

# **North Ayrshire Planning Performance Framework 2012–2013**

**September 2013**



**NORTH AYRSHIRE  
COUNCIL**

# 1. National Headline Indicators (NHIs)

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) Requirement: less than 5 years</li> <li>development plan scheme: on track? (Y/N)</li> </ul>	7  Y	6  Y
<b>Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>effective housing land: years supply</li> <li>effective housing land supply<sup>1</sup></li> <li>housing approvals</li> <li>effective employment land supply<sup>2</sup></li> <li>employment land take-up</li> <li>effective commercial floor space supply</li> <li>commercial floor space delivered<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	6.57 years 3,683 units 366 units 333ha 27,672m <sup>2</sup> 129,179m <sup>2</sup> 9,789 m <sup>2</sup>	4.29 years 2,404 units 165 units n/a m <sup>2</sup> 25,900 m <sup>2</sup> n/a m <sup>2</sup> 4,828 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Development Management</b> <b>Project Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice</li> <li>number of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan</li> <li>percentage planned timescales met</li> </ul> <b>Decision-making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>application approval rate</li> <li>delegation rate</li> </ul>	33%  0  n/a%  96.1% 91.7%	n/a%  0  n/a%  94% 92%
<b>Decision-making timescales</b> Average number of weeks to decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>major developments<sup>4</sup></li> <li>local developments (non-householder)</li> <li>householder developments</li> </ul>	30.9 weeks 8.7 weeks 6.6 weeks	14.7 weeks 8.7 weeks 6.9 weeks
<b>Enforcement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>time since enforcement charter published/reviewed (months) Requirement: review every 2 years</li> <li>number of breaches identified/resolved</li> </ul>	Feb 2013/1  138/137	June 2011/9  20/11

1. Figures taken from North Ayrshire Housing Land Audit 2012, and requirement based on updated housing land requirement from the emerging Local Development Plan.

2. An agreed definition of employment land is still required. The figure quoted is taken from Ryden's Employment Land Review of North Ayrshire (2009). Please note that we have amended how we derive the size of our effective employment land supply, making last year's figure irrelevant.

3. Of which 2,716m<sup>2</sup> was new or refurbished space.

4. The small number of major applications means that the average timescale is easily distorted. Processing agreements and 'stop the clock' measures are now being used to reduce the impact of reasonable delay on a small number of applications.

# PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

## 2. Defining and measuring a high-quality planning service

### Open for business

North Ayrshire Council is committed to furthering sustainable economic growth. Examples of this commitment include maintaining a high level of planning approvals, 96% during the period, as well as approval of a number of significant applications. These include approval for the new 'Irvine Leisure Centre', and redevelopment of part of Irvine's Beach Park for a mixed use hotel, golf course and fractional unit development.

In support of GlaxoSmithKline, a major employer within North Ayrshire, three wind turbines have been consented on site which will provide a further opportunity for the company to harness clean, renewable energy to reduce their operating costs.

Planning permissions for a large scale regeneration opportunity at the Ardrossan Harbourside area were consented in March 2013. Collectively, the permissions provide for redevelopment of a prominent, but under utilised, area of Ardrossan's coastal frontage. The proposals are for a range of new uses, including some 400 houses (including affordable housing), a marina extension, a care home and significant new commercial space. A Matters Specified in Conditions application for the first phase of the residential development is expected imminently.

We also negotiated and consented proposals for redevelopment of a stalled residential site at Ravenspark, Irvine which involves new build and refurbishment as part of a 75 housing unit proposal.

We worked with our Community Planning partners to bring forward a new 206 bed acute mental health and community hospital. Planning permission in principle was subsequently granted, and the project represents a significant investment in healthcare in North Ayrshire.

In support of tourism within North Ayrshire, an extension to Viewfield Manor Holiday Park near Kilwinning was consented, comprising pitches for an additional 196 caravans.

We commissioned a consultant study to identify mechanisms to stimulate private sector housing development in North Ayrshire. The findings of this are expected in September 2013 and we expect to begin implementing the recommendations from the study in the period 2013-2014.

The Enterprise Area designation in Irvine is gaining critical mass, and discussion is ongoing with a number of potential investors. We expect to see some results from the protocol covering the Enterprise Area, which includes provision for a 'one-stop shop' for all consents during the period 2013-2014.

Last year's PPF service improvements for this category were to begin recording pre-application discussions, and also to commence a study on how the Council can assist in stimulating development in North Ayrshire. These actions have been achieved.

# Open for business

## Case Study - Montgomerie Park

The Planning Service was instrumental in brokering the disposal of a further parcel of land within Montgomerie Park, Irvine, a masterplanned residential development opportunity which has been under phased construction for several years. The latest parcel of land has been disposed to a volume housebuilder using an innovative deal structure, whereby upfront payments are limited, with the majority of the land cost being paid in later phases of development. This increased the attractiveness of the site to the housebuilder, as it reduced up-front costs and debt funding requirements. The developer is now on site.



## High quality development on the ground

In raising the standard of design in new development, a particular focus has been the production of supplementary planning guidance and officer/Member training on design. These design guidance documents are now fully embedded amongst staff, and used regularly in providing advice to applicants and assessing applications. There is a specific policy within the LDP that requires proposals to take cognisance of any relevant design supplementary guidance.

We prepared and approved an addendum to our Supplementary Guidance on Rural Design, on Single Houses in the Countryside.

During the period, the service was successful in obtaining £500,000 Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme funding for Kilbirnie. This project will include specific improvement works to key buildings, as well as a small grants scheme for improvements to privately owned buildings. Progress with the Irvine CARS project continued, with completion of

works to Trinity Church scheduled for completion in October 2013. Funding has been secured through the Council budget to launch a small grants scheme for private property owners in Irvine conservation area. This will launch in August 2013.

We now record any 'value added' by a case officer on a planning application. Examples of 'value added' include: changes made to satisfy a concern of the case officer, consultee or objector; safeguarding of an item of archaeological or historical interest; and securing of a community benefit. During 2012-2013, a total of 353 applications had one or more value added inputs by the case officer.

Training on design continues. An elected Member workshop on rural design and renewable energy was held in September 2012.

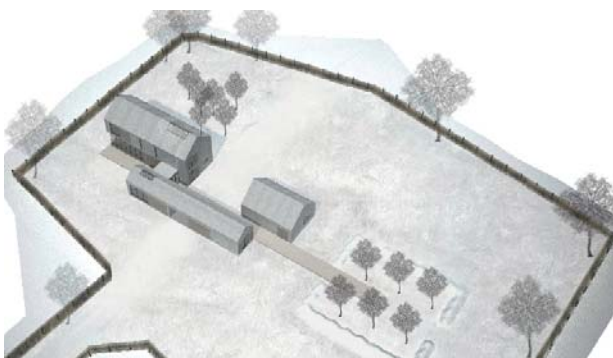
A CPD event for Planning Services staff was arranged to visit Knockroon in October 2012.

Our service improvement for this category in last year's PPF was to undertake further training for stakeholders on design, which has been achieved.

### Examples of high quality developments during the period include:



Single House in the Countryside - Site to East of Sunnyside Nursery, Kilwinning



Detached Dwellinghouse - Meikle Auchengree, Dalry





Irvine East Primary School



Woodlands Primary School

## High quality development on the ground Case Study - CPD, Knockroon

Staff from planning, roads and housing services received a presentation from the developers of the Knockroon site, after which there was discussion regarding the 'cost' of quality design and whether this was a barrier to development, and also questions on how to make quality design happen in more marginal housing market areas. This information was invaluable to the team, as lessons learned can then be applied in the North Ayrshire context. An example of application of this is our approach to design of two major developments (Middleton Road Perceton & North Gables, Irvine), where we are seeking to provide a more collaborative approach to the early design stages of projects to ensure the end product is of high quality.



## Certainty

During the period, we prepared Supplementary Guidance on Developer Contributions. The guidance outlines our transport modelling work on the projected impact on the trunk road network from proposed LDP development. It provides specific junction improvements, costs and a mechanism for recouping these costs from the development industry as proposals come forward. The Council have set aside over 50% of the proposed cost of the transport interventions to front fund implementation, as we anticipate having to defer contributions until late into development programmes so that the contribution requirement is not a barrier to investment in the area. The clear policy on developer contributions and mechanism for delivery provides a high degree of certainty to developers.

The new Local Development Plan is anticipated for adoption before the next PPF is due. While preparation of the LDP has been carefully project managed, we have learned lessons in practice regarding the new system that we intend to apply to the next LDP review to ensure that the next plan is adopted faster. We undertook a 'post mortem' exercise for the LDP process to identify procedural recommendations for the new plan.

We are actively exploring opportunities for the use of processing agreements, however major applications currently remain at historically low levels, limiting the opportunities for agreements. We will continue to explore opportunities for processing agreements during 2013-2014. Nonetheless, we have continued to work collaboratively with stakeholders, particularly on more complex proposals. A good example is the granting of consent of the new Irvine Leisure Centre, which involved input from an extensive set of stakeholders representing interests encompassing site selection, design and conservation, and transportation.

Our service improvement for this category last year was to progress our Modified LDP to Examination, which has been achieved.

## Communications, engagement and customer service

In February 2013, we held a developers forum with national and local housebuilders active in North Ayrshire. The forum was part of a wider piece of work that we commissioned to identify options for Council intervention and/or facilitation to stimulate development activity in North Ayrshire. The forum gave us useful insight into developer perceptions of the area, and barriers to development activity, which will influence the final report (this will be reported on in the next PPF).

We have designed a customer feedback survey, which is programmed for implementation during 2013-2014. This represents achievement of our improvement action in this category from last year.

# Communications, engagement and customer service

## Case Study - Scotts Restaurant, Largs

The owners of Scotts Restaurant in Largs were seeking to place an advertisement sign at the entrance to their site. Both the Council and Transport Scotland had concerns with the proposed siting of the sign for reasons of visual amenity and road safety. A site visit and round table meeting was arranged with all the key stakeholders to discuss various options. A satisfactory solution was identified and negotiated, and advertisement consent was subsequently granted.



### Efficient and effective decision-making

Member training was undertaken on planning decision making in September 2012, to provide Members with a refresher on the legislative parameters for decisions on planning applications, as well as what constitutes a material consideration. This fulfilled our service improvement action from last year. We also undertook field training on renewable energy (wind turbines) with officers in February 2013. This event was funded using monies secured from the Scottish Government's renewable energy fund.

We introduced policy protocols for case officers, which are designed to assist in the determination of certain rural housing applications and applications involving removal of occupancy restrictions. For the former, our experience had shown that decision making timescales were stalling on such applications due to the complexity involved. For the latter, we required a protocol to ensure that the Chief Planner's letter to all planning authorities regarding the use and removal of occupancy restrictions was being considered by case officers. We will consider introduction of further protocols during 2013-2014 targeted at specific types of application which involve issues that slow determination timescales down.

Last year, we commenced a review of 'legacy cases' where applications had been in the system undetermined for a long time. There were fifteen applications in total, and eight of these were withdrawn or determined during the 2011-2012 period. Progress continues, and a further two applications were decided during 2012-2013. We hope to resolve the remaining five cases during 2013-2014.



## Efficient and effective decision-making

### Case Study: Redstone Design Team

Officers were involved in the design team for the Redstone affordable housing project in Kilwinning. Working together with housing and roads colleagues, officers provided focused, front loaded planning input to work up the development proposal for the site. Timescales were critical, as the funding availability for delivery of the housing was time sensitive. The proposals were agreed in time to allow delivery of the project, and the contractor is currently on site. Several lessons learned from the Redstone project resulted in our identification of a new design and tender approach to Council housebuilding projects, which has been shortlisted for a Scottish Award for Quality in Planning. Further details on this will be provided in our next Planning Performance Framework.



### Effective management structures

The Planning Services Management Team all completed the Council's Management Development Programme, run by Glasgow Caledonian University. This completed a service improvement action from last year.

Following a corporate restructure, the Planning Service now sits within a new directorate to create stronger links with Economic Development and Roads.

The Council is represented on the Heads of Planning Scotland Executive, Development Management and Development Plans Committees. The benefits of this representation include the opportunity to engage on planning matters at a national level to ensure that our interests as a Council are represented as well as the ability to network and learn from others' experience on a variety of planning issues.

The Development Management Section continued to benchmark with East and West Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils.

## Financial management and local governance

The Management Team (Planning Services Manager and Team Managers) met six weekly specifically to discuss budget matters to promote best value and respond to budgetary pressure.

Members were provided with comprehensive planning induction training in May 2012, following local elections.

The management team attended budget holder's training in March 2013.

Total fee and funding income for 2012-2013 for the Planning service was in excess of £1,500,000 and represents recovery of over 70% of the total cost of the service during that period.

## Culture of continuous improvement

An extensive programme of team development was undertaken during the period. This included sessions on what makes an effective team, individual roles within teams, performance management, time management and a team building exercise. The sessions have resulted in improved relationships within and across teams. The awareness amongst staff regarding how the planning service contributes to corporate aims through the Single Outcome Agreement and Council Plan has significantly improved. The concept of the 'golden thread', linking staff's work to the bigger corporate picture, is now well embedded.

A follow on from this team development work was increased staff involvement in service and operational planning for 2013-2014. Staff have better ownership of their actions within these plans, and are now also more aware of the actions of others. All of this team development work represents achievement of a service improvement action from last year.

A working group of volunteers from within the planning service was set up to respond to the Council's Employee Engagement Survey, by identifying a series of actions for improvement. These are now implemented and included a nominated team member attending the team meetings of counterpart teams, and a standing team meeting agenda item to recognise staff achievements.

Various team members attended CPD opportunities during the period, and reported back on knowledge gained by circulating briefing notes. Opportunities included training on renewable energy development and urban design. This fulfilled a service improvement action from last year for this category.

## 3. Supporting evidence

Part 2 of this report was compiled drawing on evidence from statistical data, discussion with team managers, PSIF activity, team development work and external benchmarking activity.

## **4. Service improvements: 2012-13**

### **Open for Business:**

- We will work with developers to bring forward applications on at least three major development sites that are new allocations within the Local Development Plan;
- We will consult with businesses on Arran as part of preparation of new Supplementary Guidance on Affordable Housing for the island.

### **High Quality Development:**

- We will create a new internal 'design panel' to review and advise on proposals where design is particularly sensitive;
- We will identify a mechanism to review development outcomes and monitor the changes in the physical environment.

### **Certainty:**

- We will adopt the new Local Development Plan;
- We will implement processing agreements for at least three planning applications to assist in reducing our average timescales for determining applications.

### **Communications, Engagement & Customer Service:**

- We will implement a customer feedback programme to identify further service improvements.

### **Efficient & Effective Decision Making:**

- We will bring resolution to our remaining 5 'legacy' cases.

### **Effective Management Structures:**

- We will implement the remaining elements of the Planning Services restructure, including incorporation of a Transportation team within Planning Services.

### **Financial Management & Local Governance:**

- We will streamline our budget reporting procedures and the management team will meet six weekly to monitor the service budget.

### **Culture of Continuous Improvement:**

- We will embed a project management culture through project management training for all staff, to assist in the efficient and effective deployment of resources and to reduce average timescales.

## 5. Service improvements: 2011-12

### Open for Business:

- We will implement a mechanism to record pre-application discussion with applicants
- Progress: Completed. As of September 2012 we now record whether pre-application discussion was undertaken.

- We will commission a study to explore opportunities to stimulate development, including potential mechanisms to bring forward development on new allocations in the Local Development Plan.
- Progress: Completed. The study was commissioned during the period, and recommendations for action are anticipated in Autumn 2013.

### High Quality Development :

- We will undertake further training for stakeholders on design.
- Progress: Completed. Member and officer training sessions on design were held. These included a CPD visit to Knockroon and a training session on rural design for Members.

### Certainty:

- We will progress our Modified Plan to Examination.
- Progress: Completed. The Modified Plan was submitted for Examination in February 2013. Adoption is anticipated in early 2014.

### Communications, Engagement & Customer Service:

- We will design and implement a customer feedback programme to identify further service improvements.
- Progress: Partially completed. A customer survey was designed during the period, and is being implemented during 2013-2014.

### Efficient & Effective Decision Making:

- We will undertake Member training on planning decision making.
- Progress: Completed. Member training on planning decision making was held in September 2012.



### Effective Management Structures:

- The management team will continue a training programme to develop skills further.
- Progress: Completed. The management team have completed the Council's Management Development Programme.

- We will seek to implement a restructure in the Development Management Team.
- Progress: Completion was delayed pending a wider corporate restructure.

- We will implement a new corporate structure.
- Progress: Completed. The corporate structure was implemented in late 2012.

### Financial Management & Local Governance:

- We will explore opportunities for benchmarking for the Development Plans Team.
- Progress: Completed. Several authorities were approached for benchmarking activity, however the existence of Scottish Government regional forums to discuss issues, good practice and benchmark performance meant that the consensus was to use these regional forums more effectively for benchmarking. We have suggested this to the Scottish Government.

### Culture of Continuous Improvement:

- We will prepare a CPD programme for staff and identify specific internal/external work experience opportunities to broaden knowledge.
- Progress: Completed. A CPD programme was put in place, which included a trip to Knockroon, and a training session from the Scottish Lime Centre. Secondment opportunities were identified, with the first secondment due to take place in August 2013, where a Planning Policy Officer will spend time with Historic Scotland.

- We will organise team building sessions to improve morale and productivity.
- Progress: Completed. A total of four team building sessions were held during the period. These including sessions on what makes an effective team, individual roles within teams, performance management, and a team building exercise.

## PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OFFICIAL STATISTICS

### Decision-making timescales<sup>5</sup>

Category	Total number of decisions 2012-2013	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2012-2013	2011-201
<b>Major developments</b>	<b>7</b>	30.9 weeks	5/14.7 weeks
<b>Local developments (non-householder)</b>	<b>270</b>	8.7 weeks	308/8.7 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	(86.3%)	6.6 weeks	7.1 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	(13.7%)	22 weeks	18.3 weeks
<b>Householder developments</b>	<b>189</b>	6.6 weeks	279/6.9 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	96.3%	6.4 weeks	6.8 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	3.7%	13.1 weeks	12.5 weeks
<b>Housing developments</b>			
<b>Major</b>	<b>3</b>	27.8 weeks	1/16.1 weeks
<b>Local housing developments</b>	<b>70</b>	11.5 weeks	67/8.8 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	80%	7.2 weeks	7.7 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	20%	29 weeks	13.9 weeks
<b>Business and industry</b>			
<b>Major</b>	<b>0</b>	0 weeks	2/11.5 weeks
<b>Local business and industry</b>	<b>28</b>	9.9 weeks	29/7.5 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	89.3%	6.5 weeks	6.8 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	10.7%	37.8 weeks	13 weeks
<b>EIA developments</b>	<b>0</b>	0	0
<b>Other consents*</b>	<b>146</b>	7.4 weeks	126/7.1 weeks
<b>Planning/legal agreements**</b>	<b>10</b>	108.6 weeks	1/51.4 weeks
<b>Local reviews</b>	<b>14</b>	9.9 weeks	18/13.1 weeks

\* 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

<sup>5</sup> We expect that greater use of processing agreement and 'stopping the clock' will reduce the decision making timescales that have increased since the last period (see service improvement actions above). The relatively small number of applications in certain categories means that average timescales can be significantly distorted with one complex application.

## Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2012-2013 No.	%	2011-2012	
Local reviews	14	9	64.3	12	67%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	4	3	75	0	0%

## Enforcement activity

	2012-2013	2011-2012
Cases taken up	138	26
Breaches identified	122	20
Cases resolved	137	11
Notices served***	5	2
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	1
Prosecutions	1	0

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

## Context

The rise in planning enforcement activity was due to recruitment of a new Planning Inspector, with that post having been vacant for most of the PPF period 2011-2012.

## WORKFORCE AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Head of Planning Service	Tier								
	1	2	3	4					
	Managers		Main Grade Posts		Technicians Posts		Office Support/ Clerical		Totals
	No. of Posts	Vacant	No. of Posts	Vacant	No. of Posts	Vacant	No. of Posts	Vacant	
Development Management	2	0	4.2	0	2	0	2	0	10.2
Development Planning	1	0	3	0	3	0	0	0	7
Enforcement Staff	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Cross Service/ Other Planning	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	4
									22.2

Staffing Profile	Number
Under 30	3
30-39	14
40-49	1
50 and Over	6

Committees & site visits	Number per year
Full Council Committees	11
Planning Committees	11
Area Committees (where relevant)	n/a
Committee site visits	Unknown
LRB	11
LRB site visits	4
LDP Committees	3

Planning Service Budgets	Budget	Costs		Income
		Direct	Indirect	
Development Management	TBC	TBC	TBC	£406,333
Development Planning	TBC	TBC	TBC	
Enforcement	TBC	TBC	TBC	





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