportunities:

1. Develop Elgin (Barmuckity) Business Park

Status: The project was being delivered through the private sector and tri partite negotiation between the Developer, Land Owner and HIE. The risk associated with the project was too great for the individual parties to carry and negotiations ceased at the end of 2014. This is considered to be market failure that now requires public sector intervention to deliver the project. Alternative land has been considered but only Barmuckity provides sufficient land required for expansion in Elgin.

Actions for 2015-16: The Moray Council is leading the project to develop phase 1 of Barmuckity. Initial talks with the land owner have taken place and will be progressed. Options around partnerships with HIE and developers will be considered as the project moves forward. As negotiations are voluntary at present, the pace of progress is largely dependent on the land owners cooperation, but will be kept under review.

2. Develop Enterprise Park, Forres

Status: The Enterprise Park continued its success attracting new businesses to Moray. The Horizon building is fully let and there remains a pipeline of interest from companies wishing to set up on the park. The availability of serviced industrial/business land, good marketing and promotion, partnership working and ability for quick turnarounds on builds all contribute to the success.

Actions for 2015-16: Next phase of the development of the park being progressed by partner HIE. Continued marketing and promotion, continued partnership work to attract further business.

3. Industrial Estate Remodelling

Status: The Council has invested in upgrading provision of the industrial portfolio and are successful in maintaining high occupancy rates.

Investments include:

1. Construction of six new business units at Chanonry Road South, Elgin
2. Construction of four new business units at Waterford Circle, Forres
3. Construction of two new business units at Westerton Road North, Keith
4. Upgrade of estate road at Greshop, Forres
5. Upgrade of estate road at Mosstodloch Industrial Estate
6. Completion of sub division of large Unit at Isla Bank Mills, Keith
7. Miscellaneous repairs, maintenance and minor improvements at various locations.

Actions for 2015-16: Continued investment in industrial estate is one of the economic development priorities of the Council.



4. Buckie Harbour SME Accommodation

Status: Redevelopment of storage yard and sheds will be completed by August 2015. The development used ERDF funding to support the redevelopment of an underutilised area of Buckie Harbour.

Actions for 2015-16: will be completed by August 2015

5. Buckie Harbour Masterplan

Status: The Council is working with HIE to facilitate the Development of Buckie Harbour for offshore renewables, expanded harbour area and ship yard development. During 2014-15 A Buckie Harbour Master Plan was produced, planning application for lubricating oil plant received, and ongoing negotiations for offshore maintenance and shipyard. Offshore renewables operation and maintenance has been delayed due to the Contract for Difference process where Moray Offshore Renewables Limited were not successful and will need to bid again in October 2015. Wider plans and discussions for the ship yard are ongoing with a number of potential users.

Actions for 2015-16: Respond to procurement request from MORL to support O&M, Carry on the promotion and negotiation in relation to Shipyard and surrounding areas; Identify investment costs and address wider issues e.g. accommodation.



6. Lossie Green redevelopment – master planning

Status: The project involves the production of a masterplan, action plan, and financial appraisal for the regeneration of Central Elgin, including the existing City Centre, Lossie Green and Cooper Park, by means of an intensive consultation, engaging Community Planning Partners, and others in the business and wider community.

The charrette process identified the need to address the High street issues first and practical and realistic options for Lossie Green and Cooper Park to improve connectivity between these key areas of Elgin. The delivery of this project is a key element of the 'Elgin – City for the Future' strategy, which in turn is central to 'The Moray Economic Strategy'.

On 29 January 2015 masterplan workshops were held by the consultant team, to address key issues including the potential contribution of Culture and Tourism, and Cooper Park, and were an important preparatory stage for the Public Charrette, which took place during 2 – 5 March 2015.



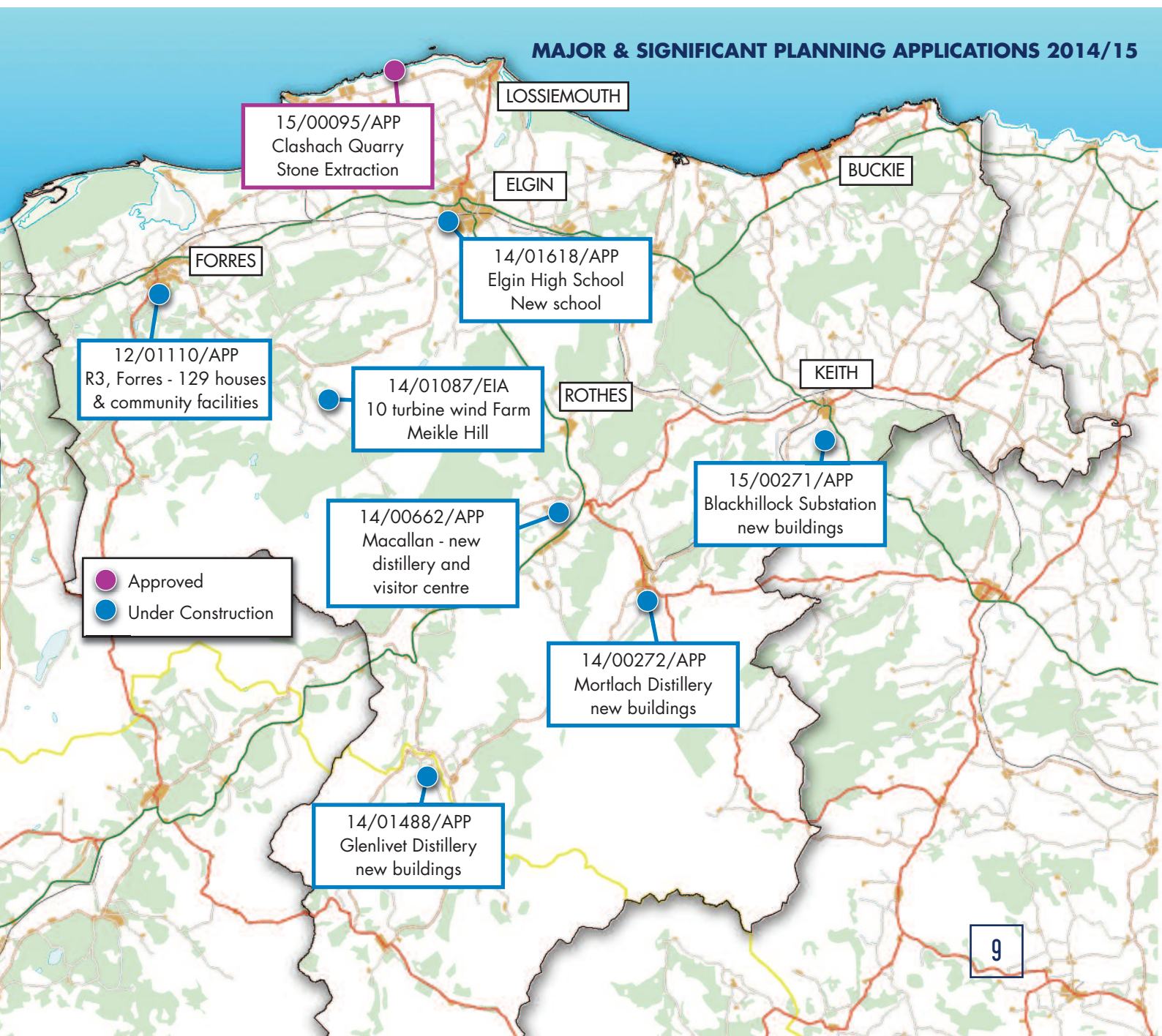
The Public Charrette team engaged with the local community in developing a masterplan, the initial results of which were included in a public presentation on 19 March.

Actions for 2015-16: It is intended to present a report on the Public Charrette to The Council in August 2015 and thereafter to the Community Planning Board.

It will address and help to coordinate projects identified through the Charette to bring vibrancy and vitality to the town centre, improving connectivity and streetscape providing opportunities for delivering of new development and regenerating vacant and derelict premises. The Charette recognised the importance of Elgin's architectural heritage and the opportunities it presents for greater influence of the local arts and culture groups.

The resulting masterplan/action plan and Development Brief will provide a proposition which can be used to market specific investment and development opportunities, which will contribute to the regeneration of Central Elgin.

Separately, ongoing engagement with house builders has been very worthwhile and highlighted a number of sites where collaborative working is now being progressed. Work is ongoing on a number of large scale masterplans, namely Findrassie, North Elgin; Elgin South LONG; and Dallas Dhu, Forres.



HIGH QUALITY DEVELOPMENT ON THE GROUND

Following Masterplan training through Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS) in 2014, officers have continued to make Placemaking a priority, with an officer within Planning and Development given this responsibility as lead officer. A Quality Auditing process is being investigated, with the Creating Places Street Check being referenced in the short term.

Masterplanning training for elected members was organised and held on 10th December 2014 as a follow up to the training for officers in April 2014, again facilitated by A&DS. A "learning visit" facilitated by Scotia Homes took place in October 2014 with planning and transportation officers visiting a number of Scotia Homes sites and discussing design issues with Scotia Homes staff.



Work is ongoing on a programme of masterplans, with public consultation on Findrassie, Masterplan, covering a 1500 house development at the north of Elgin, taking place during April 2015. Early work has started in Elgin South LONG and Dallas Dhu, Forres. In addition to promoting better quality design in urban areas, officers from Planning and Development, Development Management and Transportation organised and attended a rural design course delivered by Andrew Dickson on 29th October 2014, with the emphasis upon building confidence to challenge design of proposed houses in the countryside."

The work of the Planning and Development section is focussed upon the preparation and implementation of the Local Development Plan and strategic projects in support of the Moray Economic Strategy. In terms of the Local Development Plan, following consultation on the Proposed Plan between March and May 2014, officers reported representations to the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee on 11th September 2014 and submitted the Plan for Examination at the end of September 2014. The Examination Report was received on 28th April and officers are now moving to adopt the Plan at the end of July 2015.

Officers propose to submit Supplementary Guidance on seven topics at the same time as the Plan is submitted to the Scottish Government. Draft Supplementary Guidance on Developer Obligations was approved in March 2015 and a final version will be submitted to Committee for approval towards the end of 2015. Supplementary Guidance on Rural Groupings is also currently being prepared with an Open Space Strategy to follow in 2016. To help introduce the new Plan, a series of awareness raising events is being held with developers, elected members and Council staff.

Officers from the Planning and Development section are building and maintaining communication and collaborative working with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, local developers and community groups to raise awareness of the Local Development Plan, with a specific emphasis upon new policy topics within the emerging Plan. Officers have identified further areas for improvement and will be aiming to engage more directly with developers on the topic of Placemaking during 2015 and 2016.



Officers have worked in partnership with HIE including manning exhibitions at offshore renewable events and a learning visit to Lowestoft to promote Buckie Harbour and Moray as a suitable venue for inward investment. The Chair of the Moray Economic Partnership and Corporate Director (Economic Development, Planning & Infrastructure) are visiting local developers to ensure that the mechanisms in place are assisting to facilitate development.



Lowestoft learning visit

Town Centre Health Checks were carried out on Moray's main towns with defined centres to monitor vacancy rates and pedestrian footfall. A full charrette on Elgin City Centre was commissioned and carried out in early 2015, with the outcomes being reported in the next PPF. Moray also took part in the Scottish Government town centre pilot project supporting the town centre first principle as well as supporting the year of food and drink. By working in partnership with Elgin Bid a town centre food and drink trail was created to promote the use of the town centre through increased footfall by distributing a leaflet and creating a short film of the town which includes the maps and contact details of the businesses offering food and drink in Elgin.

In Development Management Condition Monitoring plays an important part in securing high quality development on the ground along with an efficient enforcement service. Without these important parts of the planning service the final outcome of development on the ground would not be of a standard that is secured through active monitoring and compliance.

Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS)

During 2014-15 the Economic Development Section continued work to deliver the Elgin and Keith Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS), including a comprehensive traditional building skills training programme which has been welcomed by the building sector. Elgin & Keith CARs are 5 year programmes part funded by Historic Scotland to support the economy by preserving and enhancing the Towns Conservation Areas. Both programmes help to maintain the vitality and viability of the towns and in particular the High Streets.

For Keith CARS 2011-2016 the Council contributes £50,000 of revenue per year to the £2.1 million programme, For Elgin CARs 2013-2018 the Council contributes £150,000 per year from capital to the £3.3 million programme.

In relation to Elgin CARS the Council is working with partners including Elgin Business Improvement District, the Elgin Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver the Elgin Heritage Experience.



Elgin High Street

Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere – Heritage Experience

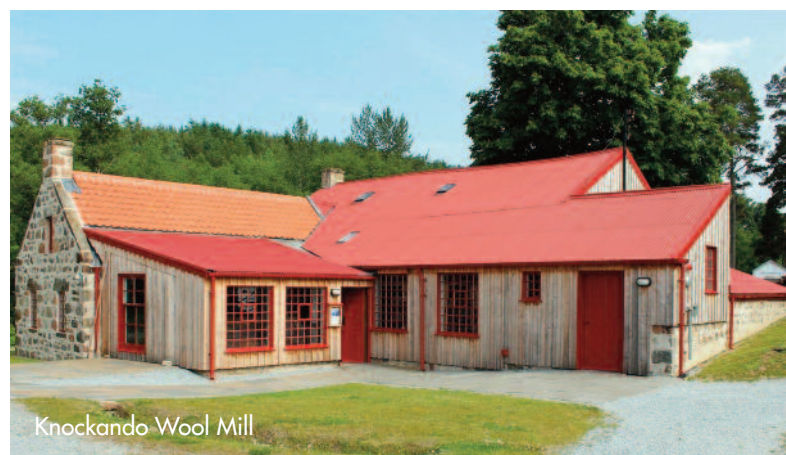
The “Elgin Heritage Experience” will bring over 1000 years of history alive through various mediums ranging from website with mobile technology, 3D interactive orientation point (which will also promote other visitor sites in Moray), 3D high definition scanning, interpretation at over 25 sites, signage, public realm improvements including lighting and pathways, an events programme, involving more than 17 organisations with their volunteers. The project and its infrastructure will make Elgin & Moray a key visitor destination and will engage more people in their heritage. This project is directly linked to the Elgin Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme.

Elgin has a fascinating rich history starting at its foundation in the early medieval times to the 20th century and previous work by the partners has highlighted that there is a great community interest in the local heritage. However, these initiatives have also identified the lack of interpretation through which visitors and the community can be engaged with the town’s heritage and easily access information about it. High quality interpretation will not only support the heritage experience but potentially increase the time spent by visitors in the town and their associated spend. Interpretation initiatives by themselves would not be effective; the studies and work carried out, pinpoint that a range of physical improvements and activities has to be undertaken to maximise the visitor experience, community engagement and learning.



Castle to Cathedral to Cashmere promotion

During 2014/15 work packages have been put out to tender, with work being undertaken during 2015/16. Packages include interpretation design & copy writing, interactive website with digital technology, footway up Ladyhill (viewpoint) contractor appointed, architect & archaeologist watching brief in place.



Knockando Wool Mill

Knockando Wool Mill

During 2014-15 work on the restoration of Knockando Wool Mill was completed. Facilitated by staff from the economic development section of Moray Council. A £4.5 million restoration of the oldest working wool mill in Scotland securing its future for manufacturing training weavers and as a visitor destination in a remote rural location.

In April 2014 the project was shortlisted in 5 categories of the RICS Scotland Awards, winner of the Community Benefit category and Overall project of the Year.

CERTAINTY

Early engagement before pre-application is also building relationships and raising awareness of design issues. Increased awareness and communication between developers and the Council allows resources to be matched to meet developer's anticipated timescales.

One of the keys to our open for business approach is how we deal with planning applications for major developments and we have been successful in securing processing agreements with all current major applications pending consideration. The demand for pre-application meetings for major applications during 2014/15 has reduced which may increase once the new Development Plan is adopted. These continue to be available and meetings are scheduled on a monthly basis, six months in advance which helps gives internal and external consultees advance notice of meetings improving attendance. All major applications currently in the system are now the subject of a processing agreement which enables the development proposals to be project managed right through the process to discharging of conditions post decision. This assists developers with their timescales and smooths the process for the implementation of the project.

The new format for pre-application advice for local applications has been in operation for over 6 months with the guidance form to submit a request available on the web site. One of the service improvements for 2015/16 is to seek feedback from applicants submitting this request to how this assists with the formal application process.

To provide greater certainty to developers, Council services, Community Planning partners and local communities, the Council has prepared draft Supplementary Guidance on Developer Obligations which was made available for consultation from 3rd April to 29th June. The draft Guidance sets out a series of thresholds for triggering developer obligations on a range of topics including education, sports facilities and community facilities.

Planning and Development officers attended a training event on Economic Viability on 21st November which assisted officers understand the developers' financial commitments in developing a site.



Elgin from Ladyhill

COMMUNICATIONS, ENGAGEMENT & CUSTOMER SERVICE

Planning and Development officers continue to meet with local developers to discuss proposals for bringing forward sites designated in the emerging Local Development Plan. A process review after the Proposed Plan was submitted for Examination was held by the Planning and Development section. A number of improvements were identified, and in terms of communications and engagement, these included the need to engage better with community groups and young people. Dialogue with the chair of the Joint Community Councils and a representative from Elgin South Area Forum lead to the preparation of the "Working Together on the Moray Local Development Plan- Best Practice Guide" and an awareness raising event with community groups in April 2015. Feedback from the event was generally positive and the feedback has been used to learn from and inform future events. In terms of engaging with young people, officers from Development Management and Development Plans have volunteered to participate in the RTPI Future Planner project and this will be progressed as part of the early stages of the next Local Development Plan. The Elgin City Centre charrette process involved engagement with local schools and Moray College through an artist making the process more inclusive and who formed part of a team of consultants engaged to facilitate the charrette and prepare the Masterplan.

Planning and Development officers have continued to develop and improve corporate links and corporate awareness of the Local Development Plan, including an article in the Council's internal "Connect" magazine, a corporate Team Talk and through working with the Council's Community Support Unit, sharing experiences and knowledge on consultation events and practices.

Planning and Development staff attended Social Media training and officers have increased use of Facebook and Twitter, but recognise this needs to be further expanded.

Over the last 12 months 692 planning applications were submitted electronically, 44% of the total applications submitted which is down from 48% submitted last year and the drop is likely to be as a result of one local agent submitting fewer applications over this period. The updating of the web site for planning is recognised as an important part of communicating with customers and keeping up to date is important.

A register of all agents details has been collated and where changes are implemented that impacts on the submission of other applications for example, a letter by the Manager for Development Management is sent out direct to all agents keeping them up to date with changes in procedures.

The Council continues to offer a duty officer service between 2pm and 4 pm every afternoon where members of the public can seek general planning advice with no appointments and this continues to be a valuable service. A dedicated customer satisfaction survey for this service was undertaken and the results supported the continued provision of this drop-in service as customers rated the service highly and as valuable.

The complaints that have been received during 2014/15 have been the subject of review and improvements will be fed into future team meetings with an action plan to address concerns raised which have been added into the service improvements for 2015/16.

The Moray Council has a central contact centre for dealing with all calls from members of the public and it is therefore important that this team is kept up to date with changes in the planning service so they have a greater understanding of customer needs. Training has been carried out with the contact centre and guidance is kept up to date to ensure that it remains current. For example when the High Hedges legislation was introduced this required the contact centre to be provided with up to date details.

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING

For decisions that fall outside the agreed delegation scheme these are shared between the Planning & Regulatory Services Committee who meet every two months and determine all major planning applications as well as make decisions on development plan policy issues. The Economic Development & Infrastructure Services Committee consider economy related projects and funding from the core economic development budget. Committee meetings are scheduled for hearings to be held every two months and Special meetings are arranged for hearings and where applicants are unable to attend scheduled meetings or to enable the timescales to be met where set out in processing agreements.

The scheme of delegation was reviewed and approved by Scottish Ministers in 2014. Over the last 12 months the level of delegation as projected has increased marginally and this has assisted in improving average performance levels for all types of developments.

The performance figures this year reflect the hard work that has been put in to further improve and reduce average timescales specifically for major applications (despite the numbers being low) along with the reduction in average timescales for both householder applications and local developments. No legacy cases (those over a year old) remain in the system. Over the last 12 months the use of processing agreements has ensured that all applications are determined timeously which has eliminated legacy cases from the system ensuring that development is not stalled due to applications being held unnecessarily in the system. A significant improvement has been made in reducing the time taken for S.75 legal agreements to be signed and issued which has been assisted by working closely with legal services. A target of 4 months from the date of instruction for all legal agreements to be signed has been set and this received committee backing at the time of reporting back the PPF for 2013/14.

A review of the committee reports has taken place and this has resulted in the format of reports being amended bringing the consultation section and representations into the main body of the report along with the recommendation being updated to have the condition and reason linked together for ease of reference and subsequent monitoring.

Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance has been prepared and is out for 12 weeks public consultation. Once this period has passed and the Supplementary Guidance has been adopted this will provide greater certainty for developers submitting applications especially for major developments.

Over the last 12 months the Planning & Regulatory Services Committee has determined 23 applications and of these decisions only 2 have been determined contrary to officer recommendation. This gives developers a reasonable amount of certainty that following pre-application advice decisions taken on major proposals are highly likely to be in accordance with the officer recommendation.

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

The planning service is based at the Council Headquarters in Elgin. The structure of our teams are set out in Appendix 2 – Workforce and Financial Information. The Manager for Development Management ensures that work is allocated in a way that keeps caseloads at a level which are manageable and are adjusted according to complexity levels, committee cases, and appeal work and to take account of holiday periods. This enables resources to be used efficiently and for case work to be re-distributed when deemed to be necessary to ensure average performance levels are maintained at the current target level.

The teams operate on a hot desk basis and are able to work flexibly either in the main HQ building or the adjoining annexe where the “Desk Duty” service is provided.

Closer working between the teams is continuing to develop through the production of masterplans and joint training activities. The introduction of the new Local Development Plan also offers the opportunity for closer working and understanding of each section’s priorities as awareness of new policies and processes are discussed.

The Development Services Service Plan was approved in March 2015 and covers a period of three years which will be reviewed and updated annually. This document sets out for the planning service what will be done, by whom and the interim milestones. Some of the projects identified in the service plan are not deemed to be service improvements as they include main stream work projects. Additional service improvements have been identified and have evolved through benchmarking groups and internal meetings held and will be the basis for the planning service to strive for continuous improvement in 2015/16.

Planning management meetings are being held quarterly involving managers and principal officers to share information and understanding and support delivery of the Service Plan. Team meeting are held every month and both Managers, Principal Planning Officers and Planning Officers have regular one to one meetings with their line managers.

Officers have collaborated to deliver joint objectives with other departments in the Council, neighbouring authorities and with other public bodies such as Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE). Over the last year Officers have worked closely with housing colleagues and are represented on the housing board meetings. The FIRS group (Future Infrastructure Delivery Group) has been re-established to bring together the Planning Obligations Officer with other members from transportation, Education , Sports & Leisure and Environmental Protection.

The Council has an Employee Review and Development (ERDP) system which is focusing on all officers completing their RTPI log books and ensuring continuous professional development records (CPD) for the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) are maintained. This will be fed into an overall training plan for the team.



FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The Moray Council now has a Corporate Plan covering the period 2015-17 which sets out the Council's visions, values, priorities, how we will change to meet the challenges, how we will make best use of our staff resources and how we will check our progress. The number one priority identified is that of Sustainable Economic Development and the document identifies how this priority is going to be delivered. In relation to the planning service it states **"A customer-friendly approach from our planning team whose pre-application discussions can save businesses time and money"**. Over the next 3 years this proactivity will become a main theme of our business and become further embedded across all parts of the planning service.

The structures that have been put in place are delivering a service which is performing well and following the completion of the costing the planning service exercise sits below the average cost for Scotland. Two posts have been re-structured in both Development Management and Development Plans where a planning assistant post and a graduate level position have been created to allow career grade planning officers to concentrate on the more demanding and complex tasks/applications. The Planning and Development section work plan identifies the priorities for the coming year, lead officers and timelines.

Performance targets for dealing with planning applications and other consents are managed closely by the Development Management Manager on a weekly basis with performance levels being circulated within the team monthly. Average determination targets are also set.

CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Principal Planner (Development Plans) carries out ERDP interviews for staff, with ongoing workload reviews on a one to one basis every four to six weeks. The section work plan is updated quarterly to reflect new/ changing priorities and resource issues. Section meetings are held every four to six weeks and an annual review of the PPF actions is held to inform and review performance.

The team plan for Development Management for 2015/16 will be a combination of the service plan proposals, service improvements and training requirements identified through the ERDP process with an increased emphasis on CPD records.

A number of training events have been organised over the last 12 months some by the Improvement Service (Public Inquiry Training – joint with Highland Council and Impact & Influence Training), others by Scottish Natural Heritage and internal training i.e. Data Protection Awareness and Equalities.

The planning service has participated in the Career Ready Scheme which has enabled mentoring opportunities for a student to take place over a two year period along with a four week placement.

Moray Council participated in costing the planning service which involved 16 local planning authorities as a second stage to the project funded by the Scottish Government and managed by the Improvement Services. Over a four week period time recording took place within both Development Management & Development Plans as well as other internal sections including legal services and the results have been analysed which demonstrate that Moray's planning service is both efficient in terms of cost and performance when compared with all other Local Planning Authorities.

Moray has been placed in the SOLACE family group 2 for benchmarking purposes and so far two meetings have been held. As Highland, Aberdeenshire and the Cairngorms National Park Authority are all in benchmarking group 1 Moray was also invited to attend due to the proximity and working relationships that already exist such as the common interest in the Cairngorm National Park. The exchange of best practice and common problems has been invaluable as well as developing relationships with other authorities and the support of the Improvement Service is welcomed. Some of the service improvements to be examined over the coming year are as a direct result of the benchmarking group.

Heads of Planning Conferences are attended with all presentations circulated round the team for CPD purposes and is added to the agenda at team meetings for general discussion, the knowledge gained at these events assist with directing future service demands.

The Heads of Planning Development Management Sub-Committee meet every quarter and are used as a sounding board for discussion on development management issues and a wide variety of related topics including discussing DPEA appeal decisions, service improvements, etc.

A one day training event was arranged by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman for all Council departments to provide an enhanced focus on complaints and how a variety of techniques can be applied to different circumstances to increase customer satisfaction with the outcome of the complaint and minimise staff resources directed to complaints handling.

The Moray Council has set up a leadership forum where there is an opportunity for all third tier Managers, Heads of Service and Corporate Directors to meet 3 times a year to work together and identify common issues.

Dalmunach Distillery – RIBA Award winner
*Credit: Architects Archial-Norr (Inverness Studio)
and Photographer Paul Zanre*



PART 3

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

In preparing this report it has been based on a wide variety of sources of information and provides the planning performance framework with the credibility of evidencing what the planning service delivers in Moray along with can do attitude to ensure continuous improvement and demonstrate that we are ambitious:

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Draft Developer Obligations Supplementary Guidance

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_98597.html

Elgin Regeneration Charrette web page

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_96875.html

Moray Business Week 10-14 November 2014

http://www.moray.uhi.ac.uk/news/moray-business-week-10th-14th-november-2014/image/image_view_fullscreen

Development Consent Hub – Moray Council web page

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_89320.html

Moray Economic Strategy

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_96870.html

Elgin Food & Drink Trail

<https://moray.presscentre.com/News-Releases/A-new-guide-to-Elgin-centre-s-food-and-drink-venues-a3.aspx>

<https://vimeo.com/127258873>

HIGH QUALITY

DEVELOPMENT ON THE GROUND

Dalmunach Distillery – RIBA Award winner

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-33203368>

Knockando Woolmill

Project of the Year – RICS Awards 2014

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-27156478>

Elgin & Keith Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS)

<http://elgincars.org.uk/>

<http://www.keithcars.org.uk/>

Inverness Architects Award 2014 – Overall Project

Alexander Graham Bell Centre, Moray College

<http://www.moray.uhi.ac.uk/news/alexander-graham-bell-architects-win-iaa-award>

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_news/news_96208.html

CERTAINTY

Moray Local Development Plan Scheme

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file97197.pdf>

Housing Land Audit 2015 & Employment Land Audit 2015

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_1858.html

Town Centre Health Checks

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_1858.html

Report on representations to the Proposed Moray Local Development Plan 9/11/14

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/minutes/data/RX20140911A00.pdf>

Making a preliminary enquiry – local developments guidance and form

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_41735.html



COMMUNICATIONS, ENGAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Moray Council Complaints

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_1379.html

Customer Satisfaction Survey – link to survey Monkey

www.surveymonkey.com/s/DevelopmentManagement

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING

Major Development Pre-application Advice

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_79962.html

EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The Moray Council Corporate Plan 2015-17

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file98504.pdf>

Moray Council Departments:

http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_41305.html

Scheme of Delegation:

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file60539.pdf>

Committee Diary:

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file81765.pdf>

CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Development Services Service Plan 2015 Report to

Committee & Service Plan 2015/18

http://www.moray.gov.uk/minutes/data/RR20150324/Item%208-Service%20Plan%20Report%202015-18_Redacted.pdf

Development Services Service Plan 2014-15

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/minutes/data/DC20140506/Item%2011-Appendix%20A.pdf>

Development Services Service Plan 2015-18

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file99610.pdf>

Planning Performance Framework 2013/14 – Feedback

Committee report – S.75 Targets

http://www.moray.gov.uk/minutes/data/RR20150324/Item%207-Planning%20Performance%20Feedback_Redacted.pdf

Elected member design training report

<http://www.ads.org.uk/search?query=moray+council>

The Moray Council Customer Charter

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file98955.pdf>

Development Management Service Charter

<http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file93673.pdf>

PART 4

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Looking back at the Service Improvements we identified for 2013/14 we are proud of the progress made against the vast majority of these:

1. Commitment

Review & improve timescales for providing preliminary advice as well as providing a revised and clearer response.

Progress

The guidance and format of preliminary applications for local developments have been revised and responses issued are now more consistent and clearer. The target for issuing a response within 28 days is not being met by all team members and as a result of monitoring over the last 12 months, the average days for a response have been reduced and there has been an increase in the number of responses issued within the target time. Work has been re-allocated to assist with making further improving over the next 12 months.

COMPLETE – TO CONTINUE

2. Commitment

Produce an improvements schedule gathered from benchmarking meeting to inform future service improvements.

Progress

Attendance at two benchmarking groups as well as the CNPA Protocol meetings has enabled a number of improvements to be fed immediately back to the team and a number of these have been incorporated into the service improvements for the next 12 months.

COMPLETE – TO CONTINUE

3. Commitment

Facilitate town centre investment and local area regeneration through a full Charrette for Lossie Green. Regeneration projects and preparation of a town centre protocol.

Progress

The Charrette was held in March over a period two days and a draft report has been prepared by the consultants which is due to be reported to the Planning & Regulatory Services Committee in August with a detailed action plan. The town centre protocol is to take on the pilot project that is being run by Heads of Planning.

4. Commitment

A data base of landowners and developers will be established with a programme of engagement developed to increase knowledge of landowner and developer future plans.

Progress

Database has been drafted and programme of engagement is ongoing. This will be supported by a series of awareness raising events being held for developers, community groups and landowners to launch the new Local Development Plan.

5. Commitment

Investigate merits of a Moray Design Panel to raise the profile of design and shared lessons.

Progress

This issue has been investigated and will be considered further after the new Primary Policy on Place-making has been operational for 12 months.

6. Commitment

Feedback forms to be used by Development Plan Officers to evaluate all future events.

Progress

This has been introduced and was trialled at the drop in exhibitions for the Proposed Moray Local Development Plan. Feedback forms were also used at Rural Design Training and at a recent awareness raising event for community groups and will continue to be used in future.

9. Commitment

Review Model Planning Conditions to ensure they meet the circular tests.

Progress

Wind farm and contaminated land conditions have been done and the remaining ones are being worked on.

7. Commitment

Supplementary Guidance will be prepared to improve quality of proposals in Conservation Areas i.e. shop front and signs to assist with implementation of CARS scheme in Elgin and Keith.

Progress

A Conservation Area Appraisal has been drafted for Cullen and will be presented to a meeting of the Planning and Regulatory Services

8. Committee in August 2015 along with guidance on windows within conservation areas. Guidance has been prepared on shop fronts and signs and this will be rolled out in the middle of July.

Commitment

Supplementary Guidance issued and implement revised developer contributions to improve certainty.

Progress

Draft Supplementary Guidance on Developer Obligations was agreed at the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee in March 2015 and this is available for public consultation from 3rd April until 29th June 2015.

Service Improvements for 2015/16

In addition to the Service Improvements commitments we made for 2013/14 some of which are still in progress as detailed previously, in 2015/16 we will:

- › Transfer Works to Trees from Development Plans to Development Management and ensure requests are logged into uniform
- › Review Development Management procedures since e-planning was introduced
- › Implement On line Data Protection Guidance agreed by Committee – 18 month rolling programme
- › Monitoring of S.75 legal agreements - set up continuous monitoring system to ensure the process is consistent
- › Investigate developer forum or developer bulletin and continue to improve dialogue with developers
- › Engage young people in the planning process - a proposal will be developed in support of the RTPi Future Planner project during 2015 which will be implemented during 2016 as it will fit into the timetable for the next Local Development Plan.
- › Improve and merge the Council's Planning service website (currently split into Development Management and Development Plans) and review and increase use of social media such as use of facebook
- › Transfer street naming and numbering from Transportation to P&D (sites better with the GIS/CAG function) and is closely linked with other we based mapping systems and is more efficient
- › Joint training event hosted by Forestry Commission Scotland for Development Management and Planning and Development planners on tree surveying to support new Supplementary Guidance and compensatory woodland planting.
- › Continue to discuss and raise awareness of planning issues within community groups
- › Introduce quality audit process, similar to Creating Places Street Technique, to support the new Primary Policy on Placemaking



PART 5

OFFICIAL STATISTICS

A: DECISION MAKING TIMESCALES

CATEGORY	TOTAL NUMBER OF DECISIONS 2014-15	AVERAGE TIMESCALE (WEEKS)	
		2014-15	2013-14
Major Developments	2	13.1	98.2
Local Developments (non-householder)			
Local: less than 2 months	731	6.6	7
Local: more than 2 months	58	21.7	34
Householder Developments			
Local: Less than 2 months	240	5.8	6.7
Local: more than 2 months	3	11.2	19.3
Major Housing Development	0	N/A	82.8
Local Housing Developments			
Local: less than 2 months	289	7	7.2
Local: more than 2 months	30	16	48
Major Business and Industry	3	16.4	82.8
Local Business and industry			
Local: less than 2 months	123	6.8	7.1
Local: more than 2 months	12	40.5	24.6
EIA developments	1	82.1	N/A
Other consents*			
Listed Buildings & Conservation Area	65	7.9	N/A
Advertisements	36	7.7	N/A
Hazardous Substances	1	8.0	N/A
Other consents and certificates	5	3.1	N/A
Planning/legal agreements**			
(major applications)	0	N/A	117
(local applications)	6	23.1	47.3
Local Reviews	14	11	7

B. DECISION MAKING: LOCAL REVIEWS AND APPEALS

TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER OF DECISIONS	ORIGINAL DECISION UPHELD	
		2015-14	2014-13
Local reviews	14	78.6%	50%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	8	62.5%	30.8%

C. ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

TYPE	2015-14	2014-13
Cases Taken Up	188	143
Notices served ***	0	6
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0
Number of breaches resolved	168	143

* 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 of overhead electricity lines, notifications and directions under GPDO Parts 6 & related to agricultural and forestry development and applications for prior approval by Coal Authority or licenced 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

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

PART 6

WORKFORCE AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The information requested in this section is an integral part of providing the context for the information in part 1-5. Staffing information should be a snapshot of the position on 31 March. Financial information should relate to the full financial year.

	TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3	TIER 4
Head of Planning Service	0	0	1	2

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

		DM	DP	ENFORCEMENT	OTHER
Managers	No. Posts	1	1	Covered by DM Manager	0
	Vacant				
Main grade posts	No. Posts	11.2	7	1	0
	Vacant	0			
Technician	No. Posts	1	2	1 (part time assistant)	0
	Vacant				
Office Support/Clerical	No. Posts	3	0	Covered by DM support	0
	Vacant				
TOTAL	27.5	16.2	10	1.3	0

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

STAFF AGE NUMBER	PROFILE	COMMITTEE & SITE VISITS*	NUMBER PER YEAR
Under 30	2	Full council meetings	14
30-39	8.5	Planning committees	12
40-49	10	Area committees (where relevant)	Not applicable
50 and over	7	Committee site visits	6
		LRB**	7
		LRB site visits	7

Notes:

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

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

	TOTAL BUDGET	COSTS DIRECT*	INDIRECT**	INCOME***
Development management	£54,525	£572,485	£155,682	-£673,642
Development planning	£634,137	£436,248	£239,783	-£41,894
Enforcement	£62,907	£62,907		
Other	£473,935	£337,859	£136,076	
TOTAL	£1,225,505	£1,409,500	£531,541	£-715,536

Notes:

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

** Indirect costs include all other costs attributable to the planning service. Examples (not exhaustive) include accommodation, IT, stationery, office equipment, telephone charges, printing, advertising, travel and subsistence, apportionment of support service costs.

*** Include fees from planning applications and deemed application, and recharges for advertising costs, etc. Exclude income from property and planning searches.

TEAM STRUCTURES

