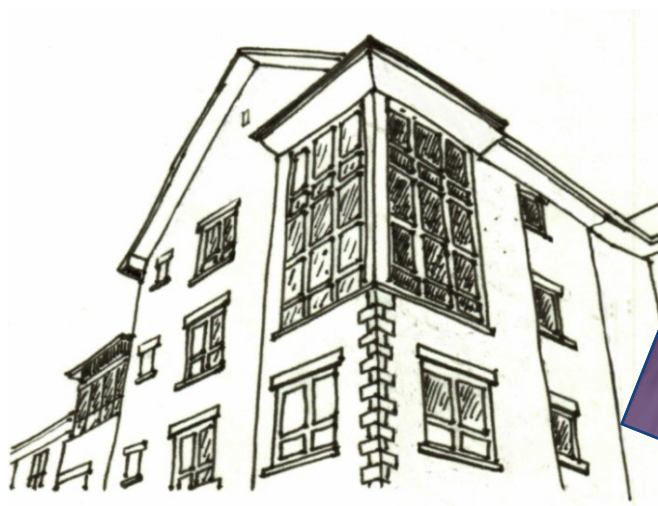


# West Dunbartonshire Council Planning Performance Framework

## Planning and Building Standards Service



## Foreword

Welcome to the third Planning Performance Framework and thank you for your interest in the Planning and Building Standards service in West Dunbartonshire. The Planning Performance Framework outlines our performance and shows our achievements, actions and improvements in 2013-14. It also outlines our proposed service improvements for 2014-15.

The feedback we received from the Scottish Government on 2012-13 was positive and has helped to shape the Planning Performance Framework for 2013-14.

*"A positive, informative and well written report that supports a strong commitment to decision making timescales and the provision of an open for business culture envisaged through planning reform and the Planning Performance Framework." Scottish Government*

West Dunbartonshire is one of the smallest local authorities in Scotland with just over 90,000 residents and is made up of rural, urban and waterfront locations. The Planning Authority excludes parts of Balloch and the countryside to the east and west of Loch Lomond which forms part of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

The challenges facing the Council and the area are significant. The area has been severely affected by economic conditions and recovery has been slower than that experienced by other local authorities. Our key regeneration sites remain undeveloped but the Council is working very closely with the site owners to bring forward proposals. The Council is progressing its own ambitious Capital Programme which involves a new school estate, two new care homes and a new leisure centre.

2013-14 saw planning application fees at their lowest level since the economic crisis of 2008. This has largely been due to the lack of major applications. Signs for 2014-15 are good as many of the major projects of the Council and those from the private sector reach the application stage. Planning application performance continues to be good. The proposed West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan is at the examination stage and it is anticipated that it will be adopted in 2015, within 5 years of the adoption of the previous Local Plan.

Our partnership working with the private sector and the regeneration company at Lomondgate was recognised at the annual Scottish Planning Awards. This year we have been shortlisted in the community involvement category for a charrette at Bowling Basin undertaken with Scottish Canals. Planning officers were also part of the Team of the Year at the Council's Annual Employee Recognition Awards for helping to bring forward the first Council housing in 25 years.

In January 2015 the Planning and Building Standards Service will move to a new office on the Clyde waterfront together with other services of the Council that are currently based in Clydebank. This will involve a new working environment, new methods of working and staff will be required to adjust to these changes.

Staff continue to show commitment to developing themselves by achieving additional qualifications such as Customer Service Professional Qualifications, Management Institute qualifications.

I hope you enjoy reading the Framework and I would welcome any feedback.

Pamela Clifford

Planning and Building Standards Manager

September 2014

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## Part 1: National Headline Indicators (NHIs)

Key Outcomes	2013-2014	2012-2013
<b>Development Planning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Age of Local Development Plan(s) (full years) <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i></li> <li>Development Plan Scheme: on track (Y/N)</li> </ul>	4 years  Yes	3 years  Yes
<b>Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective housing land: years supply</li> <li>Effective housing land supply</li> <li>Housing approvals</li> <li>Effective employment land supply</li> <li>Employment land take-up</li> </ul>	8.7 years 2,797 units 382 units 35.66ha 0.87 ha	8.82 years 2,823 units 323 units 34.16 ha 5.74 ha
<b>Development Management</b>  <b>Project Planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice</li> <li>Number of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan</li> <li>Percentage planned timescales met</li> </ul> <b>Decision-making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application approval rate</li> <li>Delegation rate</li> </ul>	  43%  0  n/a  97.6% 81.9%	  100% (major)  0  n/a  95% 80%
<b>Decision-making timescales</b> Average number of weeks to decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major developments</li> <li>Local developments (non-householder)</li> <li>Householder developments</li> </ul> <b>Enforcement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed (full years). Requirement: review every 2 years</li> <li>Number of breaches identified / resolved</li> </ul>	  32.4 15.2 7.5  1  34/23	  20 12 7  0  32/24

### **Contextual Statement (reasons/factors which have influenced performance and any increase /decrease)**

The proposed Local Development Plan was published in September 2013 in line with the June 2013 Development Plan Scheme. Submission to the Scottish Government for Examination was timetabled for March 2014. This was missed as a Modified version of the Plan was published that month. The Plan was submitted in June 2014 and Examination has now commenced. Housing figures are based on draft 2014 Housing Land Audit (dated 31/3/2014) prior to consultation with Homes for Scotland and RSLs. The Effective Housing Land Supply figure is the number of houses expected to be built in West Dunbartonshire from 2014-2021. The 'years supply' figure is calculated by dividing this by 320, our LHS Housing Supply Target. Housing approvals include all housing related approvals on sites of 4 or more units, and includes changes of house types, permissions in principle and in detail.

All major applications were subject to pre-application advice which is consistent with the developers' protocol. 62 % of local developments were subject to pre-application advice, especially for the more complicated residential developments, whilst 23 % of householder applications were subject to pre-application advice. Although there were no planning decisions issued with a processing agreement, one was agreed in this year period, but the application decision was not issued until June due to the conclusion of a legal agreement.

The approval rate for applications continues to rise with just over 2% of applications refused. This may be due to the applicants seeking early advice before the submission of an application. The Council continues to work with applicants to revise their proposals so as to make them more acceptable, rather than just refusing them or withdrawing them.

The delegation rate has increased from last year from 80% to 82%. The full impact of the revised scheme of delegation have not yet been felt as the amended scheme of delegation was only agreed in January 2014, which was too late to have any significant impact on delegation rates for 2013-14. Delegation rates should increase next year due to these changes.

There were only 4 major applications this year. One of the major applications was for a windfarm close to the boundary with the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park which had significant landscape and visual impacts. This application took 90 weeks. The other 3 major applications for a new cemetery and two housing developments took an average of 13 weeks, which is good for major developments, that often have complex issues to resolve.

The local development applications saw a slight increase in the average number of weeks to decision. This was due to 6 decisions over the year. This year's figure has been skewed by legacy cases and one legacy case in particular, which took no less than 314 weeks. If we exclude that case the average number of weeks was 13 weeks. The cases which have taken a longer period include those which were subject to prolonged design amendments and legal agreements. The average number of weeks for householder applications was very similar to last year.

The Enforcement Charter was published in late 2013 and is available on the website. The number of enforcement cases remains very similar to previous years.



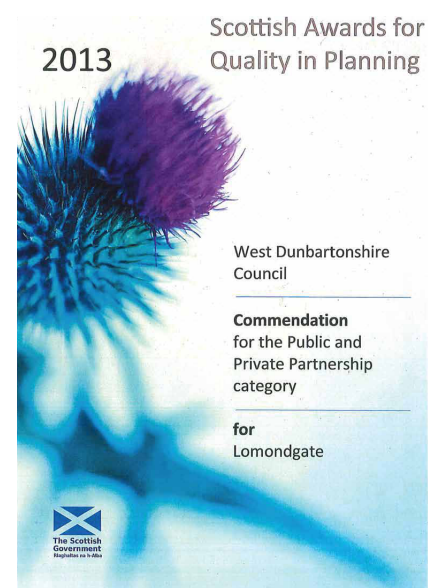
## Part 2: Defining and measuring a high-quality planning service

### Open for business

#### Public and Private Partnership - Lomondgate Development Dumbarton

This is a major mixed-use development on a 50 hectare site on the edge of Dumbarton. The masterplanned project comprises around 340 homes, BBC Scotland studio and River City set, Business Park and associated roadside services. Liaison meetings between the Council and the developer have taken place every 4-6 weeks and have helped to facilitate development during challenging economic times. It has become a forum where inward investors/developers such as Aggreko, Costa Coffee and the house builders such as Persimmon, Taylor Wimpey can bring forward their development proposals. Other Council services such as Roads, Environmental Health and Building Standards have been invited to attend the liaison meetings to discuss specific issues with developers. The approach has worked so well that it has been embedded in the protocol for Facilitating Appropriate Development on Key Development Sites. The liaison process has also been influential in decisions not to proceed with inappropriate development.

The approach was commended at the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2013 in the Private and Public Partnership category because Lomondgate has been created through a strong successful partnership.



*"Regular liaison combined with a pragmatic approach has been core to the success of the partnership for over 10 years between the Council, Walker Homes and Strathleven Regeneration. As a result, the physical changes that have taken place are testament to a public and private partnership making things happen."* Comments of the SAQP 2013 Judging Panel

#### Beardmore Place Clydebank – Use of a Processing Agreement

This involved a development of 54 flats for rent by a housing association. The site was previously in industrial use. It backs onto the Forth and Clyde Canal with residential uses on either side of it. The developer used the Council pre application service and agreed to enter into a processing agreement. The processing agreement identified the supporting information required for the application and the main planning issues raised by the proposal. It was important that all parties were clear about these issues and requirements from an early stage. It also identified the need for a financial contribution towards improvement of play facilities in the area and an associated legal agreement so the new flats remained in social rented use. This allowed the developer to build these additional requirements and costs into their development model. The processing agreement gave the developer early clarity on timescales, processes and information required.

### West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan - Developer requirements

Anticipating that difficult conditions for developers may continue in West Dunbartonshire over at least part of its lifetime, the Local Development Plan has taken a realistic view on the provision of developer requirements. The Plan does not have an affordable housing quota policy; instead it specifically identifies land for both private and affordable housing. This minimises the bureaucracy that can surround quota type policies, and gives developers certainty as to what tenure of housing will be expected from a specific site. Developer contributions are only sought in relation to infrastructure required to service the site e.g. road improvements and green infrastructure. With regard to the latter - SuDS, open space, paths and habitat enhancement will be sought at a level proportionate to the scale of development, to be set out in detail in Supplementary Guidance.

### Merkins Wind Farm

An application for 10 wind turbines close to the boundary of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park raised substantial issues in terms of landscape and visual impact on the National Park, the Kilpatrick Hills and the National Scenic Area. Planning officers worked very closely with the developer and key consultees such as Scottish Natural Heritage, the Park Authority and SEPA to ensure that the information requested was clear and proportionate to the visual and landscape issues being addressed both at the pre-application stage and during the consideration of the application. This allowed the consultees and the Planning Authority to reach conclusions on the main issues of the development more effectively and allowed clear recommendations to be made.

## High quality development on the ground

### West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan – Successful places

The proposed Local Development Plan includes Policy DS1 which requires all development to contribute towards creating successful places. Based on the six qualities of a successful place – Distinctive, Adaptable, Resource Efficient, Easy to get to/move around, Safe and Pleasant, and Welcoming – the policy sets out a range of criteria that can be used both by applicants as a guide to developing proposals and Development Management officers to assess planning applications. With Scottish Planning Policy strengthening the importance of placemaking and stating that planning permission can be refused on design grounds, this policy establishes the requirement for good design in the Development Plan.

### Residential Development: Principles for Good Design Supplementary Guidance

The Council published Supplementary Guidance on Residential Development: Principles for Good Design alongside its Proposed Local Development Plan. The Supplementary Guidance applies to housing developments of 3 units or more. It seeks to inform developers of the standards of development required and the criteria used by planners to assess such proposals. It requires development to reflect its local context, be design led and be based on the six qualities of successful place. The document has 6 sections considering: Character and Setting; Layout and Plot Sizes; House Design; Landscaping, Open Spaces and Play Areas; Roads and Parking; and Community Safety. Each section includes a checklist of the criteria to be considered. The Supplementary Guidance was amended following a consultation period and is being used for the assessment of residential applications.

### Former Clydebank College Site

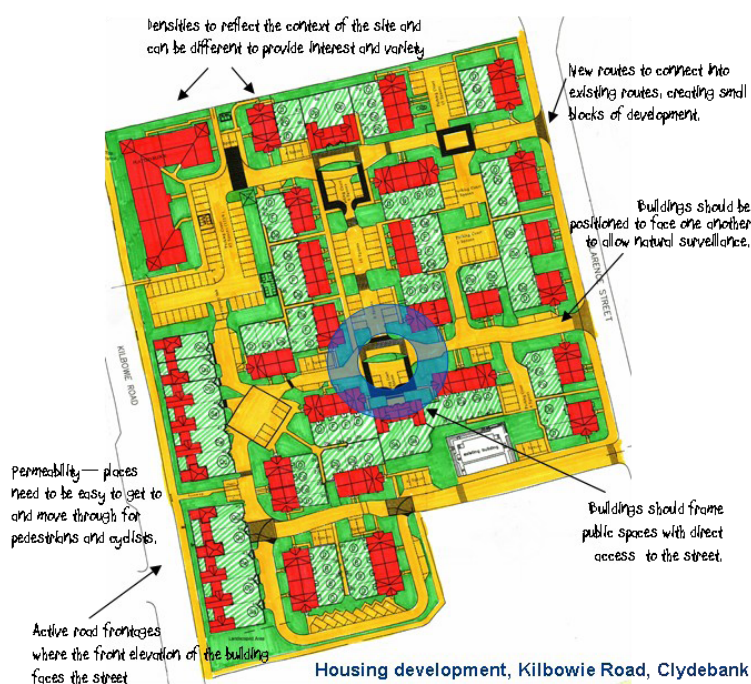
The site is presently being developed for 91 detached, semi-detached and terraced houses and 33 flats. The housebuilder had owned the site for a number of years and had previously secured detailed permission for 127 flats and 51 houses prior to the housing market downturn in 2007/8. However the site remained undeveloped as demand for the flats was very limited. The Council has worked very closely with the developer to achieve a more house dominated layout which also meets the Council design requirements for the site, including an active frontage onto Kilbowie Road, a main thoroughfare. This is an example of a development where pre-application discussions were essential as the layout within the site has been designed to reflect the Scottish Government's "Designing Streets" guidance, whereby street design considers place before movement and puts the needs of pedestrians and





cyclists before cars. The proposed layout features a square in the centre of the site, and a series of shared surface streets with a relatively informal character enhanced by landscaping. There are good pedestrian linkages throughout the site, providing access to Kilbowie Road and open space to the north. The development provides an attractive new residential environment, with appropriate frontages onto existing streets.

*"Through the pre-application process West Dunbartonshire Council took a flexible and common sense approach, allowing some planning guidelines and standards to be relaxed without compromising the quality of the final design."* Stuart Dodson, Development Director, Barratt Homes



### Site Monitoring Guidance: Quarries and Landfill sites

Recent events in the opencast coal industry highlighted the need to ensure that there is clear guidance available to officers and operators regarding the monitoring of quarry and landfill sites. It is important that quarry and landfill sites are effectively managed, monitored, regulated and restored. The guidance sets out how often the site needs to be monitored to ensure compliance with planning permissions and associated legal agreements. A checklist is attached with each site which highlights the main considerations for monitoring and the planning conditions and this is used to provide evidence that the monitoring has been carried out. It was agreed that the monitoring of the 2 quarries and the 2 landfill sites would take place annually during the month of May unless specific issues required more frequent visits. An annual report will be presented to the Planning Committee usually in August updating of the progress of the sites and identifying any issues which require resolution.

## Certainty

### West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan

The Council has an up-to-date Development Plan (SDP published May 2012, Local Plan adopted March 2010). Preparation of the new Local Development Plan is well underway, with the Proposed Plan published in September 2013 and a modified version in March 2014. It is anticipated that the Local Development Plan can still be adopted by March 2015, within 5 years of the adoption of the previous Local Plan. Whilst the Development Plan Scheme provided the target dates for key stages of the Plan, the writing of key documents such as the Main Issues Report and Proposed Plan was tightly project-managed to ensure it went through the various approval levels before submission to Committee. A project plan for the new Local Development Plan will be included in future Development Plan Schemes. The Development Plan Scheme is published in June every year providing an up-to-date position on development plan preparation in the authority area.

There has been Elected Member involvement throughout the Plan process, with a series of workshops held before both the MIR and Proposed Plan were taken to committee for approval. Key agencies have also been involved throughout the Plan process with one-to-one meetings and multi-agency workshops held and early drafts of the MIR and Proposed Plan sections shared.

The proposed Local Development Plan is a shorter and more definitive document than the current Local Plan. It is 100 pages compared to 220 pages and has 37 short and definitive policies compared to 81 policies in the current local plan that are often wordy and not as clear in their intent.

99.1% of planning applications determined in 2013/14 were in accordance with the Development Plan. Assessment against the development plan is clearly set out in Planning Committee Reports and in 2013/14, 97.8% of planning applications determined by the Planning Committee were in accordance with the Development Plan.

### Protocol - Planning Processing Agreements

This takes the same format as the protocols for pre application advice and liaison meetings. The role and function of processing agreements is to deliver high quality development as efficiently and effectively as possible. The protocol outlines what the developer and Council should expect of each other if they agree a processing agreement. A training session was held with Development Management officers to discuss the protocol and to encourage the promotion and use of Processing Agreements. The protocol is available on the website and developers are referred to it. Promotion of the use of processing agreements has led to one signed processing agreement with another processing agreement ready to be signed shortly and a few others currently being discussed.

### Protocol - Elected Member Involvement in Pre-applications Discussions

We are keen that our elected members are confident in engaging at the pre- application stage on major development proposals. In PPF2 it was indicated that a report to Planning Committee had agreed that elected member engagement at the pre-application stage would be by way of written briefings and a developer presentation. This was formalised in a Protocol. The Scottish Government in conjunction with COSLA and the Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland issued guidance on the role of Councillors in pre-application procedures in February 2014. The Protocol has been revised to take this advice into account and the Planning Committee has agreed detailed procedures for its involvement at the pre-application stage. We have had our first request for such a meeting and this will take place in the next few months.

**PROTOCOL 3 - ELECTED MEMBER INVOLVEMENT IN PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS**

**Background**

West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to engaging with developers at the pre-application stage. This Council has agreed procedures for elected member involvement in the pre-application stages of major development proposals. Recently, the Scottish Government has issued guidance on the role of Councillors in pre-application discussions. Councillors are encouraged to engage at the pre-application stage and to add value to the process while continuing to act within the terms of the Councillors Code of Conduct.

**Purpose**

To engage Councillors at the pre-application stage on major and complex developments that are key to the Council's strategic priorities and objectives. Appropriate local development may also benefit from this process.

**Role**

To allow early engagement with elected members to identify key and significant local issues at an early stage of the planning process rather than only emerging in the course of a planning application.

**Function**

To achieve high quality development as efficiently and effectively as possible by engaging elected members at an early stage.

- To better inform Councillors of development that would be subsequently presented to Planning Committee;
- To give a degree of certainty and confidence to developers by identifying key and local issues earlier;
- To reduce abortive costs by failed applications or redesign work;
- To assist officers to negotiate on key issues;
- To foster greater efficiency in the processing of the subsequent application.

Protocol 3 - Elected Member Involvement in Pre-application Discussions

**What you can expect of us:**

- Offered for all major or complex development or other local development which we would consider would benefit from early input from elected members;
- Consistent and transparent procedure for involving all elected members;
- Ensuring that pre-application meeting is arranged for the earliest date at the end of a Planning Committee meeting or a Special Meeting held;
- Briefing note prepared by officers of the main issues and development policies and circulated before the meeting;
- Invitation to all elected members to the presentation;
- Opportunity to hear from the elected members directly;
- Clearly identified on the agenda of Planning Committee or Special Meeting as different from other items;
- Elected members being open-minded to all material considerations and are prepared to change their views if persuaded they should;
- Meeting will be minuted and will be available publicly;
- Advised of all the relevant procedures. With procedures regularly reviewed to ensure openness and accountability.

**What we expect of you:**

- Openness and transparency regarding your development proposal;
- Commitment to provide as much information at this early stage;
- Opportunity to make a short presentation of draft proposals;
- Commitment to give weight and consideration to issues raised by elected members.

**Contact**

\* you require more information about this service please contact:

Clifford  
Building Standards Manager

[clifford@wdbarton.gov.uk](mailto:clifford@wdbarton.gov.uk)

**Housing, Environmental and Economic Development**

**Facilitating Appropriate Development on Key Development Sites**

August 2014  
West Dunbartonshire Council

## Communications, engagement and customer service

### Local Development Plan

A participant database was established when preparation of the new Local Development Plan began in 2010. By the end of the Proposed Plan consultation, 670 individuals and organisations had participated or registered their interest in the plan process. The Council has stressed that email is its preferred means of communicating directly with participants, and it holds email addresses for almost 70% of participants. Participants have been sent a newsletter at key stages of the plan process. The Main Issues Report, Proposed Plan and associated Supplementary Guidance and supporting documents have all been published online, both as pdf documents and using the Online Local Development Plan system. Hard copies were also available. To maximise the opportunity to comment all forms of representation have been accepted at consultation stages i.e. e-forms, email, OLDP and hard copy. Whilst electronic submissions were encouraged, the importance of accepting hard copy submissions was demonstrated by 40% of representations on the Proposed Plan being submitted that way. Promotion of the Proposed Plan consultation period was achieved by:

- Directly notifying over 3000 premises situated close to sites that were proposed for development by the Plan.
- Staffed information sessions held in Alexandria, Clydebank and Dumbarton.
- A mobile exhibition located at several locations throughout the authority.
- Meetings with 9 of the 10 active Community Councils
- Regular reminders of the Plan's availability on the Council's Facebook page and Twitter feed.

### Bowling Basin Charrette

Jointly with Scottish Canals, the Council ran a charrette to consider the future development of the Bowling Basin site. The local Community Council were engaged early so that they could help shape the format of the event. Publicity included early website and press articles to give people notice of the event, a Bowling Basin website ([www.bowlingbasin.com](http://www.bowlingbasin.com)), posters and the direct leafleting of 1200 houses. Charrette sessions were held during the day, in the evening and at the weekend in order to maximise attendance. Gavinburn Primary School was engaged in the charrette by the Scottish Waterways Trust. One hundred and twenty different people attended one or more of the charrette sessions with many repeat visitors. Bowling has a population of 560 so attendance was strong. Feedback on the event indicated:

- 91% agreed or strongly agreed that the charrette was well publicised.
- 100% agreed or strongly agreed that the charrette was convenient to attend.
- 91% agreed or strongly agreed that the charrette was well organised and interesting.
- 78% agreed or strongly agreed that the charrette felt like a community event.
- 96% agreed or strongly agreed that participants were able to express their views.

The engagement had a direct impact on the proposals for Bowling with a significant area that the Local Development Plan identified for development removed as an opportunity on all of the options that emerged from the charrette. High, mid and low density options emerged from



the charrette reflecting the different views of those who attended. The charrette has been shortlisted for a Scottish Award for Quality in Planning 2014 in the community involvement category.

*"I had a really positive meeting with your colleagues last week about how we can work up a detailed planning app for the new canal bridge and access improvements and the western arches and also prepare a PAN and masterplan PPP application as soon as possible. You are a very positive crowd down there and it is much appreciated and this 'can do' attitude has been fed back to the Scottish Govt."* Chris Breslin, Estates Manager, Scottish Canals



## Planning Enforcement Charter

Revised in 2013, the Planning Enforcement Charter is now presented in a more clear and concise manner. It recognises the increasing role that members of the public play in reporting potential breaches of planning control and in monitoring the conditions that are placed on certain planning consents. It summarises the key points of Planning Enforcement and it provides service standards for responding to complaints and indicates how those making complaints will be kept informed if enforcement action is taken. It is a useful document for officers and the public and has helped to inform the compliance monitoring guidance for quarries and landfill sites.



## Efficient and effective decision-making

### Committee Structure

The Planning Committee meets every month, with the exception of July. The more major and contentious applications continue to be determined by Committee. This allows the maintenance of good performance statistics whilst maintaining a good balance between the use of delegated powers and committee applications. In 2013-14, 40 applications were determined by Planning Committee. Site visits continue to take place before the Planning Committee for applications which are subject to objection or if the application is of local significance. A total of 18 site visits took place in 2013-14. The Committee also considers reports on consultations from neighbouring authorities, Scottish Government consultations, the Kilpartick Hills Statement of Importance, Antonine Wall Management Plan and the outcome of planning appeals.

### Review of the Scheme of Delegation

The Council's Scheme of Delegation was revised in September 2013. The new Scheme of Delegation reflects recent regulatory change by removing the requirement for applications to be decided by the Committee because of a Council interest in the land or development. Between June 2011 and June 2013 53% of all applications that went to Committee were Council interest applications. Applications for Council interest development will now be handled in the same way as all other applications. It was not considered appropriate to change the other categories of applications which are determined by Planning Committee where the more major and contentious applications continue to be determined by Committee.

### Reducing Legacy Cases

A review of 10 legacy applications has been undertaken this year. Some of these applications had been determined and were outstanding because of legal agreements; others were undetermined because of a particular unresolved issue. Six of these applications have now been determined and one was withdrawn. One of the applications was 2201 days old and it had not progressed due to economic conditions and a contribution requested towards providing play equipment elsewhere. The Council recently took a fresh look at the financial contribution level and agreed a reduced level with the developer. Of the legacy applications that remain the Council is working with the applicants to try to progress the outstanding issues.

## Effective management structures

### Team Working

There are close links between the four teams in Planning & Building Standards (Development Management, Building Standards, Forward Planning and Technical Support) and there is regular interaction and co-ordination of their work. During the year a Development Management Officer moved over to the Forward Planning Team on a temporary basis to cover maternity leave. This made efficient use of resources and has been a substantial benefit to the Forward Planning team as her development management experience has been very useful in the preparation of supplementary guidance. A number of workshops were held with the Development Management team when the Proposed Plan was being prepared in order to test the practical application of the new policies.

Teams meet regularly to progress workload, share good practice and ensure that procedures are correctly applied and Team Leaders meet officers on a one-to-one basis. Regular meetings are held by the Planning and Building Standards Manager with the Team Leaders to update them on corporate matters and to progress operational matters. The Manager contributes to fortnightly Management meetings held by the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development.

### Collaborative Working

Monthly meetings are held between the Managers and Team Leaders of the Roads and Planning Services. This is an opportunity to discuss issues on key development sites and to discuss the nature and speed of responses to consultations on planning applications. The Roads Protocol is a regular item on the agenda of these meetings. This year we have been working with the Roads Service to encourage it to review parking standards for social rented housing and private housing.

We also meet every second month with our colleagues in Regeneration and Asset Management to update each other formally with regard to activity on key development sites and to progress the Council's Property and Land Disposal Strategy.

There is collaborative working as a member authority of the Strategic Development Plan Authority. Officers take part in the various topic groups, Heads of Policy meetings and the Steering Group. Elected members participate in the Strategic Development Plan Committee on a quarterly basis. The Council is a partner in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership with 7 other local authorities, SNH, Forestry Commission and others. This has allowed the Council to contribute to, and benefit from, various studies and projects regarding the green network.

The Council is a member authority of the West of Scotland Archaeological Service (WoSAS). WoSAS maintains the Historic Environment Record and provides archaeological advice to 11 of Scotland's planning authorities.

*"The internal collaboration between Roads and Planning has been strengthened over the past years through the introduction of planned liaison meetings and Planning/Roads protocol. These practices facilitate open and constructive dialogue which can address any issues where there is misinterpretation or conflict and assists in ensuring prompt and consistent procedures are in place to ensure there is a broad agreement in principle between the Services prior to any application being determined."* Jack McAulay, WDC Roads and Transportation Services Manager

## Financial management and local governance

### Financial Management

The service budget is monitored on a monthly basis by the Manager and the Service accountant to ensure that outturn is being achieved. The budget is discussed regularly at Team Leader and Management Team meetings. The revenue budget for 2013/14 continues to be heavily weighted towards employee costs and related items. The main payments to other agencies and bodies are for the Strategic Development Planning Authority, Ordnance Survey, computer licences and the Archaeology Service. The main source of external income is from application fees and related items. Although planning fees were increased by 20% in April 2013 our planning fee income fell to the lowest level since the downturn in applications began in 2008. It is hoped that this is a one-off and that fee income will rise this year to the levels experienced previously. The signs are promising as in the last few months a number of developers have re-engaged and it is hoped that this interest will be translated into applications. As the Council's ambitious capital projects are progressed this should further assist with an increase in planning fee income.

### Costing the Planning Service

This Council, together with 14 other Planning Authorities, took part in a 4 week pilot of costing the planning service. The Development Management, Forward Planning and Technical Support teams all recorded the time spent on planning-related tasks, as did colleagues within the Roads Service and Environmental Health. The results demonstrated that planning application fees and other planning-related income does not cover the cost of running the planning service. The exercise had the benefit of focussing staff on the amount of time spent on particular tasks, and also of revealing how much time can be spent by a number of staff on a particular application e.g. a significant amount of time was spent finalising the committee report for a major wind farm application over the time of the exercise.



## Culture of continuous improvement

### Performance & Development Planning and training

All Planning staff have a Performance and Development Plan (PDP) which is undertaken on annual basis and reviewed half yearly in November. Their training requirements are identified in the Service Training Plan and this is supported through both the Service and Departmental budget to ensure that training requirements are met. Internal training continues with the sharing of knowledge and skills between team members and with events held by the Council's Organisational Development team and other services such as a recent SUDS event organised by the Council's Roads Service.

One of our Support Officers represented the Council at the Young Scotland Programme in October in North Queensferry. This event develops young talent in the workplace by improving communication skills and inspiring confidence and was attended by young people employed in both the public and private sectors.

One of our Support Assistants achieved the Customer Service Professional Qualification and another Support Assistant is undertaking the same qualification in the coming year.

The Service's GIS Officer and a Support Officer have completed Level 2 Chartered Management Institute (CMI) qualification

Other external events attended by staff included the two day A&DS Design Symposium, the National Planning Forum, HOPS events, PPF, dealing with the media, project management and the Development Management and the Development Plans Sub-Groups. Training and development needs will continue to be identified through Performance and Development Planning work.

### Development day and drawing skills

A staff development day was held in October 2013 in the newly refurbished Clydebank Town Hall. This included all planning and building standards officers and technical and administrative staff. The morning included sessions on freedom of information, handling complaints and a presentation on the work and structure of our Housing colleagues. The afternoon was a Drawing Skills session led by Susie Stirling, Head of Placemaking and Design at the Scottish Government. The purpose of this was to increase staff

confidence to use their drawing skills and to help them better understand drawings that are presented to them. The programme included an introduction to drawing equipment, basic drawing skills, understanding plans, tracing from photographs and making use of 'B' plans. The





inspiration for the training was the Scottish Government's promotion of more graphical development plans. The drawing training was well received and drawing talent discovered across the teams. Drawings were subsequently included in the Residential Development Supplementary Guidance and will feature in future Development Plans, as well as presenting alternative layouts to developers.

### Benchmarking Partners

The group (West Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire and Inverclyde Councils) continues to meet every four months to share good practice and to benchmark on specific planning issues. Items on the agenda have included the High Hedges Act, scheme of delegation, archiving and filing, restoration arrangements for quarries and landfills sites, and procedures for elected member involvement in the pre application stage. The feedback we all received on PPF 2 was shared and discussed. This year Heads of Planning Scotland had proposed that participation in benchmarking through the Solace family groups. However the Benchmarking group agreed that our existing benchmarking arrangements work well given the close proximity of the local authorities involved and the commonality in the issues. It was agreed by all that the existing group would be retained. The email group continues to be used to exchange information and to get views on specific planning issues such as purchase notices, permitted development queries, etc.

### Improvement Plan for Planning Performance Framework 2012-13

This was put together to address matters raised from feedback and performance indicators of PPF2. The improvement plan addressed matters such as promoting processing agreements, investigating the use of project management techniques and reviewing legacy cases. The improvement plan was reported to Planning Committee and has allowed us to focus and progress these issues.

### Elected Member Site visit to Alg Dearg Wind Farm Argyle

In September 2013 we arranged for a site visit to an operational wind farm primarily for elected members. It involved a visit to the site and presentations from the planning officer who dealt with the planning application and the Chair of the Planning Committee for Argyle and Bute Council. The visit was also attended by other officers of this Council responsible for Sustainability. It was very beneficial to assess the impact of the wind turbines both directly on the site but also on the overall landscape. It was good to hear from both an officer's and elected member's perspective the issues they took into account when considering the wind farm development.



## Part 3: Supporting Evidence

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

### Open for Business

- West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan ([www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/3761560/ldp\\_\\_as\\_modified\\_march\\_\\_with\\_fc.pdf](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/3761560/ldp__as_modified_march__with_fc.pdf))
- Facilitating Appropriate Development on Key Development Sites ([www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/2115391/facilitating\\_appropriate\\_development\\_inc\\_protocols\\_34.pdf](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/2115391/facilitating_appropriate_development_inc_protocols_34.pdf))

### Quality Development on the Ground

- West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan ([www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/3761560/ldp\\_\\_as\\_modified\\_march\\_\\_with\\_fc.pdf](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/3761560/ldp__as_modified_march__with_fc.pdf))
- Residential Development: Principles for Good Design Supplementary Guidance ([www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/2589591/residential\\_development\\_principles\\_for\\_good\\_design\\_supplementary\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/2589591/residential_development_principles_for_good_design_supplementary_guidance.pdf))

### Certainty

- West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan ([www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/3761560/ldp\\_\\_as\\_modified\\_march\\_\\_with\\_fc.pdf](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/3761560/ldp__as_modified_march__with_fc.pdf))
- Facilitating Appropriate Development on Key Development Sites ([www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/2115391/facilitating\\_appropriate\\_development\\_inc\\_protocols\\_34.pdf](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/2115391/facilitating_appropriate_development_inc_protocols_34.pdf))

### Communications, Engagement and Customer Service

- West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan report of Conformity with Participation Statement ([www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/strategies,-plans-and-policies/local-development-planning/local-development-plan/](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/strategies,-plans-and-policies/local-development-planning/local-development-plan/))
- Bowling Basin Charrette Report ([www.bowlingbasin.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Bowling-Basin-Charrette-Report.pdf](http://www.bowlingbasin.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Bowling-Basin-Charrette-Report.pdf))
- Planning Enforcement Charter 2013 ([www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/3199135/planning\\_enforcement\\_charter\\_2013.pdf](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/3199135/planning_enforcement_charter_2013.pdf))

### Efficient and Effective Decision-making

- Scheme of Delegation ([www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/1087893/scheme\\_of\\_delegation\\_appendix\\_1.pdf](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/1087893/scheme_of_delegation_appendix_1.pdf))

### Effective Management Structures

- Planning and Roads Protocol ([www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/planning-building-standards/planning-applications/planning-application-service-and-performance/Planning-Roads-Protocol-2014-09.doc](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/planning-building-standards/planning-applications/planning-application-service-and-performance/Planning-Roads-Protocol-2014-09.doc))

### Culture of Continuous Improvement

- Improvement Plan - Appendix 2

## Part 4: Service Improvements 2014-15

In the coming year we will:

- Prepare Development Briefs for Council disposal sites as required so as to ensure high quality development on the ground.
- Hold a Planning and Building Standards forum to enable contact with frequent users of the service.
- Carry out Customer surveys to measure customer satisfaction.
- Provide guidance on trees and publicise trees protected by TPO.
- Promote the Protocols on Processing Agreements and Elected Members involvement in the pre application stage.
- Review the Environmental Health Protocol.
- Review restoration bonds for quarries and landfill sites.
- Formally monitor landfill and quarry sites and present an updated report to Planning Committee.
- Preparation of supplementary guidance on the green network.
- Benchmark with other authorities on processes, best practice and cost.
- Promote and implement a Protocol on Legal Agreements.
- Scan and archive planning records.
- Review Planning Website and continue to encourage use of electronic communication.
- Hold away day for all staff to view examples of good development.
- Review and undertake individual PDPs and prepare training implementation programme.
- Progress training plan for Elected Members with Improvement Service.
- Introduce new ways of working associated with our new offices.

## Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2013-14:

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
<b>Promote and implement the Developer Protocol in terms of pre-application service and regular liaison meetings with key developers</b> Protocol on the website and number of new liaison meetings set up for key development sites.	Yes
<b>Implement elected member involvement in pre-application discussions</b> Protocol implemented and procedures agreed by Committee. First meeting to take place in the coming months.	Yes
<b>Assess the effectiveness of pre-applications discussions for major proposals</b> Pre-applications discussions now being recorded and an assessment has been undertaken of the effectiveness of these discussions.	Yes
<b>Review the approved scheme of delegation</b> This was approved by full Council in January 2014.	Yes
<b>Prepare Development Briefs for Council disposal sites</b> No development briefs were requested by Asset Management during 2013/14.	Partial
<b>Implement residential development guidelines</b> This is now supplementary guidance and all new residential applications are being assessed by the guidelines.	Yes
<b>Provide guidance on trees and publicise trees protected by TPO</b> This has not been achieved this year however it presently is being progressed as supplementary guidance and is an action for 2014-15.	No
<b>Continue to encourage greater use of electronic communication and document management systems</b> This is being achieved through working practices and is reviewed regularly at Team meetings and by our Technical Support Team. 68% of planning applications submitted online.	Yes
<b>Hold a Planning and Building Standards forum to allow regular contact with frequent users of the service</b> This was not achieved this year due to other commitments. It will be an action for 2014-15	No
<b>Carry out Customer surveys to measure customer satisfaction</b> This was not been achieved this year however it will be an action for 2014-15.	No

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
<b>Benchmark with other authorities on processes, best practice and cost</b> The Benchmarking Group continues to meet every four months to share best practice and to benchmark on specific planning issues.	Yes
<b>Review the Environmental Health Protocol and implement the Roads Protocol</b> The Roads Protocol has been implemented and is available on the website. It is a regular item on the agenda of Planning / Roads Liaison meetings and its effectiveness is assessed. The Environmental Health Protocol is presently being reviewed and will be an action for 2014-15.	Partial
<b>Review and undertake individual PDPs and implement Training implementation plan</b> All Staff have up to date PDPs and there is a Service Training Plan.	Yes
<b>Implement training needs of elected members in conjunction with Improvement Service</b> This is being progressed with the Improvement Service and a training plan has been produced.	Partial



## Part 5: Official Statistics

### A: Decision-making timescales

Category	Total number of decisions 2013-2014	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2013-2014	2012-2013
<b>Major developments</b>	4	32.4	20.38
<b>Local developments (non-householder)</b>	102	15.2	12.45
Local: less than 2 months	60.8%	7.0	7.1
Local: more than 2 months	39.2%	28.0	23.8
<b>Householder developments</b>	107	7.5	7.3
Local: less than 2 months	88.8%	6.9	6.87
Local: more than 2 months	11.2%	12.6	15.33
<b>Housing developments</b>			
<b>Major</b>	2	15.9	22.7
<b>Local</b>	26	24.9	15.57
Local: less than 2 months	53.8%	7.4	7.1
Local: more than 2 months	46.2%	45.3	21.9
<b>Business and industry</b>			
<b>Major</b>	0	n/a	n/a
<b>Local business and industry</b>	15	9.8	11
Local: less than 2 months	53.8%	6.1	6.6
Local: more than 2 months	46.2%	20	23.5
<b>EIA developments</b>	1	90	23.3
<b>Other consents*</b>	41	11.1	6.85
<b>Planning/legal agreements**</b>	11		
<b>Local Reviews</b>	1	5.0	n/a

\* Consents and certificates: Listed buildings and Conservation area consents, Control of Advertisement consents, Hazardous Substances consents, Established Use Certificates, certificates of lawfulness of existing use or development, notification on overhead electricity lines, notifications and directions under GPDO Parts 6 & 7 relating to agricultural and forestry development and applications prior approval by Coal Authority or licensed operator under classes 60 & 62 of the GPDO.

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

## B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld	
		2013-2014	2012-2013
Local Reviews	1	1 (0%)	n/a
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	3	3 (33%)	3 (50%)

## C: Enforcement activity

	2013-2014	2012-2013
Cases taken up	65	66
Breaches identified	34	32
Cases resolved	23	24
Notices served***	5	2
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	1	0
Prosecutions	0	0

\*\*\* Enforcement notices; breach of condition notices; planning contravention notices; stop notices; temporary stop notices; fixed penalty notices; and

## D: Context

Over the past year the average timescales for both householder and local developments remained very similar to the previous year. Although there was a slight dip in both the percentage of householder and local development applications determined in less than 2 months. The average timescale figures are good given that we dealt with 6 legacy applications which were over 1 year old. One of these applications for a play area was 2201 days old. Also the number of planning /legal agreements nearly tripled for this year. Often where an application is associated with a legal agreement there is a delay in issuing the decision for various reasons. This year we are intending to give priority to the Protocol on Legal Agreements and we will work with our legal colleagues to simplify procedures and try and reduce the time taken to conclude a legal agreement.

The average timescale for major developments was 32.4 which is consistent with the Scottish average. However this figure was skewed by an application for a windfarm which took 90 weeks to determine. The other 3 major applications took an average of 13 weeks. Appeals and Local Reviews remain low compared to the number of applications determined.

## Part 6: Workforce and Financial Information

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

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
<b>Head of Planning Service</b>				X

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

		DM	DP	Enforcement	Other
<b>Managers</b>	No. Posts	1	1		0.5
	Vacant				
<b>Main grade posts</b>	No. Posts	3.5	2.5		
	Vacant	0.5			
<b>Technician</b>	No. Posts	0.5	1		
	Vacant				
<b>Office Support/Clerical</b>	No. Posts	3.5	0.5		
	Vacant				
<b>TOTAL</b>		9	5		0.5

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

Staffing Profile	Number
Under 30	3
30-39	7
40-49	4
50 and over	5

Committee & site visits*	Number per year
Full Council committees	4
Planning Committees	11
Area Committees (where relevant)	0
Committee site visits	18
LRB**	1
LRB site visits	0

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

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

	Total Budget	Costs		Income***
		Direct*	Indirect**	
<b>Development management</b>	£223,644	£280,000		£137,101
<b>Development planning</b>	£185,625	£170,000		
<b>Enforcement</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	
<b>Other</b>		£213,985	£248,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	£871,254			

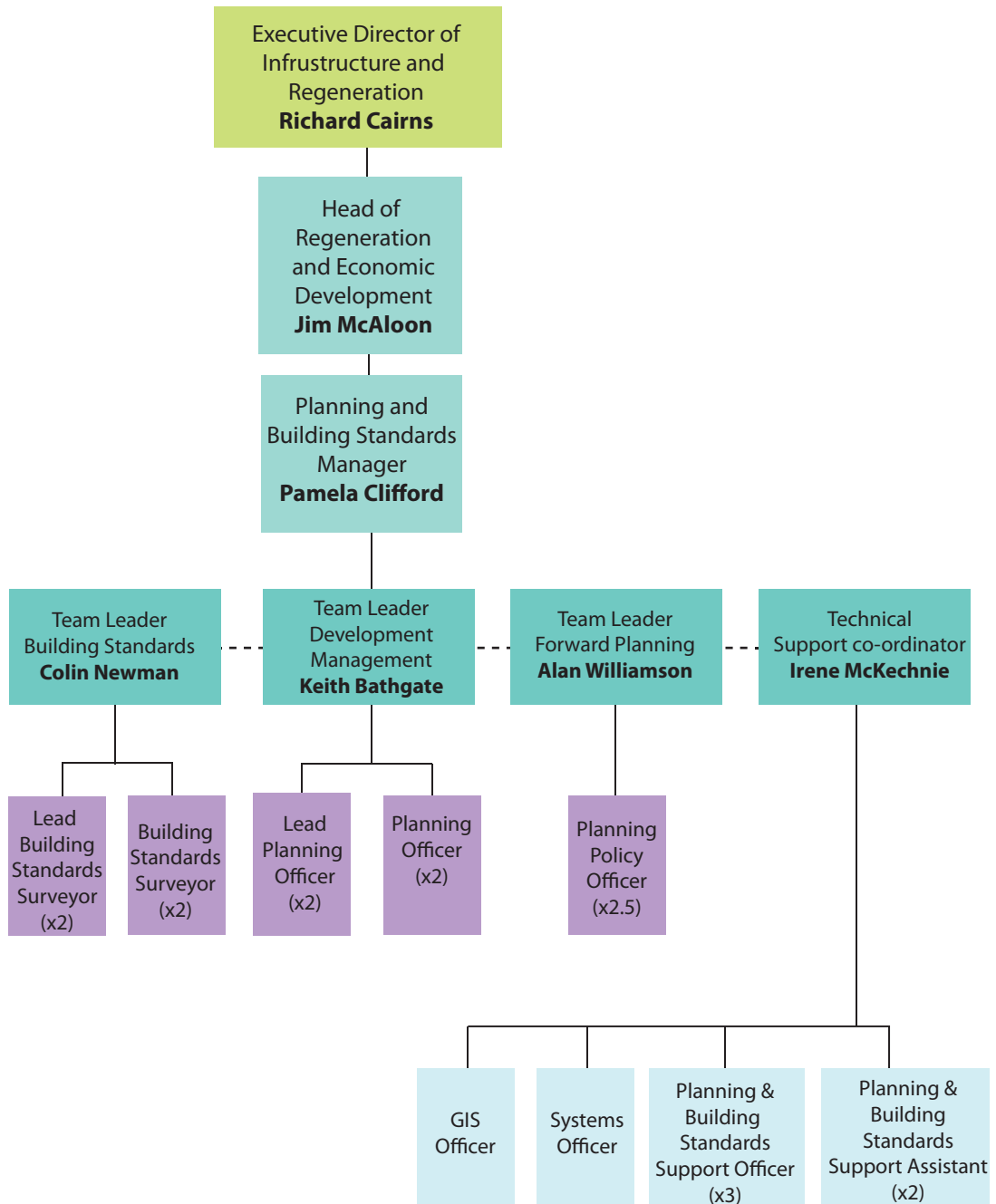
\*Direct staff costs covers gross pay (including overtime, national insurance and superannuation contribution). The appropriate proportion of the direct cost of any staff member within the planning authority spending 30% or more of their time on planning should be included in costs, irrespective of what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

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

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

## Appendix 1

### Planning and Building Standards Service Structure





## Appendix 2: Improvement Plan - Planning Performance Framework 2012-2013

Ref	Action	Milestone	Target Date	Complete?	Statement
PPF1	Promote and publicise the use of processing agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce a protocol on processing agreements.</li> <li>Produce guidance/ information for the website.</li> <li>Provide training for Planning Officers.</li> </ul>	30/05/2014 30/05/2014 30/05/2014	Yes	The protocol has been updated and is on the website. One processing agreement signed with another one ready to be signed shortly. Others being discussed.
PPF2	Record and conclude legal agreements/ Section 69 agreements within 6 weeks of planning decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce a protocol on legal agreement process and timescales.</li> <li>Make officers and legal officers aware of the timescales.</li> </ul>	30/06/2014 30/06/2014	No	This was not achieved due to priority being given to the Protocols on Processing Agreements and Elected Member Involvement in Pre-application Stage. It will be an action for 2014-15.
PPF3	Enforcement Charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicise revised Enforcement Charter.</li> </ul>	28/02/2014	Yes	This is now complete and is available on the website. It is being use by officers and the public.
PPF4	Project Management Techniques for use in the Local Development Plan process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate use of project managements techniques.</li> <li>Review, evaluate and implement if appropriate.</li> </ul>	30/05/2014 30/05/2014	Yes	An Officer is attending a course on project management techniques and is using their new skills to project manage the Development Plan and supplementary guidance.
PPF5	Review all legacy applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the reasons for stalled applications and facilitate progress</li> </ul>	30/03/2014	Yes	This has been undertaken this year and seven legacy applications were either determined or withdrawn.