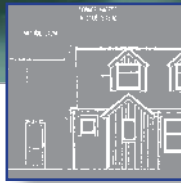


Planning and Building Standards Services



Planning Performance Framework 2014 - 2015



Community and Enterprise
Resources



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to Performance Framework

- 1.1.1 The Scottish Government's central purpose is to create a more successful country with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish through increasing sustainable economic growth. The planning system is therefore expected to support the creation of high quality diverse places which are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. In pursuit of this role the plan making, development management, enforcement and development design functions of a planning service should take a positive approach to enabling high quality development and to making an efficient use of land which will deliver long term benefits for the public, while protecting and enhancing natural and cultural resources. In order to achieve these broad aims development plans need to provide certainty for communities and investors about where development should and should not take place, and identify the supporting infrastructure required for growth. The development management system also needs to deliver timely and reliable decisions that are made in a transparent and fair way; with enforcement powers then being used to uphold the law and enforce these decisions.
- 1.1.2 The effective and efficient fulfilment of these roles requires planning services to perform to a high standard and pursue continuous improvement. The Planning Performance Framework (PPF) which the Council is required to prepare, on an annual basis, plays a significant role in reporting on how the work of the Planning Service in South Lanarkshire seeks to deliver on these tasks and on its commitment to continuous improvement. The PPF also fulfils the need to embed a culture of continuous improvement, within our Planning Service, by incorporating a programme of improvements for the coming year.
- 1.1.3 This is the fourth Planning Performance Framework (PPF) produced by South Lanarkshire Council. It provides a comprehensive view of the planning service in South Lanarkshire, based on a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators. In addition, the PPF sets out the actions to be taken by the Planning Service in 2015/16 in order to support continuous improvement in the delivery of its functions and duties. The PPF also reviews progress on the actions identified in the second PPF, covering the period April 2014 – March 2015.

The Planning Service

1.2 The Planning Service

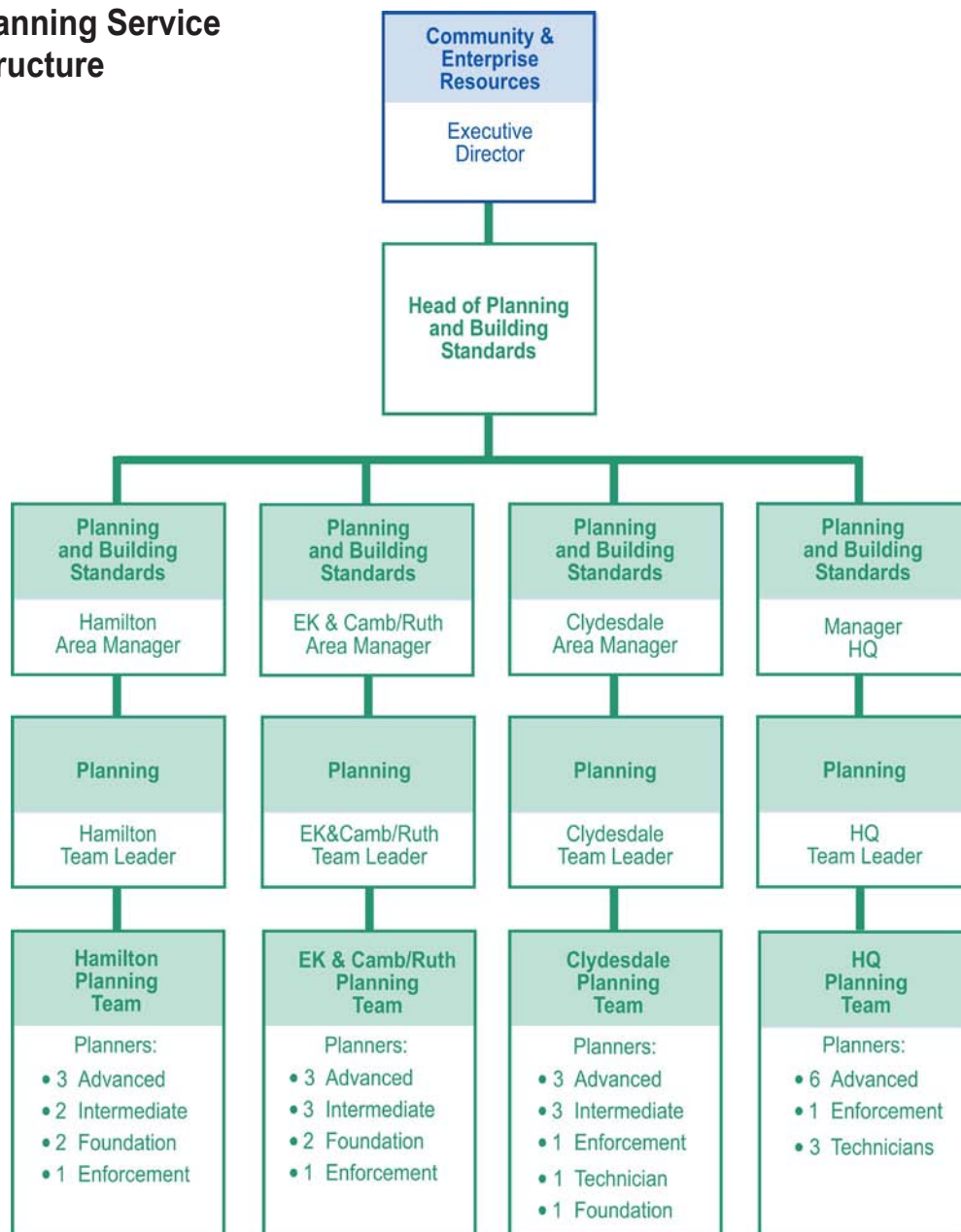
- 1.2.1 South Lanarkshire, with a population of 314,000, is Scotland's fifth largest local authority and covers an area of approximately 1800 square kilometres. It sits to the east and south of Glasgow extending from Rutherglen and Cambuslang, on the boundary with Glasgow, to the Southern Uplands at Leadhills and east to Forth. Its many communities include a World Heritage site, Royal Burghs, a New Town, market towns, weaving, mining and agricultural villages.
- 1.2.2 South Lanarkshire's Planning Service is part of Community & Enterprise Resources. The Council's Planning Service's work is undertaken by 4 teams with a total of 41 staff. The staff are based within four teams comprising a Headquarters team and three Area Office teams.
- 1.2.3 The HQ team is based in the Community & Enterprise Resources HQ building in Hamilton. It deals with Development Plan preparation, publishing and monitoring; and produces, where necessary, appropriate Supplementary Guidance (SG). The HQ team also coordinates the Council's input to the preparation and monitoring of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP), via the Glasgow & Clyde Valley Strategic Planning Authority as well as handling all mineral, waste and large scale windfarm applications.



The Planning Service

- 1.2.4 The 3 other Area teams, located in Lanark, Hamilton and East Kilbride, handle the vast majority of all the planning applications submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 and other associated legislation. This includes applications for planning permission, listed building consent, conservation consent, advertisement consent, high hedges applications and certificates of lawful use. In addition to this work these teams also assist the HQ team in work on the Development Plan, SG and the SDP.
- 1.2.5 Previous PPFs have highlighted that the Planning Service is combined and managed jointly with the Building Standards Service. This remains the case and the Service continues to operate on a decentralised basis through its locally based area offices, which also deliver the Council's Road's functions. Through this structure it is possible to deliver, a co-ordinated service which provides applicants, developers and investors with guidance on their proposals and on the application process, covering planning permission, building warrant and roads construction consent.

Planning Service Structure



The Planning Service

- 1.2.6 When carrying out this work the service remains conscious of the need for it to deliver on the outcomes set by the Scottish Government, the aims around which the Community Plan is structured and the priorities identified in the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA). The national outcomes include the need to protect and enhance our natural & built environment, and to make Scotland an attractive place for business investment, and a well designed sustainable place. The Community Plan highlights the need to promote sustainable and inclusive communities, plus ensure sustainable economic recovery and development; while the SOA identifies economic growth and recovery as a priority.
- 1.2.7 The direction established in these documents is cascaded down into the objectives set out in the Council Plan, Connect and include an explicit recognition of the importance of:-
- Supporting the local economy by providing the right conditions for growth
 - Improving the quality of the physical environment
 - Improving the road network and influencing improvements in public transport
 - Improving the quality, access and availability of housing
 - Achieving the efficient and effective use of resources
 - Promoting performance management and improvement and
 - Embedding governance and accountability
- 1.2.8 The Resource Plan prepared for Community & Enterprise, in response to the Council Plan, recognises that the Planning Service has a role to play in pursuing these objectives. This includes specific references to the need to progress work on the preparation and implementation of both the Council's Local Development Plans, and Clydeplan (the Strategic Development Plan), plus the need to process planning applications in accordance with legislation and the policy direction established in the development plan. This is with a view to securing development which can generate economic development and is of a high standard.
- 1.2.8 To deliver on these Council's objectives and the tasks identified in the Resource Plan the Planning Service must aim to perform to a high standard and pursue continuous improvement. This should be with a view to facilitating sustainable economic growth, the creation of new jobs, and the strengthening of economic capacity. The Service, therefore, must endeavour to have up to date, clear and ambitious plans in place. Developers in turn can use these plans to identify proposals which can make their way through the development management process with the minimum of delay, thus providing them with greater certainty and minimising their risk. These plans must also give residents and business a clear picture of how, having taken into account their views and concerns, their communities are planned to develop by directing investment, through the development management process, to the right place at the right time and of the right quality. This together with the monitoring and enforcement of the development process can create well designed and located places which respect the distinctive and valued qualities of the area's natural and built environment, and acknowledge the views and concerns of the area's communities and businesses.
- 1.2.9 In fulfilling these tasks the Service therefore remains aware of the need for its working practices and methods to be responsive to and aware of the demands of its customers, throughout all the stages of the planning and decision making process, and for its staff to have the skills and knowledge they need to deliver quality outcomes.
- 1.2.10 Taking account of the above the Service continues to focus its improvement actions on the need to:-
- Improve the user's experience and increase their understanding of the Planning Service;
 - Raise the Quality & Effectiveness of our Business Processes; and
 - Raise our Effectiveness in Assessing the Quality of Development Proposals.

Addressing and reviewing the Service's performance against these aims also provides a means of linking actions in the Performance Framework to the aims and objectives set out in the Council Plan, the SOA and the Council's annual Resource and Service plans.

1.3 Planning Performance Framework

1.3.1 The components of the PPF for 2013- 2014 are:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Part 1 | National Headline Indicators such as age of Development Plan, effective housing land supply, application approval rate and delegation rate. |
| Part 2 | A performance assessment across 8 areas of agreed activities that define and measure a high quality planning service. These activity areas cover the following topics:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Open for Business,ii. High Quality Development on the Ground,iii. Certainty,iv. Communications, Engagement & Customer Service,v. Efficient & Effective Decision Making,vi. Effective Management Structures,vii. Financial Management & Local Governance andviii. Culture of Continuous Improvement. |
| Part 3 | Supporting evidence and links to related reports and studies such as customer survey results, Resource and Service Plans and Planning Service Improvement Plan. |
| Part 4 | Service improvements and timescales for the delivery of improvements, plus a review of the delivery of the previous year's service improvement actions. |
| Part 5 | Official Statistics – including average timescales for determining applications, numbers of local reviews and appeals and enforcement activity. |
| Part 6 | Workforce and financial information. |

1.3.2 In terms of Part 2 of the PPF, Defining & Measuring a High Quality Planning Service, previous PPFs categorised the performance factors in terms of how they contributed towards delivering certainty, consistency, communications and contactability. The Service continues to find this a useful and effective way of identifying and grouping these activities and has used this approach in Part 2 of the PPF.

South Lanarkshire Council National Headline Indicators – Part 1

2. South Lanarkshire Council National Headline Indicators – Part 1

- 2.1 The table below provides performance figures for key indicators within both development management and development planning. Within development planning the performance of the Planning Service can be measured through the assessment of key outcomes such as the age of the local plan and the number of housing units that can be delivered. Within development management performance can be measured through the assessment of key indicators such as the average number of weeks to make a decision on a planning application and the rate of planning approval.

Part 1: National Headline Indicators (NHIs)

Key outcomes	2014-2015	2013-2014
Development Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> age of local/strategic development plan(s) (years and months) at end of reporting period Requirement: less than 5 years Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? (Y/N) Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? (Y-earlier/ Y-later/N) Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year? (Y/N) 	LDP Minerals – 3 year SLLP – 6 years N N Y	LDP Minerals – 2 year SLLP – 5 years Y N Y
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established housing land supply 5 year effective housing land supply 5 year housing supply target 5 year effective housing land supply (years 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 	19219 4664 750 6.2 3638 3175 123.53 1.83	20034 4487 800 5.6 374 3340 136.43Ha 6.56Ha
Development Management: Project Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice number of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan percentage planned timescales met Decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> application approval rate delegation rate 	38% 0 N/A 97.1% 92.9%	40% (Quarter 4 only) 0 N/A 97.1% 90.7%
Decision making timescales: Average number of weeks to decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major developments Local developments (non-householder) Householder developments 	75.9weeks 14.9weeks 7.3weeks	62.4 weeks 18.6 weeks 8.0 weeks
Legacy Cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number cleared during reporting period Number remaining 	52 92	
Enforcement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed (months) <i>Requirement: review every 2 years</i> Number of breaches identified / resolved 	16 months (to March 2015) 256/186	4 months 256/216

During 2014/15, improvements were made to a number of the National Headline Indicators. The main aspects of the outcomes are summarised below.

Development Planning - The Council's Development Plan Scheme (DPS) anticipated the Department of Planning and Environment Appeal's (DPEA) Report on the South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (SLLDP) would be completed in June/July 2014; as the Plan and its associated representations had been submitted to the DPEA in November 2013, in accordance with the DPS. It was not, however, received by the Council until October 2014. The Council's decision to adopt was therefore delayed to March 2015.

The Council then anticipated that it would be able to formally adopt the SLLDP in April 2015. However the Council subsequently received 3 letters extending the time period for the plan to be considered by Scottish Ministers. This further delayed adoption of the SLLDP till June 29th 2015. The Council now has an adopted Local Development Plan.

Consultation took place on draft Supplementary Guidance to be provided in support of the SLLDP.

Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs – There has been a notable increase in the number of housing approvals. This is a result of the Council granting consent for a number of major housing developments on sites previously allocated through the development plan process, including one of the Council's CGAs. It also reflects an upturn in economic activity in the housing sector. The reduction in the figure for the housing supply target accords with the outcome of the Housing Needs Demand Assessment recently completed as part of the work required to update the Strategic Development Plan. The established housing land supply figure has been reduced as the Service, in order to ensure it had a realistic figure, decided to remove a number of sites which had been on the list for some time but had not shown signs of activity or developer interest. As a result of some previously allocated sites coming forward with development at a higher capacity than originally anticipated there has been an increase in The the 5 year effective land supply. The overall figure, in years, for the effective land supply (6.2) translates into a 19.6% allocation for generosity.

Part of the decrease in employment land is due to a 9ha site at Larkhall being taken out following permission being granted for a housing development. Further reclamation works at Clyde Gateway has allowed a 0.96ha site to be added to the supply.

Sites at Carluke, Cambuslang and East Kilbride, totalling 1.55ha, were taken up for industrial and warehouse use.

Development Management – The proportion of applications subject to pre-application discussion has remained approximately the same. Measures have been included in the 2015/16 improvement plan to try and improve the figure. The agents' forum also provided an opportunity to emphasise to them the benefits of early engagement with the Service. In terms of decision-making, the application approval rate of 97.1% remains relatively high. The Council both through its web site and in all pre-application discussions continues to encourage the use of processing agreements.

Decision-making timescales – The process review undertaken in 2014/15 in response to the trend in the Council's decision making timescales and described in more detail below has succeeded in reducing the average for both local developments and householder developments by 20% and 8.75% respectively. The impact of the changes made to DM processes on the Service's decision making time scales will continue to be monitored.

The increase in the decision making timescales for major developments from 62.4 weeks to 75.9 weeks is attributable to the determination of a legacy minerals application from 2001 and to a legacy wind farm application from 2007. If these two applications were excluded, the figure for major applications would be closer to 52 weeks, which would be a 16% improvement on last year's figure.

Progress is continuing to be made in the clearing of legacy cases.

Enforcement – The enforcement charter will be reviewed in 2015/16.

3. Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service – Part 2

- 3.1 Part 2 of the PPF provides an opportunity to demonstrate within 8 areas of activity how the Planning Service delivers a high quality planning service and how the quality of this service is measured. 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 & Customer Service** – communications strategy for engagement and positive customer experience;
 - **Efficient & Effective Decision Making** – ensuring structures and processes are proportionate;
 - **Effective Management Structures** – ensuring management structures are effective and fit for purpose;
 - **Financial Management & Local Governance** – demonstrating effective governance and financial management; and
 - **Culture of Continuous Improvement** – demonstrating a culture of learning and improving.
- 3.2 The current actions, processes and procedures identified against each of the activity areas described above have been categorised in order to identify how they contribute towards delivering on the priority areas described in paragraph 1.3.2 i.e. certainty, consistency, communications and contactability.

Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service – Part 2

Current Position

RETURN FOR PERIOD ENDING March 2015

Area of Activity: **Open for business**

Certainty

- Approved Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Development Plan (May 2012).
- Main Issues Report for Clydeplan (Strategic Development Plan 2) published January 2015
- Adopted Minerals Plan (June 2012).
- Adopted South Lanarkshire Local Plan (March 2009).
- Proposed South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan published in May 2013.
- Committee agreed to adopt South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan March 2015 and cleared for adoption by Scottish Government in June 2015.
- Draft Supplementary Guidance on Green Network & Greenspaces, Affordable Housing, Green Belt & Rural Area, Town Centres & Retailing, Industrial & Commercial Development, Community & Infrastructure Assessment, Sustainable Development & Climate Change and the Natural & Historic Environment all published for public consultation in 2014/2015.
- Proportion of applications approved 97.1%.
- Key Applications and those prioritised for action are recorded on the Service's Key Application List. List used by Case Officers, Planning Team Leaders, Area Managers, Head of Service and Executive Director to review and monitor progress at 1-2-1 meetings held on 3 week cycle.
- Effective land supply 4664 houses.
- Planning co-ordinates input from Building Standards, Environmental Services, Flood Prevention Unit, Countryside & Greenspace and Roads to the pre-application discussions, assessment and determination process.
- The Planning Service contributed to developing the City Deal projects aimed at securing £170M of investment in strategic development proposals, including the infrastructure required for the Community Growth Areas in South Lanarkshire.

Consistency

- Internal protocols in place with Environmental Services and Roads covering appropriate information required to support applications in operation.
- Approved Council Guidance available on Pre-application Discussions, Pre-application Consultation Process and Decision Making Process.
- Written advice provided in response to pre-application enquiries/discussions
- Guidance note prepared for case officers on the formal recording of all pre-app discussions
- 38% of applications subject of pre-application discussion
- On initial submission all applications reviewed by Planning Team Leader to ensure policy and design issues be addressed by case officer are identified at the start of the assessment process.

continued -

Area of Activity: Open for business

Communications

- Coordinated working structures established with other Council Services to ensure priority programmes are progressed timeously e.g. Schools Modernisation and Social Housing.
- Attend Clyde Gateway partnership and City Deal meetings to assist in progressing planned regeneration/economic development proposals.
- The South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan specifically points out that in respect of developers contributions the Council 'will aim to strike a balance between setting contributions at a level that addresses projected impact and ensuring that the development remains viable.'
- Draft Supplementary Guidance on contributions published in December 2014. In response to comments received working group set up to establish consistent and balanced process for reviewing and considering contributions to be sought from developers. This is to ensure contributions are proportionate and reasonable. Publication of a finalised version, to include additional detailed advice on contributions, actioned for 2015/16.

Contactability

- Decentralised office structure provides ready access to Planning advice across the Council area.
- Applicant advised of direct contact numbers/e-mail address of their dedicated case officer when application registered.
- Major applications handled by dedicated case officers who deal directly with Area Manager and Head of Service.
- Development Management Charter sets standards for responding to meeting requests, telephone calls & site visits.

Developers Contributions

In December 2014 the Council published draft Supplementary Guidance (SG) on Community Infrastructure Assessment (CIA). This contains advice and guidance on how the Council will consider and assess developers' contributions. The SG reflected the policy approach set out in the Council's Local Development Plan, the draft SG therefore specifically acknowledges (paragraph 4.24) the need to strike a balance between setting contributions at a level that addresses projected impacts and ensuring that a development remains viable. The draft SG goes on to set out a detailed methodology for the consideration, assessment and calculation of contributions for affordable housing, education roads and community facilities. The SG also refers developers to a model agreement prepared by the Council's Legal services and includes an example of how contributions can be phased/programmed in order to ensure that their economic impact does not prejudice the viability of a proposed development.

In response to some of the comments received the Council has recognised to need to ensure that the contributions individually identified for affordable housing, education roads and community facilities are subsequently reviewed and assessed jointly. This is to ensure that together they are set at a level which acknowledges the need to address the infrastructure impacts of new developments, but also ensures they remain viable. This exercise will be co-ordinated by the Planning Service.

A finalised version of the SG will be published in 2015/16.

Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service – Part 2

Key Applications

The monitoring of progress on key applications by Planning Team Leaders, Area Managers, Head of Service and Executive Director has been used to identify if staff resources across the Planning Service were distributed in accordance with the pressures being experienced in either specific categories of work or individual Area Offices. This resulted in the Planning and Building Standards Management Team deciding on a temporary redistribution of staff to reflect and accommodate the Development Management demands in Area Offices. In part this has contributed towards the reduction in the processing time for some developments. The Management Team will continue to monitor progress with a view to identifying the appropriate response in terms of staff allocations.

Current Position

RETURN FOR PERIOD ENDING March 2015

Area of Activity: High Quality Development on the Ground

Certainty

- Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Design, describing design standards and incorporating principles set out in Designing Streets, provides basis for assessing housing applications.
- Green Network Design Guide provides advice on the creation of quality, well managed and accessible greenspaces.
- Proposed Local Development Plan includes policy requiring proposals to address the 6 qualities of place making.
- Policy is complemented by Supplementary Guidance on Development Management Place Making & Design, the final version of which, incorporating illustrative material/advice on the 6 qualities of placemaking, will be considered by the Council's Planning Committee in 2015 and published on the Council website.
- Supplementary Guidance on Development Management Place Making & Design to include an appendix which sets out detailed advice on the 'Objectives of Urban Design' and 'Aspects of Development Form', plus detailed advice on points to consider when addressing design matters.
- Shop front design guide available
- Advice on windows and doors for listed buildings and conservation areas available
- Landscape quality and capacity advice in respect of windfarm and wind turbine developments is published on Council website and used as basis for updating Supplementary Guidance on renewable energy which will go to Committee in September 2015.

Consistency

- Consideration of design issues is a standing item on the agenda for the Development Management Policies & Procedures Group's (DMPPG) review of past cases. This provides an opportunity for the Area Offices to share examples of good design and approaches to design solutions. Examples of some of the developments considered are provided below.
- Interim Guidance on Road Construction Consent process prepared by Roads & Transportation Service which incorporates principles set out in Designing Streets.
- Participate in the Local Authority Urban Design Forum.

Communications

- Local Development Plan requires Community Growth Area applications to be the subject of masterplans, based on clearly defined 'Masterplan Development Frameworks' prepared by Council.
- Local Development Plan requires applications for Development Framework Sites to be subject of small scale masterplans, based on clearly defined key considerations specified in each plan.

Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service – Part 2

**Blackhall,
Hawksland**



The applicant submitted a planning application for a replacement dwellinghouse on the site, a long, narrow plot of land set within the rural area. The original, single storey dwelling and associated outbuildings had been abandoned for a number of years, and was in a ruinous, dilapidated condition, adversely affecting the quality of the surrounding landscape. The applicant had a number of pre application discussions with the Planning Service to discuss issues of scale, mass, design and access/parking provision. The submitted application sought consent for what is considered to be an individually designed dwelling which is of an exceptional and innovative design quality. It reflects a high standard of design in terms of modern, contemporary architecture and has been built in a manner that incorporates high energy efficiency, sustainable construction methods and traditional materials, including stonework salvaged from the original dwelling.

Continued over page.



Blackhall
continued:



The completed dwelling has enhanced the immediate setting of the site, removed a dangerous, vacant building and improved road safety/visibility by re-siting the replacement structure further back within the site. The dwelling is served by a small wind turbine and is occupied in connection with the running of a rural smallholding on the adjoining land. Tourist accommodation has also been developed at the site which mirrors the high quality and sustainable form of the house and provides an economic benefit for the local area.





East Lodge, Stonebyres

The use of natural stone and the architectural detailing ensured the extension to this property in a prominent location on the A72 respected the character of the original building and the amenity of the wider area.

Hamilton International Technology Park



The design and finishes were aimed at ensuring the completed development had a contemporary look which expressed the role and function of the Technology Park

Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service – Part 2



**Lanark
Memorial
Hall**

Refurbishment and extension of a category B listed building to provide enhanced facilities for the local community developed in partnership with a range of Council Services. The modern addition to the original building makes a positive contribution to the streetscene

**Hamilton Bus
Station**



The design and layout was the subject of discussion with SPT, the bus operators, Scotrail and users in order to ensure that the resulting development provided a safe and attractive facility that benefitted passengers and the bus companies.

Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service – Part 2

Current Position

RETURN FOR PERIOD ENDING March 2015

Area of Activity: **Certainty**

Certainty

- Proportion of applications approved contrary to current Local Plan 2.62%.
- Proportion of applications approved in accordance with officer's recommendation 100%.
- Timescale for processing priority applications monitored through Key Application process.
- Chair & Vice Chair of Planning Committee regularly briefed on applications programmed for Committee.
- Early involvement of building standards & roads in discussion/assessment process provides advance indication of requirements for Building Warrant & Road Construction Consent process.
- On line advice published on coal mining legacy problems and how they can be addressed through the planning process.
- Council agreed to adopt South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan in March 2015.
- Development Plan Scheme 2015, incorporating progress plan, in place and provides basis for monitoring progress on development plans.
- Video prepared and available through the council web site describing the application process.
- Key application lists used to monitor and manage progress on applications
- Submission and monitoring of Performance figures a standing item on Management Team agenda.

Consistency

- Protocol in place with Environmental Services and Roads covering advice required by Planning Service to progress applications.
- Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing and Housing for Particular Needs approved.
- Supplementary Planning Guidance on Renewable Energy Development approved.
- Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Development and Design approved.
- Draft Supplementary Guidance on Development Management Place Making & Design Green Network & Greenspaces, Affordable Housing, Green Belt & Rural Area, Town Centres & Retailing, Industrial & Commercial Development, Community & Infrastructure Assessment, Sustainable Development & Climate Change, and the Natural & Historic Environment published.
- Landscape and Landscape capacity advice on windfarms published.
- Proportion of applications not validated at first attempt 37%
- Recording of all pre-application discussions formalised and entered into Development Management system to ensure consistency of responses.

Communications

- Website and pre application discussions used to promote processing agreements.

Validation

The Service noted over the year that the proportion of applications being made invalid on first submission was increasing. The resulting need to return applications to agents/applicants, with requests for further details, impacted upon the quality of the service being provided to our customers by delaying work on the assessment of their proposals. In addition, some agents had indicated to the Service that the approach taken to the validation process varied across the Area Offices. These difficulties were raised as a specific item for discussion at the Agents' Forum. In addition a draft guidance note setting out in detail the information needed to ensure that an application could be validated, and which would be used by all officers across the Service, was circulated to the agents. Following the discussions at the forum a finalised version of the guidance was prepared and issued to case officers. The level of invalid applications submitted will be kept under review to establish what further action may be required.

Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service – Part 2

YouTube video guidance

In order to advise our customers of the process to be followed when seeking permission to alter or extend their home, the Service in collaboration with the Council's in-house New Media Team, created a short informative video. The video, shot using members of the Planning and Building Standards team as presenters, provides advice on when a planning application is required, how to submit such an application, and the details which should accompany the application. It also includes information on conservation areas, listed building consent and building warrant requirements. The video was produced in response to the need to consider alternative communication channels with direct and indirect customers and to provide a readily accessible source of guidance on how to submit a valid application. The video is published on the Council's YouTube channel and on its website. The links are provided in the supporting information.

Current Position

RETURN FOR PERIOD ENDING March 2015

Area of Activity: **Communications, Engagement and Customer Service**

Certainty

- Complaints to SPSO – 6 complaints were referred to the SPSO. Of those, 5 were not pursued by the SPSO and 1 was upheld, in part, with recommendations, with which the Council has complied.

Consistency

- Complaints handled in accordance with Council procedure. All responses from the Planning Service regularly reviewed by Service's complaints panel to establish if pattern or frequency of complaints indicates need to consider procedural or policy changes.
- Online publications provide guidance on the decision making process, pre-application consultation process, design and access statements, planning local review body, high hedge applications and residential design guide.

Communications

- Enforcement Charter & Development Management Charter in place setting out application process, contact points and response standards.
- Enforcement Charter Crystal Marked.
- Guidance published encouraging pre-application discussions.
- Customer Forum held with agents.
- Customer Satisfaction Survey sent out with each decision and results collated annually and considered by Management Team and Policy & Procedures Group.
- Proportion of agents/applicants identifying the overall level of service provided by Planning as 'excellent or good' 96% and the proportion who consider usefulness of advice and assistance received from planning staff to be 'excellent or good' is 97%.
- Mystery Shopper exercise undertaken annually to evaluate council response to inquiries.
- Outcomes from Forum, Surveys and Mystery Shopper exercise feed into Service and Resource plans and Planning Service Improvement Plan
- Applications submitted online via the National Planning Portal processed directly into the Council's Electronic Data & Record Management System and DM system without requiring any manual input from Support Staff.
- e-consultation undertaken with all statutory and of non-statutory consultees who can receive information electronically.
- Online enforcement register.
- Electronic Data & Record Management System allows all documents held by Service to be immediately viewed at any planning office across the Council area.

Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service – Part 2

Current Position

RETURN FOR PERIOD ENDING March 2015

Area of Activity: **Communications, Engagement and Customer Service**

- Web information on planning applications updated daily.
- Guidance available, prepared in co-operation with Access forum, on inclusive design and advising on how buildings can be designed to make sure everyone can use them.
- Suite of 10 information leaflets provides guidance to householders on the need for planning permission for common types of householder development.
- Publication of Local Development Plan and Draft Supplementary Guidance undertaken electronically with option for representations to be submitted electronically, directly to Council.

Contactability

- Proportion of applications submitted electronically - 56%. (5% increase)
- Planning Portal usage audited and number of visits averaged 9,055 per month in 2014/15. (8% increase)
- Planning portal allows for electronic submission of representations to planning applications.
- Duty Officer system ensures that a professional member of staff is always available to advise customers at each office.
- Decentralised office structure provides ready access to Planning advice across the Council area.
- Applicant advised of direct contact numbers/e-mail address of their dedicated case officer when application registered.
- Development plan consultation process allows for direct submission of representations to proposed plans and draft Supplementary Guidance electronically.

Agents Forum

The Service has regularly held an agents' forum in order to seek feedback from its customers. It was noted that whilst the forum had always been a valuable way of seeking out the views of some of the Service's customers the attendance did not reflect the full range of agents who dealt with the Council. In addition, the Service was also conscious of the Scottish Government's (SG) intention to implement the powers available through the Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 to vary the level of planning application fees charged by a Planning Authority, if the SG considered performance was not satisfactory. In response to this the Service had carried out a detailed process review and had identified number of changes it wished to make to its procedures. Some of the proposed changes were likely to have implications for the way in which the Service interacted with agents and were particularly aimed at improving both the quality of the information provided by them on submission, and the speed with which any additional information was subsequently provided by agents. Consequently there was a need to ensure that as many agents as possible were made aware of the changes and the reasons for them.

The agents who made most use of the Planning Service were contacted. They were advised that we were seeking to make changes to our procedures and that there were a number of specific areas or topics on which we wished to seek their views. These were:-

- i. Validation
- ii. Pre-application discussions
- iii. The Planning Portal

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- iv. The Scheme of Delegation
- v. The assessment of applications
- vi. Processing agreements
- vii. The Local Development Plan

In response 15 agents attended the meeting. The Head of Service introduced the event together with one of the Service's Area Managers. Thereafter short breakout sessions were held in smaller groups to discuss each of the topics and report back on views and suggestions.

There was a positive response from agents to the suggested advice on validation. The agents also recognised the benefits of pre-application discussions but expressed some concerns over variations in the approach taken by either different officers or offices. This was particularly in relation to who attended meetings and the nature of the feedback provided. In response the Service has provided further guidance for officers and introduced a more systematic system for recording pre-application consultations. All agents found the portal useful but suggested it could be used to keep them up to date on legislation. This will be explored in 2015/16.

Some agents suggested a further extension in delegated powers. This however cannot be explored until after the next Council elections in 2017. In response to concerns raised regarding the time taken for consultation replies from Roads, Flooding and Environmental Services, and variations in the content of these responses it has been decided to undertake a co-ordinated review of the protocols with these Services in 2015/16. Regarding processing agreements the Service took the opportunity to further emphasise the benefits of this approach. The agents indicated that they considered they could be beneficial for some major developments but that in view of the generally positive approach taken by the Council they were not essential in all cases. Finally, it was apparent from the discussion that a number of agents had a relatively limited knowledge of the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) or found it difficult to find on the Council's website. We will review the way the LDP is accessed through the website and seek further views on whether or not some agents would benefit from awareness training on the LDP

Public Performance Reporting

The Council Plan outlines the Council's objectives for 2012-2017. Each year the Council produces an Annual Performance Report which details how we have performed in achieving these objectives. The Performance Report is evaluated annually, against 18 corporate management themes, by Audit Scotland. When the Council received the report from Audit Scotland covering the 2012/13 Annual Performance Report it identified 10 corporate management themes where it considered that the reporting mechanism was only partially compliant. This included planning (environmental and developmental). In response the Service, in co-operation with Support Services, reviewed and reappraised the content of the planning section. The opportunity to make a number of changes and improvements was identified. The revised content was incorporated into the 2013/14 Annual Performance Report as part of a suite of individual performance reports which focus on key areas of Council business ('Performance at a glance'). Audit Scotland has confirmed that following its review of the 2013/14 Annual Performance Report the Planning input is fully compliant.

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Current Position

RETURN FOR PERIOD ENDING March 2015

Area of Activity: Efficient and Effective Decision Making

Certainty

- 4 week Committee cycle for Planning Committee established and diarised.
- 8 week Committee cycle for Area Committees established and diarised.
- Planning & Local Review body programmed on 3 week cycle and held as required.
- Deadlines set for checking & submission of reports to the committees and for reviewing with Chair/Vice Chair.
- Scheme of Delegation reviewed and updated March 2015 to ensure it accorded with legislation
- The managers' meeting and 1-2-1 meetings with individual managers and Head of Service, held on 3 week cycle, each review the position regarding applications going forward for approval either via Committees or under delegated powers.
- Protocols with Environmental Services, Roads, and the Flood Prevention Unit used to improve effectiveness & efficiency of response process and specify information required.
- Time Management training available to all staff on line.

Consistency

- Prior to issue Building Warrant approvals & Roads Construction Consents are cross checked against Planning Permissions to identify discrepancies.
- Licensing applications cross checked against Planning Permissions to ensure consistency.

Communications

- Applications with outstanding Section 75 agreements identified and all applicants contacted to establish if applications to be withdrawn/refused. Report to go to Committee in 2015/16 summarising actions in respect of each application.
- Electronic filing and work flow of all documents associated with applications allows immediate & direct access to this information across the entire service.
- Council approved guidance available on the planning permission 'Decision Making Process'.

Bond Requirements

The Council has received a substantial number of applications for windfarms and individual wind turbines (50 in 2014/15). In the majority of cases it was considered necessary to put in place arrangements, either through a financial guarantee bond or similar, to ensure that if/when turbines were removed the site could be restored. Consequently, when approving these applications the Council originally included a requirement for a Section 75 agreement to be concluded, prior to a consent being issued, which would cover the need for a bond (or similar). This approach resulted in the time taken for consents to be issued being lengthened and added to the administrative burden on both applicants and the Council. In response to these problems the Planning Service approached the Council's Legal Services in order to investigate the possibility of adopting a different approach. Following detailed consideration and assessment of the options, in partnership with Legal Services, it was concluded that it was both sufficient and appropriate to include the requirements for a bond as a pre-commencement condition on the consent. The terms and content of the condition were discussed and agreed with Legal Services. This ensured that any risk to the Council in adopting this approach was minimised and that the condition also included specific and clear advice on what was expected of applicants.

Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service – Part 2

Consent for windfarms and individual wind turbines are, where appropriate, issued with the condition and the practice has been extended to include applications for minerals developments. This has helped streamline the final stages in the determination of these applications

Section 75 Agreements

In parallel with the above exercise the Service took the opportunity to review the use of Section 75 agreements. In consultation with Legal Services a revised and updated procedures note was produced for officers. The note specifically highlights that section 75 agreements should only be used if there are key matters that cannot be controlled by planning conditions. It also emphasised that it is becoming increasingly common for key matters to be controlled by planning conditions instead of the use of Planning Obligations. The note provided specific examples of matters which had traditionally been controlled by agreements but where the Service now considered it was appropriate to use conditions, thus reducing the need for agreements. The note also emphasises to case officers that discussions on agreements can commence at any stage of the application process and, therefore, the importance of front loading this process and so allowing negotiations on the document to commence as soon as possible. In addition the Service will in all cases advise applicants and their solicitors that a planning Obligation should be concluded within a maximum period of 6 months from the date of the Committee approval of the application; and that a failure to do may result in the application being reported back to Committee with a recommendation for refusal.

Process Review

In its comments on the 2013/14 Planning Performance Framework the Scottish Government noted that the Service should consider what further improvements could be made to reduce average timescales for determining applications. Consequently, in 2014 the Planning Service commenced work on a review of its application processes. An officer group was established to carry out the review led by an Area Manager. It comprised of officers of different grades across the three area offices and headquarters team and, as required, input from other Services

The review was based on the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) method with advice and guidance provided throughout by Education Resources who had successfully carried out a similar exercise. The PDSA approach rests on initially implementing changes at a small scale (for example at an area office or even individual level) and studying the effects of that change over a period of time to see if it is having the effect that had been predicted. A measurement to test the success of each action point is produced for each one. Only when it is established that the change is making a difference is it fully implemented. If not changes can be made to the particular action and tested again; or it can be abandoned altogether.

Initially, therefore, the group examined data to get an understanding of the performance of the service and establish an overall aim for the exercise. Case studies were investigated to determine the reasons for the delay in determining particular applications and a sub group looked at the processes involved in making a decision. After an initial session which was used by the group to put forward and discuss suggested reasons for delays a series of actions to address these were identified and tested. After 6 months an action plan was prepared, based on the results of these tests, and rolled out to all offices. The outcome of these actions is still being monitored and tested to make sure they are having a positive impact on performance. The approach we are using seeks to continuously improve decision making timescales and it is anticipated that new or amended actions will be developed as performance patterns become clearer.

As well as the development of the action plan the group identified that officers were concentrating on determining applications within the statutory 2 month period. Attention thereafter switched to other applications in order to ensure their 2 month deadline was achieved. The move to measuring performance based on average number of weeks to determine an application required a significant change in culture by officers. This has been embraced across the service and combined with the processing improvements introduced has already seen an improvement in timescales for processing householder applications.

Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service – Part 2

Current Position

RETURN FOR PERIOD ENDING March 2015

Area of Activity: Effective Management Structures

Certainty

- System of 1-2-1 meetings between Executive Director/Head of Service/Managers/Team Leaders/Case Officers – all held on 3 week cycles, used to review and programme workloads.
- Heads of Service meetings and Managers meetings, also held on 3 week cycle, jointly review workloads and performance, and considers where resources may need to be directed.

Consistency

- Annual Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) for all members of staff used to review skills and identify training or development needs. Progress reviewed after 6 months.
- Service maintains regular dialogue with Housing, Roads & Environmental Services regarding application procedures/process.
- Schools Modernisation Programme and Council's Social Housing Programme progressed with Education and Housing Services respectively through Joint Project Teams.
- Approved Affordable Housing, Residential Design Guide and Renewable Energy SPGs developed in co-operation with Housing, Roads, Environmental Services, Estates and Legal Services.
- Responses to Draft Supplementary Guidance on Development Management Place Making & Design, Town Centres & Retailing, Sustainable Development & Climate Change and Wind Energy reviewed in co-operation with Roads, Flood Prevention Unit, Countryside & Greening, Environmental Services and Regenerations Services.
- Management Team has identified staff that, following final adoption of SLLDP, will begin to shadow officers currently involved in Development plan work, including work on the next Strategic Development Plan. This is to build expertise in an area of work which has been identified as requiring succession planning.

Communications

- Regular liaison meetings held with Countryside & Greening Service to co-ordinate work on Development Planning, Development Management, Core Path Plan and Sustainable Development Strategy.
- Regular liaison meetings held with Support Services to monitor workloads & priorities.
- Participate in the Central Scotland Wind Turbine Forum and Strategic Environmental Assessment Forum
- Planning Service works with other Authorities through the Strategic Development Planning Authority, West of Scotland Archaeology Service, Clyde Gateway, the Green Network Partnership, the Glasgow and Clyde Valley LDP Forum and Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) Development Management, Development Plans and Energy & Resources Sub Committees and HOPS benchmarking group and Executive Committee.

West of Scotland Archaeology Service

The Council is a partner in the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS). The service, on behalf of its 10 partners, maintains and updates the Historic Environment Record for each Authority and provides information and advice to Planning Authorities on potential archaeological issues raised by development proposals. The partners in response to pressures on the Service's resources, and in co-operation with WoSAs staff, agreed to introduce a new, integrated, and almost entirely digital system to allow the speedy identification and early warning of potentially problematic casework and to identify and access information on the area's Historic Environment assets. The work done to ensure that all the partners can fully exploit and utilise the considerable knowledge

and expertise available, via this shared service, by adapting its working methods to take advantage of emerging technologies and resources, was recognised when WoSAS received a commendation at the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning in 2014/15.

Succession Planning

The work done in the Service's HQ section requires specialised knowledge of a number of aspects of Development Planning, e.g. housing and industrial and commercial land supply, town centres and retailing, and development planning processes and procedures. This work is done by a small group of officers who have developed a detailed and comprehensive knowledge of these particular topics. Following a review of the skills and knowledge available throughout the Service the management team noted that the age profile of the staff involved in this work is such that there could, in the future, be difficulties in the team being able to respond to work demands, if a relatively small number of staff left the Service over a short time. Consequently whilst the Performance and Development review process for all staff was being carried out the opportunity was taken to ascertain if officers had a particular interest in developing skills in these areas by shadowing the work off some of the HQ team. On the basis of the responses received and subsequent discussions a number of appropriate officers have been identified and been involved initially in shadowing the HQ team's officer at relevant meetings. This process will continue over the coming year.

Bench Marking

The Service has continued its involvement in the benchmarking group set up by Heads of Planning Scotland (HOPS) and run by the Improvement Service. It also participates in the HOPS Development Plans, Development Management and Energy & Resources sub-committees plus the Executive Committee. These groups have proved useful as a means of sharing good practice across the authorities who take part, and as forum to discuss performance issues as they arise, along with potential solutions. This has led to:-

- consideration across a number of authorities on how the reporting of housing land supply might be improved;
- involved work which has seen the committees contribute towards the review of the Section 36 windfarm application process, and associated model conditions; and
- involved work on preparing advice on bonds for mineral developments.

Participation in all of these groups has provided the Service with the opportunity and means to review elements of its own working practices and procedures in response to the work streams being taken forward, and where appropriate make changes. This has included updating our suite of conditions covering windfarms, and our advice on bonds.

The Service also participates in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley LDP Forum. It consists of the eight Clyde Valley authorities including the SDP Core Team and meets every 6 months. Its principle purpose is to share and exchange best practice in respect of LDP and SDP preparation and implementation. The 2014/15 meeting was hosted by East Dunbartonshire Council and held in February 2015. On this occasion a number of matters were discussed. With regard to Supplementary Guidance, Authorities had the opportunity to discuss what Guidance they already had, or proposed to produce, and to consider the implications of the guidance from the Scottish Government. As a result research on all the topics to be covered was collated, with a view to discussing consistency and best practice at the next Forum. The opportunity was also taken to report on the outcome of recent LDP Examinations and to discuss key recommendations from the DPEA, particularly on themes of common interest across all the authorities. The administration of Examinations was also discussed in order to share best practice. Finally the approach being taken to the preparation and publication of MIRs particularly in terms of the types of issue to include if an LDP had recently been adopted was considered.

Current Position

RETURN FOR PERIOD ENDING March 2015

Area of Activity: Financial Management and Local Governance

Certainty

- Revenues Budgets reviewed with Finance via 1-2-1 meetings with Head of Service and Managers on a monthly basis.
- Budget & financial resources reviewed at all Heads of Service and Managers meetings.
- Allocation of resources to meet priorities and demands on Service reviewed by Head of Service and managers through 1-2-1 meetings and management meetings.
- Service representative attends Resource Procurement Meetings to review current activities and practice.
- Procedures used to monitor works associated with the Bonds which are lodged with the Council to cover restoration have been reviewed and revised.

Regulation of Open Cast Coal Operations

In response to the issues arising from the liquidation of Scottish Coal, particularly associated with the cost of restoring their former opencast coal sites, the Council's current procedures and controls in relation to obtaining and monitoring the bonds intended to cover these works was reviewed. This review also took account of and was informed by similar work being done concurrently by the Scottish Coal Industry Task Force and in which the Service participated. As a result, in order to ensure that any bonds lodged with the Council are set at an appropriate level, independent consultants will be asked to review the restoration plans submitted, and the costs associated with the works. This assessment will be used to identify the appropriate level for bonds to be set and the phasing of the bond values over the life of a site. In addition, independent consultants will be used to regularly and systematically review progress of works on site in order to verify if restoration has been progressed in accordance with the previously approved plans and if the bond value remains sufficient to cover any outstanding works.

Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service – Part 2

Current Position

RETURN FOR PERIOD ENDING March 2015

Area of Activity: Culture of Continuous Improvement

Certainty

- Council/Resource/Service Plans identify and programme the Council priorities. Plans cascaded to staff via managers & Team Meetings and also used to undertake individual Performance and Development Reviews.
- Development Management Policy & Procedures Group reviews the robustness, relevance and use of the Service's processes and procedures.
- Planning Services represented on the Best Value and Best Value Risk Groups which aim to ensure procedures across Community & Enterprise Resource are efficient and effective and take account of the potential risks associated with the work of the Service.
- Council's Learning and Development Board ensures staff receive appropriate training when necessary and stay abreast of good practice.
- Participation in Clyde Valley LDP Forum provides opportunity to share and benefit from best practice.

Consistency

- PDRs identify and monitor progress on training & development needed to ensure each member of staff can deliver on the Service's priorities.
- On line training courses available to staff, via the Council's Intranet, covering a range of categories including managing meetings, negotiating skills, effective business writing, information security, and complaints handling.
- Council wide Performance Management Policy in place
- Officers attended training/workshops on advertisement control, TPO's, managing the planning customer's experience, permitted development, high hedges, spatial planning for onshore wind turbines, landscape capacity studies, project managing development plan preparation, infrastructure investment and current enforcement issues.
- Feedback from customer surveys, Customers Forum & Customer Service Excellence (CSE) assessment used to develop Service Improvement Plan.
- Planning Service recognised through Customer Service Excellence scheme.
- Participated as pilot authority in a study undertaken by Scottish Government aimed at 'Streamlining Planning Appraisals'. This provided a basis for case officers to robustly re-appraise the information submitted in support of applications in order to determine if its scale and level of detail was proportionate and relevant. The templates prepared as an outcome from the study are now used to assess applications and to assist applicants in identifying the information to be submitted with proposals
- Participated in a study funded by the Scottish Government, along with other Councils, development industry, agents and community representatives, to review the visual and noise and shadow flicker impacts of a selection of Scottish onshore wind farm developments. Report published summer 2015

Communications

- Employee Audit and suggestion scheme allows employees to identify options for improving delivery of the Council's services.
- Customer Forum held with agents on an annual basis used to secure feedback on potential Service improvements.
- Response to Customer Satisfaction Survey and Mystery Shopper exercise used to identify potential Service improvements.

Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service – Part 2

Customer Service Excellence

In order to provide a robust and independently verifiable basis for reviewing and identifying improvements to the way in which the Service engaged with its customers it was decided that it should seek recognition through the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) scheme. The CSE approach is aimed both at delivering excellent customer focussed services and keeping the customer at the heart of public service. This required the Service to test itself against 57 separate statements grouped under 5 criteria:-

1. **Customer insight** – Do we consult meaningfully with customers and use the feedback to assess customer perceptions of the Service and make positive changes?
2. **Culture** – Does the Service at all levels of its hierarchy demonstrate a customer focused culture?
3. **Information & Access** – Does the Service provide information to its customers in the most convenient and appropriate form?
4. **Timeliness and Quality of Service** – Does the Service respond promptly to customers on the basis of agreed and mutually understood timescales? Under this heading the CSE guidelines specifically highlight that to satisfy their requirements speed must not be achieved at the expense of quality.
5. **Delivery** – Does the service listens to its customers, and constructively uses comments, feedback and complaints to make adjustments to the way it operates?

In order to satisfy the CSE requirements the Service had to assemble a range of evidence which demonstrated how it was responding to each of these criteria. This gave the service the opportunity to critically appraise the actions we were taking to engage with customers and identify whether or not we were systematically identifying, acknowledging and responding to the needs of our customers. The CSE assessors thereafter sought to test the evidence submitted by the Service by speaking independently not only to officers but also to a cross section of our customers; including applicants, agents, consultees, and objectors.

Following the assessment process the Planning Service was awarded CSE recognition. The service fully met the standard in 44 areas out of the 57 tested. This included five areas where it was rated as compliance plus. Eight areas achieved partial compliance. The Service is carrying out further development in these areas and actions have been incorporated onto the planned improvements for 2015/16. The assessor stated in his report that this was “a strong outcome at first assessment” and that “in Planning Services there is an undoubted commitment to deliver customer focused services that seems shared by all staff”.

Streamlining Planning Assessments

The Planning Service was asked to be one of the pilot authorities participating in a project aimed at identifying how the work involved in providing supporting information to accompany planning applications could be made more streamlined. The project sought to identify ways in which the planning assessment process could be simplified and made more rational, based on an approach which depended on Council demands for information being made more proportionate and relevant to the proposed development. Participation in this exercise involved the Service in testing the guiding principles and supporting information summary templates which had been developed through stakeholder workshops. The Service benefitted significantly from its early participation and involvement in an exercise which gave it an opportunity to critically appraise and assess how it determined the information needed for and relevant to the consideration of applications.

The resulting guiding principles and summary are used by officers, particularly during the pre-application process, in order to advise on the level of supporting information to be submitted with applications.

Supporting Evidence – Part 3

4. Supporting Evidence – Part 3

4.1 This section lists the evidence drawn on to support part 2 of the PPF.

Customer Survey Results	Results obtained from applicants, agents & objectors are collated on an annual basis and the outcomes used to identify actions in the Service Plans & the Planning Service Improvement Plan.
Customer Forum Results	Feedback from the informal sessions held with agents & architects is used to identify actions in the Service Plans & the Planning Service Improvement Plan.
Employee Audit and Employee Audit Action Plan	Feedback used to identify actions in the Service Plan & the Planning Service Improvement Plan.
Resource and Service Plan	Used to set out the Resource & the Service's actions aimed at delivering the Council's objectives.
Council Complaints Procedure	Complaints handling procedure identifies processes and procedures for responding to and addressing customer complaints. http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200170/comments_complaints_and_consultations
Performance Development and Review results	Used to identify individual staff training needs and Service improvement actions.
Minerals Plan	Sets out policy and guidance on Minerals Proposals. https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/6301/adopted_minerals_local_development_plan_2012
South Lanarkshire Local Plan	Sets out policy and proposals used to guide decisions on applications and future land use. http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200172/plans_and_policies/39/development_plans/3
Approved Supplementary Guidance on Affordable Housing and Housing for Particular Needs	Sets out detailed guidance on the provision of affordable housing and housing for particular needs. https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/5384/affordable_housing_and_housing_for_particular_needs_supplementary_planning_guidance_march_2011
Approved Supplementary Guidance on Renewable Energy Development	Sets out guidance on how the Council will consider and assess Renewable energy proposals. https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/3988/renewable_energy_supplementary_planning_guidance_december_2010
Approved Supplementary Guidance on Residential Development and Design	Promotes the creation of residential developments of a design, quality and character which provide attractive, safe and sustainable environments. http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/5448/residential_design_guide_2011
South Lanarkshire Development Plan Scheme 2015	Sets out the Council's programme for the preparation of local development plans to cover the South Lanarkshire area. http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/48/

Supporting Evidence – Part 3

South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan	<p>Sets out proposed policy and proposals used to guide decisions on applications and future land use.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200172/plans_and_policies/39/development_plans/6</p>
Draft Supplementary Guidance on Development Management, Place Making and Design	<p>Sets out draft guidance on how the Council will consider and assess the design of proposed developments.</p> <p>https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7620/development_management_place_making_and_design_supplementary_guidance_may_2013</p>
Draft Supplementary Guidance on Green Network and Green Spaces	<p>Sets out draft guidance for developers, planning officers, other interested parties and groups on delivering a green network and green spaces.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/8980/green_networks_and Greenspace</p>
Draft Supplementary Guidance on Affordable Housing and Housing Choice	<p>Sets out draft guidance for land-owners, land-agents and developers on how to factor an affordable housing contribution into cost calculations regarding land purchase and development.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/8981/affordable_housing_and_housing_choice</p>
Draft Supplementary Guidance on Green Belt and Rural Area	<p>Sets out draft guidance for developers on the requirements for all new development proposed within both the Green Belt and the rural area.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/9050/green_belt_and_rural_area</p>
Draft Supplementary Guidance on Town Centres and Retailing	<p>Sets out draft guidance for developers on the requirements for development associated with town centres and retailing.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/9379/town_centres_and_retaining_supplementary_guidance</p>
Draft Supplementary Guidance on Industrial and Commercial Development	<p>Sets out draft guidance for developers on the requirements for development proposals in the employment land use areas identified in Policy 7 in the proposed plan.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/9146/industrial_and_commercial_development</p>
Draft Supplementary Guidance on Community and Infrastructure Assessment	<p>Sets out draft guidance and advice on the detailed criteria for assessing contributions required for development proposals.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/9342/community_infrastructure_assessment</p>
Draft Supplementary Guidance on Sustainable Development and Climate Change	<p>Sets out draft guidance for developers on the requirements for all proposed development to minimise, mitigate and adapt against the effects of climate change.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/9343/sustainable_development_and_climate_change</p>
Draft Supplementary Guidance on the Natural and Historic Environment	<p>Sets out draft guidance to assist in the consideration and assessment of all development that may have an effect on the character and amenity of the natural and built environment.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/9053/natural_and_historic_environment</p>

Supporting Evidence – Part 3

Council's Economic Strategy	<p>Provides a framework for collective and integrated action to generate a change in the performance of the Council's economy.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/8508/south_lanarkshire_economic_strategy_2013_-2023_-21</p>
Development management Charter	<p>Sets out standards to be applied to the development management process.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/6570/development_management_charter</p>
Enforcement Charter	<p>Sets out standards to be applied to the enforcement process.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/57/planning_enforcement_charter</p>
Green Network Design Guide	<p>Provides guidance on the creation of high quality, managed and accessible greenspaces.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/4641/green_network_design_guide_2009_-21</p>
Advice on Windows and Doors for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas	<p>Provides advice on installing replacement windows And doors</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7633/windows_and_doors_for_listed_buildings_and_conservation_areas</p>
Shop Front Design Guide	<p>Provides advice on new shop fronts</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7507/shopfront_design_guide</p>
Spatial Framework and Landscape Capacity for Wind Turbines Update (2013)	<p>Update of the initial Spatial Framework and Landscape Capacity for Windfarms study done in 2010. Taking account of existing developments since 2010 it considers the capacity of the South Lanarkshire landscape to accommodate wind energy development.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7611/spatial_framework_and_landscape_capacity_for_wind_turbines_update_2013_technical_report_chapters_1_to_5</p> <p>https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7612/spatial_framework_and_landscape_capacity_for_wind_turbines_update_2013_technical_report_chapter_6</p> <p>https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/7613/spatial_framework_and_landscape_capacity_for_wind_turbines_update_2013_technical_report_appendices</p>
Coal mining legacy problems advice	<p>Provides advice on how to address coal mining legacy problems.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200219/planning_for_developers/679/coal_mining_legacy_problems</p>
West of Scotland Archaeology Service Historic Environment Records	<p>WoSAS interactive Map search illustrating archaeological sites.</p> <p>http://www.wosas.net/search.php</p>

Supporting Evidence – Part 3

Online publications Decision Making Process Pre-application Consultation Process Pre-application Discussions Inclusive Design High Hedges Design and Access Statements Planning Local Review Body	<p>Provide guidance on detailed aspects of the planning process.</p> <p>https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/60/planning_application_decision_making_process</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/61/pre-application_consultation</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/8563/pre-application_discussions</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/76/inclusive_design</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/8770/high_hedges_act_guidance_leaflet</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/59/design_and_access_statements</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/62/planning_local_review_body</p>
Information leaflets	<p>Provide information and advice on the need for planning permission for a range of householder proposals</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/42/planning_and_building_standards_leaflets</p>
Advice on Processing Agreements	<p>Information and advice on Processing Agreements</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200219/planning_for_developers/1318/planning_processing_agreements</p>
Video advising on “How to make a planning application”	<p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec7i16QIQ60 or</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200218/planning_for_householders/50/how_to_make_a_planning_application</p>
Customer Service Excellence	<p>Background to accreditation. Also click on ‘Planning performance’.</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200173/council_performance/1488/other_performance_information/2</p>
Wind Farm Impacts Study	<p>Scottish Government Funded Windfarm Study on noise, landscape and shadow flicker impacts</p> <p>http://www.climateexchange.org.uk/reducing-emissions/wind-farm-impacts-study1/</p>
Public Performance Reporting	<p>Individual performance reports which focus on key areas of Council business – ‘Performance at a glance’. Planning (environmental and developmental)</p> <p>http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/info/200173/council_performance/1478/public_performance_reporting</p>
Inclusive design	<p>Advice on how to design homes in a way that allows everyone to use them no matter what their needs.</p> <p>https://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/76/inclusive_design</p>

5. Service Improvements 2015/16 – Part 4

5.1.1 The table below details the key commitments and actions for the coming year for future service improvements within Planning. The headings at the top of these tables also highlight how these commitments and actions link to and support the Council's vision, values, objectives and improvement themes as set out within the Council's Plan which are embedded within the Resource and Service Plans. Furthermore the tables also demonstrate within the 'What will be achieved' box how the Service will deliver on the priority areas of certainty, consistency, communications and contactability.

Council/Resource Objective: **Embed governance and accountability**

Improvement Area	Improve the user's experience and increase their understanding of the Planning Service			
What will we do?	Why will we do it?	When will we do it?	What will it achieve?	How will we monitor and assess progress?
Hold a Local Forum with agents to provide service users with an opportunity to scrutinise the quality of the Planning Service.	To provide the Service with an opportunity to directly engage with customers on a regular basis and identify potential ways of responding to their concerns.	By March 2016	Identify the needs and concerns of customers and an opportunity to identify responsive and customer focussed business process. (Communications)	Through appraisal & review of the actions taken in response to the issues raised at Forums by the Planning & Building Standards Managers (PBSMs); and a review of the changes generated by the Forums.
Survey applicants/agents and objectors.	To evaluate and test their experience of the planning application process and to identify ways of improving the process.	By March 2016.	Provide feedback on the performance of the planning application process from those directly involved. (Communications)	Through appraisal and review of the actions taken in response to the issues raised in the survey by the PBSMs and the Development Management Policies and Procedures Group (DMPPG); and a review of the changes generated.
Review and update the Enforcement Charter	To ensure that the content remains valid and relevant and that the standards set remain appropriate	By December 2015	It will ensure customers can access a document describing the service standards set and the role of the Service in undertaking enforcement activities. (Certainty)	PBSMs to require the Enforcement Group to review Charter, in accordance with a timetable to be agreed with the managers
Review and update the Development Management Charter.	The Service is in the process of revising its procedures in line with the outcome of the process review undertaken in 2014/15. This has generated a need to update the charter to reflect these changes	By August 2015	It will ensure customers can access a document describing the service standards set and the role of the Service in undertaking development management activities. (Certainty)	PBSMs to require the DMPPG Group to review Charter, in accordance with a timetable to be agreed with the managers.

Service Improvements 2015/16 – Part 4

5. Service Improvements 2015/16 – Part 4

Council/Resource Objective: Embed governance and accountability

Improvement Area	Improve the user's experience and increase their understanding of the Planning Service			
What will we do?	Why will we do it?	When will we do it?	What will it achieve?	How will we monitor and assess progress?
Prepare a submission to address year one re-assessment of Customer Service Excellence accreditation.	To address the areas of partial compliance noted in the assessment of the Service and to reaffirm CSE accreditation.	By July 2015	Retention of CSE status. (Certainty)	PBSMs to make a sub group responsible for preparation and submission of information.
Pursue the potential for identifying how applicants can specify a 'preferred method of contact' which would be used automatically by the DM system to issue all documentation.	To respond to customer request for more extensive use of electronic communication immediately from submission of applications.	By December 2015	More effective communications with customers. (Communications)	PBSMs to pursue in co-operation with Support Services and IT Services.
Introduce a formal checklist describing all the points to be covered in pre-application discussions, and have completed list logged, recorded and shared with applicants.	To provide for a more systematic and consistent process and thus encourage applicants to engage with the process.	By December 2015	More effective and useful pre-application discussions and applications thereafter submitted with the necessary information. (Certainty)	PBSMs to make CSE group responsible for preparation and introduction of the checklist.
Survey customers who were involved during the preparation of and consultation on the Local Development Plan, including representees.	To evaluate and test their experience and knowledge of the development plan process.	By October 2015	Provide feedback on the performance of the development plan process from those directly involved which can be used to identify ways of improving the process. (Communications)	HQ manager to agree content for survey and its distribution.
Review way in which Local Development Plan information is presented on the Council website.	To improve is visibility to potential users.	By December 2015	Improved access to these documents for applicants/ agents/consulates and third parties. (Communications)	PBSMs to make a sub group of the DMPPG responsible for review.

Service Improvements 2015/16 – Part 4

5. Service Improvements 2015/16 – Part 4

Council/Resource Objective: Achieve the efficient and effective use of resources and promote performance management and improvement

Improvement Area	Raise the quality and effectiveness of our business processes			
What will we do?	Why will we do it?	When will we do it?	What will it achieve?	How will we monitor and assess progress?
Prepare advice note for case officers setting out a list of all potential consultees and describing the circumstances when consultation is appropriate.	To streamline the consultation process.	By December 2015.	It will make consultation more consistent and ensure it is proportionate and appropriate. (Consistency)	PBSMs to make CSE group responsible for preparation and introduction of the checklist.
Introduce dedicated report writing days for case officers.	To give case officers a period when they are free from phone and customer distractions.	By August 2015	It will provide case officers with an opportunity to concentrate on the preparation of reports. (Communications)	PBSMs to agree on rotas and appropriate rules and introduce the process through Team Meetings.
Review and revise the existing protocols in place with Flooding, Roads and Environmental Services.	To ensure consultation is proportionate and case assessment streamlined.	By January 2016	It will streamline the consultation process. (Consistency)	PBSMs to agree programme and monitor implementation.
Investigate potential for using social media in connection with the planning application and development plan process.	To provide applicants and representees with information updates on progress.	By January 2016	Reduction in need for direct customer contact on basic aspects of progress and the provision of more up to date information. (Communications)	HQ Manager to progress with IT Services.
Audit skills of planning staff and assess skills needs through the Performance & Development Review (PDR) Process.	To establish specific areas in which training is needed.	By July 2015	A detailed assessment of the more technical areas in which training is needed. (Consistency)	PBSMs to review PDR outcomes and develop a programme of training.
Continue dialogue with IT on the potential for the introduction of 'mobile working'.	Initial investigations undertaken in 2014/15 resulted in meetings with IT and potential providers of the software and hardware needed to progress 'mobile working'. This demonstrated its potential advantages to the Service	By March 2016	It will allow for ongoing involvement in and assessment of the potential benefits and challenges presented by the introduction of 'mobile working' practices. (Certainty)	PBSMs to pursue in co-operation with Support Services and IT Services.
Explore the use of the Notebook facility on Council website to advise agents/applicants of legislation changes.	To ensure agents/ applicants are aware of changes	By December 2015	It will help agents/ applicant to prepare submissions that accord with up to date requirements. (Certainty)	PBSMs to make CSE group responsible for assessment.
Review processes and procedures associated with section 75 legal agreements.	To identify and implement actions aimed at streamlining the process.	By March 2016	It will ensure applicants receive consents as soon as possible.	PBSMs to make Process Review group responsible for assessment and implementation.

Service Improvements 2015/16 – Part 4

5. Service Improvements 2015/16 – Part 4

Council/Resource Objective: Improve the quality of the physical environment and support the local economy by providing the right conditions for growth, improving skills and employability

Improvement Area	Raise our effectiveness in assessing the quality of development proposals			
What will we do?	Why will we do it?	When will we do it?	What will it achieve?	How will we monitor and assess progress?
Undertake training with West of Scotland Archaeology Service.	To improve case officers' knowledge and understanding of the issues associated with archaeological and heritage assets.	By March 2016	Further develop skills of staff in assessing development proposals. (Consistency)	PBSMs to agree programme and monitor implementation.
Seek training for staff from Architecture & Design Scotland on place making and design, based around the content of the Council's Supplementary Guidance.	To improve case officers' knowledge and understanding of these issues	By March 2016	Further develop skills of staff in assessing development proposals. (Consistency)	PBSMs to agree programme and monitor implementation.

Delivery of Planning Service Improvement Plan Actions 2014/15 – Part 4

5.2 Delivery of Planning Service Improvement Plan Actions 2014/15 – Part 4

- 5.2.1 This section of the PPF sets out the commitments made on the previous year's service plan and the specific actions carried out in relation to these commitments as well as the results of these actions.
- 5.2.2 The plan for 2014/15 identified 23 separate actions. Of this total 20 were completed over the year and 1 was partially completed. Past improvement plans had placed a focus on delivering a suite of training events to improve and develop staff skills and knowledge. The improvement plan for 2014/15 placed less emphasis on training events. Nevertheless, in response to requests from planning staff a valuable session on the practical interpretation and application of historic environment policy was held with Historic Scotland in December 2014. This focussed on worked examples plus the consideration and assessment of the use of materials on historic buildings. Development economics continues to be an area in which officers have sought guidance. An opportunity was identified to enrol a member of staff in a course on Real Estate Development which forms part of an RICS accredited course on real estate management. The course content includes work on development economics. The knowledge obtained through attendance at the course is being cascaded to other staff through team meetings. Officers have also benefitted from attending training events covering a range of topics including project managing development plans, preparing Housing Needs and Demand Assessments, infrastructure funding, housing land supply, community engagement and minerals planning. Finally, the Service continued to benefit from the funding provided by the Scottish Government to assist in dealing with renewable energy applications, particularly onshore wind proposals. This has been used to fund additional work on ensuring that the Service's database on all wind turbines is up to date and accurate, involving mapping over 600 wind turbine locations; and to access expert landscape and visual advice on proposals from its term consultants.
- 5.2.3 The results of the customers surveys undertaken in 2014/15 continued to demonstrate a high satisfaction rate amongst that the agents and architects using the Council's Planning Service. An extract from the results is provided below, together with some of the comments made by agents and architects. It was considered necessary, however to supplement this by extending the way in which the agents' forum operated. This was with the aim of seeking their views on a range of specific topics – validation, pre-application discussions, the planning portal, the Council's scheme of delegation, the assessment of applications, processing agreements and the Local Development Plan. Small groups comprising both officers and agents, with the assistance of a facilitator, discussed each topic with a view to identifying the particular areas of concern for the agents. Appropriate actions to address the points raised at the event have been incorporated into the Improvement Plan for 2015/16 and further details of the event are provided above.

Questions	Excellent	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Don't Know
How would you rate the overall service provided by Planning?	72%	28%	0%	0%	0%
The usefulness of advice and assistance given by Planning staff, prior to and after submitting applications.	77%	22%	0%	0%	3%
The knowledge of Planning staff.	66%	33%	0%	0%	3%
Time taken to reply to written enquiries.	39%	44%	6%	0%	11%
The length of time taken to make a decision on your application.	66%	22%	11%	0%	0%

Delivery of Planning Service Improvement Plan

Actions 2014/15 – Part 4

- The officer was easy to contact and helpful. A proportionate and reasonable approach was taken to queries. The service allowed the project to proceed on time.
 - Application processed quickly, well within 8 weeks. No problems.
 - Officer was very helpful in dealing with application and proactive in contacting agent to keep them informed of progress.
 - I only submit projects relating to extensions/garage conversions in the residential sector but am very happy with the service and assistance by the Planning team (admin and professionals).
 - Staff are first class always very efficient
 - SLC planning generally embrace the principle of enabling development and work in partnership with applicants to find solutions to constraints, where possible and appropriate.
- 5.2.4 The Planning Service successfully secured recognition through the Customer Service Excellence (CSE) scheme in July 2014. A team of 6, made up of officers at different levels and from across the three area offices and the HQ team, together with administrative support, prepared the application. Through the application process the Service had the opportunity to assess and review its existing practices and procedures and identify areas which could lead to improvements in customer service. It also allowed those directly involved in making the application to acquire new skills in identifying, assessing and implementing measures to improve our customers' experience of the Service; and an understanding of the wider corporate environment in which the Service has to operate.
- 5.2.5 At present the Service is working towards the first review of the CSE standard which will be carried out in the summer. This will look at one third of the statements previously assessed together with the eight where partial compliance was achieved. The annual review obliges the service to focus its efforts on continuously improving its customer service. This review process is included in the Improvement Plan for 2015/16
- 5.2.6 Following detailed discussions over the past year, with applicants, agents and the Council's Legal Services, the Planning Service identified an initial list of applications which had been awaiting conclusion of an associated Section 75 agreement, for a protracted period, and which could be recommended for refusal. A report detailing the list of refusals was approved by the Committee in July 2015. In response to requests from some applicants it was decided in those cases to allow them further time to conclude the appropriate agreements, but within agreed deadlines. These cases will be kept under review over the coming year.
- 5.2.7 The Service received complaints from some customers regarding the difficulties they experienced when trying to access the Council's Planning Portal. Following discussions with the Council's IT Service it was identified that the portal's performance could vary for customers, depending on the web browser they were using. Software improvements were identified to address these problems and following testing they were installed. This has removed the difficulties which some customers had been experiencing
- 5.2.8 The Council's Development Management Policies and Procedures Group considered the way in which design and place making principles could be conveyed through the guidance contained in the Development Management and Place Making Supplementary Guidance. On the basis of these discussions the advice set out in the SG's appendix was agreed and will be supplemented by visual and diagrammatic material when the approved version is published in 2015/16. These discussions were informed by the Group's experience in looking at case studies from across the Council area, particularly in respect of design matters. Some of the developments that have been the subject of these discussions have been illustrated.

Delivery of Planning Service Improvement Plan Actions 2014/15 – Part 4

- 5.2.9 The proportion of applications submitted electronically had remained relatively static between 2012/13 and 2013/2014 at around 50%. Last year's Improvement Plan included an action to review the planning content on the web site, in order to emphasise the advantages of using this approach. Case officers were also advised that in pre-application discussions the option of submitting applications electronically should be emphasised. The proportion of applications submitted has increased in 2014/15 and the Service will continue to promote the use of electronic submissions.
- 5.2.10 Whilst to date the Council has not entered into any processing agreements it continues to promote their use through both its website and pre-application discussions. In addition, this year we wrote to all the major housebuilders operating in the Council area advising them that the use of processing agreements would be raised with them at pre-application discussions. We also advised them that we are keen to increase the number of agreements as they can help achieve certainty for developers and focus those involved in the planning application process on clear timescales for submitting information and assessing proposals within agreed timescales. We will monitor the response to this letter.
- 5.2.11 Further details of actions taken and the progress made on the 2014/15 improvement plan are included in the table below. Outstanding actions have been rolled forward to 2015/16

Delivery of Planning Service Improvement Plan Actions 2014/15 – Part 4

5.2 Delivery of Planning Service Improvement Plan Actions 2014/15 – Part 4 Service Improvements 2014/15

Improvement Area	Improve the user's experience and increase their understanding of the Planning Service		
What will we do?	Action carried out/Evidence	Complete	Comment
Hold a Local Forum with agents to provide service users with an opportunity to scrutinise the quality of the Planning Service.	Planning Agents workshop held on 3 March 2015.	Yes	The Forum was specifically designed to ensure agents were made aware of the role performance figures would play in the Scottish Government's assessment of the Council's performance. The session also included workshops on validation, pre-app discussions, the portal, delegation, the assessment process, processing agreements and the Development Plan.
Survey applicants, agents & objectors.	Surveys issued and results collated. 62% of respondents (including objectors) rated the Planning service as excellent or good. 68% of respondents (including objectors) rated the advice given by staff in response to applications/objections as good or excellent.	Yes	Results and feedback via Local Forum indicate Service viewed favourably by architects/ agents. Wider surveys including objectors showed lower levels of satisfaction. This was investigated to establish if there was underlying procedural issues. It was identified that it was a response to the outcome of a particular application with a number of objectors.
Seek views of consultees on the electronic consultation process.	Consultees asked to provide any comments/observations they had on the effectiveness/efficiency of the consultation process.	Yes	No issues raised but process to be kept under review.
Put Planning Service forward for Customer Service Excellence (CSE) award.	Application submitted May 2014. Following assessment Planning Service awarded Customer Service Excellence in July 2014. Assessor advised that the service fully met the standard in 44 areas out of the 57 tested. This included five areas where the Service was rated as compliance plus.	Yes	The preparation and assessment process highlighted that in order to secure accreditation it was important to ensure that the Service could demonstrate its commitment to providing a high quality customer service and its established emphasis on putting the customer at the centre of service provision
Having secured CSE accreditation prepare a submission to address year one re-assessment.	Work has been carried out on assembling the evidence need to show progress made in addressing the areas of partial compliance and demonstrating the Service's continued compliance with the areas previously vetted. .	Yes	Evidence to be submitted in July 2015 in accordance with the CSE assessor's requirements
Change the advice contained on the Council web site on making representations and in the content of the letters sent to objectors.	The advice contained in both web site and standard acknowledgement letters was altered in response to the concerns expressed by objectors and to provide them with greater clarity on the assessment process.	Yes	

Delivery of Planning Service Improvement Plan Actions 2014/15 – Part 4

Improvement Area	Improve the user's experience and increase their understanding of the Planning Service		
What will we do?	Action carried out/Evidence	Complete	Comment
Provide planning advice - via the web – on validation of applications.	Published on website.	Yes	Advice discussed at agents' forum before being finalised
Publish 'How To' videos on website describing aspects of the planning application process.	Videos were completed and are available on the Council web site. Link contained in supporting information.	Yes	
Upgrade EDRM software including software to drive system servers (part of phase 4 corporate infrastructure improvements).	All software updated and the enhanced performance of system servers has improved the operation of the Electronic Document and Record Management system and web access for customers.	Yes	
Contribute to training and briefing of Q & A staff on planning enquiries.	Training undertaken in co-operation with Support Services	Yes	Opportunity taken to update call centre and Q & A staff on new legislation and procedures.
Review content and presentation of planning pages on web site, including advice & information on submitting applications electronically.	Content reviewed with specific reference to incorporating advice on the benefits of submitting applications electronically.	Yes	Increase in percentage of applications submitted electronically and will be kept under review.
Apply the Improvement Science approach to an assessment of the planning application process.	Process was reviewed in accordance with the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) method.	Yes	Action plan being implemented
Head of Service to issue regular email/briefing update to staff.	Briefing notes being issued by Executive Director with contributions, where appropriate, from the Head of Service.	Yes	In view of the range of Services operating within the Resource initially considered appropriate to have briefing notes from Executive Director, with contributions from Heads of Service.
Head of Service to attend Team Meetings in Area Offices and HQ	Meetings programmed and held.	Yes	Opportunity taken at meetings to advise on potential corporate issues facing the Council and the implications for the Service.
Audit skills of planning staff and assess skills needs through the Performance & Development Review (PDR) Process.	All staff assessments completed by May 2014.	Yes	Outcome used to identify potential training and succession planning opportunities.

Delivery of Planning Service Improvement Plan Actions 2014/15 – Part 4

Improvement Area	Improve the user's experience and increase their understanding of the Planning Service		
What will we do?	Action carried out/Evidence	Complete	Comment
Take actions needed to remove or progress stalled S75 applications.	Applications identified and contact made with applicants with a view to initially seeking withdrawal of applications prior to seeking committee approval, where appropriate, to refuse permissions. In a number of case applicants wished further discussion and the list has been the subject of change to reflect customer concerns.	Partial	Report seeking approval for initial refusals went to Committee July 2015.
Revise flooding protocol.		No	Following process review the need to jointly revise the protocols with Environmental Services, Roads and Flooding was identified. This joint project will roll forward to 2015/16.
Provide advice and templates for use by Enforcement Officers when gathering evidence and submitting reports to the Procurator Fiscal (PF).	Advice prepared in conjunction with Legal Services and available to Enforcement Officers.	Yes	
The Service will contribute to the Scottish Government reviews being undertaken on:- i. The Section 36 approval process for electricity generating proposals ii. The streamlining of planning appraisals iii. The review of the visual and noise impacts on local households of onshore wind farm developments.	Council representatives contributed to the work of each review. Changes to Section 36 approval process being implemented. Outcome of streamlining of planning appraisals exercise have been rolled out to other authorities and relevant templates are on the Council website. Windfarm developments review concluded June 2015. Report published in Summer 2015 with recommendations for developers, councils and third parties.	Yes	
Investigate the introduction of 'mobile working'.	Potential investigated in co-operation with Support & IT Services.	Yes	Opportunities identified and initial discussions have been held with potential software providers. Corporate view is currently to focus on roads inspections. However, will continue to progress with IT Services. Retained as action for 2015/16.

Delivery of Planning Service Improvement Plan Actions 2014/15 – Part 4

5.2 Delivery of Planning Service Improvement Plan Actions 2013/14 – Part 4 Service Improvements 2013/14

Improvement Area	Raise our effectiveness in assessing the quality of development proposals		
What will we do?	Action carried out/Evidence	Complete	Comment
Undertake training with Historic Scotland and agree a suitable programme focussing on the practical application of historic environment policy.	Workshop held with Historic Scotland in December 2014.	Yes	
Provide further training on development economics focussing on practical applications of process.	Officer enrolled in Real Estate Management course which includes work on development economics. Information cascaded to other staff through team meetings and advice available to planners from the officer.	Yes	
Seek training for staff from Architecture & Design Scotland on place making and design.	Decided that event would benefit from following on from finalisation and publication of the Council's Supplementary Guidance on Development Management Place Making & Design as it could provide a context for looking at how to practically apply the SG's policies and guidance	No	Roll forward to 2015/16

6. Official Statistics – Part 5

A: Decision making timescales

Category	Total number of decisions 2014-2015	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2014-2015	2013-2014
Major developments	26	75.9	62.4
Local developments (non-householder)	702	14.9	14.9
• Local: less than 2 months	52.8%	6.9	6.9
• Local: more than 2 months	47.2%	23.8	23.8
Householder developments	730	7.3	8.0
• Local: less than 2 months	88.6 %	6.5	6.7
• Local: more than 2 months	11.4 %	13.9	15.7
Housing developments			
Major housing developments	14	67.4	34.4
Local housing developments	273	16.9	15.8
• Local: less than 2 months	45.4 %	6.8	7.4
• Local: more than 2 months	54.6%	25.3	24.6
Business and industry			
Major business and industry	2	14.4	27.3
Local business and industry	157	11.5	12.8
• Local: less than 2 months	63.1%	6.9	7.1
• Local: more than 2 months	36.9%	19.3	19.7
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) developments	2	14.1	n/a
Other consents*	197	12.8	10.4
Planning/legal agreements**	10	113.0	127
Local reviews	7	8.5	10.2

* Consents and certificates: Listed buildings and Conservation area consents, Control of Advertisement consents, Hazardous Substances consents, Established Use Certificates, certificates of lawfulness of existing use or development, notification on overhead electricity lines, notifications and directions under GPDO Parts 6 and relating to agricultural and forestry development and applications for prior approval by Coal Authority or licensed operator under classes 60 and 62 of the GPDO.

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

B: Decision making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2014-2015		2013-2014	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	7	6	85.7	4	100
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	8	6	75	10	55.6

C: Enforcement activity

Type	2014-2015	2013-2014
Cases taken up	79	133
Breaches identified	256	256
Cases resolved	186	233
Notices served***	16	32
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	1
Prosecutions	0	0

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

Official Statistics – Part 5

Planning Applications - 2014/15

Post 3rd August 2009 applications

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	
Without Legal Agreement	21	36.4	
With Legal Agreement	2	105.4	
MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	
All Major Developments	23	42.4	
Minerals	2	26.1	
Housing	13	51.5	
Business and Industry	2	14.4	
Waste Management	1	32.3	
Electricity Generation	2	59.3	
Freshwater Fish Farming	0	-	
Marine Finfish Farming	0	-	
Marine Shellfish Farming	0	-	
Other Developments	3	24.4	
LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	
Without Legal Agreement	1,426	10.7	
With Legal Agreement	5	69.9	
LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	Proportion of Decision
All Local Developments	1,431	10.9	
Local: Less than 2 months	1,018	6.6	71.1%
Local: More than 2 months	413	21.4	28.9%
Local Developments (non-householder)		14.6	
Local: Less than 2 months	371	6.9	52.9%
Local: More than 2 months	330	23.3	47.1%
Householder Developments	730	7.3	
Local: Less than 2 months	647	6.5	88.6%
Local: More than 2 months	83	13.9	11.4%
Housing	272	16.3	
Local: Less than 2 months	124	6.8	45.6%
Local: More than 2 months	148	24.2	54.4%
Business & Industry	157	11.5	
Local: Less than 2 months	99	6.9	63.1%
Local: More than 2 months	58	19.3	36.9%
LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	% Under 2 months
Minerals	1	28.0	0.0%
Waste Management	0	-	-
Electricity Generation	55	28.1	21.8%
Freshwater Fish Farming	0	-	-
Marine Finfish Farming	0	-	-
Marine Shellfish Farming	0	-	-
Other Developments	187	11.8	61.0%
Telecommunications	25	7.4	84.0%
AMSCs (under 2 months)	4	16.9	25.0%
OTHER CONSENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	
Listed bldg.+con.area consents	56	18.1	
Advertisements	100	9.2	
Hazardous substances consents	0	-	
Other consents and certificates	41	5.9	
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	
Local Developments Subject To EIA	0	-	
AMSCs (Subject to EIA)	2	14.1	
APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	
Planning/Legal Agreement	8	73.7	
Local Review	7	8.5	
PROCESSING AGREEMENTS	Total number of decisions	% within agreed timescales	
All Processing Agreements	0	-	
Major applications	0	-	
Local Applications	0	-	
EIA developments	0	-	
Other consents	0	-	
APPLICATIONS APPROVED / DELEGATED		Percentage	
Percentage of Applications Approved		87.1%	
Percentage of Applications Delegated		92.9%	

All applications
2013/14

All applications 2013/14

All applications 2014/15

Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
23	61.2
3	189.0

Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
26	75.9
3	136.1
14	67.4
2	14.4
1	32.3
3	162.3
0	-
0	-
0	-
3	24.4

Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
1,426	10.7
6	89.0

Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	Proportion of Decisions
1,432	11.0	
1,018	6.6	71.1%
414	21.8	28.9%
702	14.9	
371	6.9	52.8%
331	23.8	47.2%
730	7.3	
647	6.5	88.6%
83	13.9	11.4%
273	16.9	
124	6.8	45.4%
149	25.3	54.6%
157	11.5	
99	6.9	63.1%
58	19.3	36.9%

Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	% Under 2 months
1	28.0	0.0%
0	-	-
55	28.1	21.8%
0	-	-
0	-	-
0	-	-
187	11.8	61.0%
25	7.4	84.0%
4	16.9	25.0%

Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
57	24.7
100	9.2
0	-
41	5.9

Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
0	-
2	14.1

Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
10	113.0
7	8.5

Percentage of Applications Delegated 92.9%

LOCAL REVIEWS and APPEALS	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld (%)
Local Review	7	85.7%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	8	75.0%

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY	Number
Cases Taken Up	79
Notices Served	16
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0
Prosecutions	0
Number of breaches resolved	186

Table supplied by Scottish Government

D: Context

South Lanarkshire determined 1656 applications in 2014/15, a 10% increase on the previous year. While there have been increases in determinations in many categories, some of the most notable changes relate to:

- a significant increase in the number of housing (major) determinations, from 4 to 14;
- an increase in householder determinations from 651 to 730;
- an increase in business & industry (local) determinations from 128 to 157;
- a reduction in electricity generation (local) from 80 to 55.

A summary of some of the key points is given below.

Decision-making timescales – There was an increase in the time taken to determine major applications, from 62.4 weeks to 75.9 weeks. However, this is attributable to the determination of a legacy minerals application from 2001 and to a legacy wind farm application from 2007. If these two applications were excluded, the figure for major applications would be closer to 52 weeks, which would be an improvement on last year's figure.

The determination of longstanding legacy cases will continue to have an ongoing affect on the figures for 'all applications', as opposed to the figures for applications received after 2009.

However, while there has been an increase in time taken for major applications, there has been an improvement in the average time taken to determine most categories of local applications. Some comparisons with 2013/14 are shown below:

	2014/15 (in weeks)	2013/14 (in weeks)
All local	11.0	13.4
Local (non-householder)	14.9	18.6
Householder	7.3	8.0
Housing	16.9	15.8
Business & Industry	11.5	12.8
Elec. Generation	28.1	41.7

This reflects the work done by the Service through its Process Review group. The group's work is described in more detail above, and is aimed at identifying and implementing changes to our procedures which can improve performance and the outcomes delivered by the Service.

Legal Agreements – The average time taken to conclude legal agreements has decreased from 127 to 113 weeks, although this figure is again skewed by determination of some longstanding legacy applications. The legal agreement process is one which is currently being examined as part of the process improvement work referred to above.

Decision-making: local reviews and appeals – The Council dealt with 7 cases through the local review process in 2014/15, an increase of 3. There was a reduction from 100% of the original decisions upheld, to 85.7%. The average time to determine an application subject to Local Review reduced from 10.2 in 2013/14 to 8.5 weeks in 2014/15.

In terms of appeals to the Scottish Ministers, there was a significant reduction in the number of appeals from 18 to 8. This was attributable to the reduction in appeals relating to wind turbines. In 2013/14 this accounted for 11 appeals (61% of all appeals), but in 2014/15 there have only been two such appeals. There has been an overall increase in the percentage of appeals upheld, from 55.6% to 75%.

Enforcement activity – It is noted from the figures below that while the number of complaints received is the same as 2013/14 (256), there has been a reduction in the number of cases taken up, the number of notices served and the number of breaches resolved. This reduction in part reflects two enforcement officer posts being vacant for a period over the reporting year.

	2014/15	2013/14
Cases taken up	79	133
Notices served	16	32
Breaches resolved	186	233

7. Workforce and Financial Information - Part 6

- 7.1 South Lanarkshire's Planning Service is part of Community & Enterprise Resources. The Service's work is undertaken by 4 teams with a total of 41 staff. Support is provided by 13 clerical staff that are managed through the Resource's Support Services. The HQ team is based in the Community & Enterprise Resources HQ building in Hamilton. It deals with Development Plan preparation publishing and monitoring, and produces the associated Supplementary Guidance (SG). The Council's input to the preparation and monitoring of the Strategic Development Plan (SDP), via the Glasgow & Clyde Valley Strategic Planning Authority, is also co-ordinated through the HQ Team. It also handles all the minerals, waste and large scale windfarm applications.
- 7.2 The 3 other Teams, located in Lanark, Hamilton and East Kilbride, handle the vast majority of all the applications submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 and other associated legislation. This includes applications for planning permission, listed building consent, conservation consent, advertisement consent and certificates of lawful use. They also assist the HQ team in the work on Development Plans, SGs and the SDP.
- 7.3 The fee income received for planning applications in 2014/15 was £1,776,500. The Service had a training budget of £17,000 for 2014/15. The budget allocated for 2015/16 is £17,000. This has been 'top sliced' with £900 being given to the Improvement Service in exchange for training events they will deliver. Discussions are taking place with the Improvement Service regarding the provision of training in 2015/16.

Workforce and Financial Information - Part 6

Workforce and Financial Information - Part 6

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

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

Tier posts	Managers		Main grade posts		Technician posts		Office support		Totals
	No. of posts	Vacant	No. of posts	Vacant	No. of posts	Vacant	No. of posts	Vacant	
Development Management	3		27						30
Development Planning	1		2		3				6
Enforcement Staff			4						4
Other Planning			1				12		13

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

* Staff Age Profile	Number
Under 30	4
30-39	10
40-49	7
50 and Over	21

* This information does not include age profile of Office Support staff

Committees and site visits	No. per year
Full Council committees	8
Planning Committees	11
Area Committees (where relevant)	20 *1
Committee site visits	0
LRB	13 *2
LRB site visits	0

*1 – SLC has 4 Area Committees

*2 – Only 4 required



Community and Enterprise
Resources