

West Dunbartonshire Council

# Planning Performance Framework

Planning and Building Standards Service



West   
Dunbartonshire  
COUNCIL

July 2016



## Foreword

Welcome to the fifth 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 2015-16. It also outlines our proposed service improvements for 2016-17.

A different approach to the assessment of last year's Planning Performance Framework was taken whereby a peer review was undertaken by East Dunbartonshire Council who are part of our Solace Grouping. We also peer reviewed their Planning Performance Framework. Their feedback advised:

*“ Good example of a well-written, concise PPF report. As a result this is accessible to external stakeholders.”*

This review and the peer review of the East Dunbartonshire Planning Performance Framework helped shape this year's Framework.

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 Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park planning authority area.

In 2015 the Senior Management structure of West Dunbartonshire Council was reviewed and a new smaller senior leadership team was created to drive the Council's priorities from April 2016. Planning and Building Standards now sits under the Strategic Lead for Regulatory having moved from Regeneration and Economic Development.

A number of the Council's key capital projects are progressing well on site such as the new Clydebank leisure centre, the Dumbarton care home and a number of new schools: Bellsmyre co-educational campus; Kilpatrick special needs school; and the Balloch campus. Planning and Building Standards are a key service in the delivery of these developments and are involved from the initial concept stage to final occupation. The private sector shows continued interest in the area with new houses being built and new and expanded accommodation for businesses being created.

An important milestone this year has been the grant of planning permission in principle for 1,000 new houses, health and care uses, and retail and leisure uses on the Queens Quay site in Clydebank. The detailed application for infrastructure and public realm works is due to be submitted shortly. Planning and Building Standards continue to play an important role in enabling delivery of the Exxon site in Bowling - our City Deal project. Development of the new Council offices has now started on the site of the former Dumbarton Academy and Burgh Hall in Dumbarton town centre and developers of the adjacent Dumbarton Waterfront are bringing forward their development proposals.

Planning application fees amounted to £320,000 for 2015-16. The Council continues to face financial challenges in the coming years and this Service continues to look at new ways of working, the use of new technology and bringing in additional income to assist with the challenges.

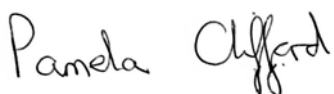
In 2016, the Planning Committee took a final decision not to progress the Local Development Plan beyond Proposed Plan stage due to an issue with a housing site in Clydebank. Work has now commenced on the new Local Development Plan.

This year we have worked with the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority to deliver a charrette for the Balloch area which we hope will also benefit the wider Vale of Leven. We also received a Team of the Year commendation with our Regeneration colleagues for the Clydebank and Dumbarton charrettes in the annual Council Employees Recognition awards.

We have now settled in our new offices at Aurora House on the Clydebank waterfront. This has facilitated more flexible working, more integration between teams and a new approach to customer service.

Staff continue to show commitment to developing themselves by attending external and internal training courses and by working closely with the Scottish Government, Heads of Planning and the Improvement Service

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



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## Part 1: National Headline Indicators (NHIs)

Key Outcomes	2015-16	2014-15
<p>Development Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>age of local/strategic development plan(s) (years and months) at end of reporting period Requirement: less than 5 years</li> <li>Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? (Y/N)</li> <li>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)</li> <li>Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year? (Y/N)</li> </ul>	<p>6 years 0 months</p> <p>No</p> <p>n/a-see note below</p> <p>n/a-see note below</p>	<p>5 years 0 months</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes-later</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established housing land supply</li> <li>5-year effective housing land supply</li> <li>5-year housing supply target</li> <li>5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place)</li> <li>Housing approvals</li> <li>Housing completions over the last 5 years</li> <li>Marketable employment land supply</li> <li>Employment land take-up during reporting year</li> </ul>	<p>5,869units 1,731units 1,600 units 5.4 years</p> <p>309 units 1,206 units 35.05 ha 0 ha</p>	<p>5,873 units 1,747 units 1,600 units 5.4 years</p> <p>193 units 1,164 units 35.05 ha 0.83 ha</p>

Key Outcomes	2015-16	2014-15
<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</li> <li>Number of applications subject to other project plan</li> <li>Percentage planned timescales met</li> </ul>	49.8%  0  0 n/a	43%  1  0 100%
<b>Decision-making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application approval rate</li> <li>Delegation rate</li> </ul>	96.6% 90.0%	96% 86%
<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>	24.6 10.7 7.3	19.8 10.5 6.8
<b>Legacy Cases</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number cleared during reporting period</li> <li>Number remaining</li> </ul>	2 7	1 6
<b>Enforcement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time since enforcement charter published/reviewed (months). Requirement: review every 2 years</li> <li>Number of breaches identified / resolved</li> </ul>	0 months  45/27	15 months  33/24



## Contextual Statement

The proposed Local Development Plan was on schedule to be adopted by the 5th anniversary of the adoption of the previous Local Plan i.e. by March 2015. However, the Planning Committee of the Council declined a recommendation of the Examination Report and entered into correspondence with the Scottish Ministers on this matter. The Scottish Ministers issued a Direction preventing the Council from adopting the Plan unless the recommendation was accepted. In April 2016 the Planning Committee took a final decision not to accept the recommendation and therefore not to adopt the Local Development Plan, and instructed that preparation of the next Local Development Plan commences. Therefore, over the last year there has been no slippage in the submission date of the Local Development Plan to the Scottish Ministers as submission had already occurred and there was no development plan engagement/ consultation exercises undertaken as none were required owing to the stage the Plan was at.

Housing figures are based on the finalised 2015 Housing Land Audit (base dated 31/3/2015). Comparison figures are from the finalised 2014 Housing Land Audit (base date 31/3/2014). Housing approvals are for the year ending 31 March 2016 and include all housing approvals on sites of 4 or more units, including changes of house types, permissions in principle and in detail. Housing completions are for the 5 year period ending 31 March 2016. Employment land figures are based on the 2016 industrial and business land monitoring (base date 31/3/2016).

Nearly 49% of all applications were subject to pre application advice which is higher than last year. All 5 major applications were subject to pre application advice which is consistent with the developer's protocol. The average number of weeks to decision for major developments increased by 5 weeks although it is still well below the national average. This increase in the timescales is due to 2 applications. One application was validated in 2010 and presented to Planning Committee within 4 months of the validation date however due to the economic situation the applicant had no immediate intention of commencing the development and did not progress the Section 75 legal agreement with any urgency. In addition the applicant was renegotiating the off-site road infrastructure works for an adjacent site which once agreed had implications for the Section 75 agreement. This application took 350 days. The second application involved an extension to Dumbuckhill Quarry which raised a number of technical issues that took time to resolve with consultees. It took 294 days to determine. The other three major applications were determined in 90 days, 41 days and 85 days respectively.

The average number of weeks for local development applications is consistent with last year's figures. This is good as these applications often involve complex issues. Further we had a major office move in March 2015 and staff were disrupted in the lead up to the move and afterwards, as we settled into the new office environment and new ways of working. Householder applications decision levels were very similar to last year.

Approval rates were very similar to last year although the delegation rate increased to 90% with increased use of delegation powers. The number of legacy cases remains very similar to last year.

A new updated Enforcement Charter was approved in March 2016. There was an increase in the number of enforcement cases, as there is more development activity on the ground.



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

### Quality of outcomes

#### New Dumbarton Council office

Development of the new Council offices in Dumbarton town centre has commenced. On completion the offices will be occupied by 500 staff. The development will incorporate a nationally important A-listed building, known as the Old Academy building, most of which was demolished in 2005 leaving only the front and side walls. The new development will involve significant works to the listed façade including the rebuilding of a pitched roof and dormer windows to replicate those on the original building, and restoration of original stonework and carvings. Behind the façade a modern extension, carefully designed to complement the listed building, will be built to provide a modern open plan office and civic space. The development also includes landscaped amenity space and a car park. Prior to the submission of the application several meetings were held with the project design team and Historic Environment Scotland to ensure that the listed façade was incorporated into the design of the new building as sympathetically as possible. The proposed design was regarded as the best option as it fully integrates the façade into the rest of the building. The new part of the building will have a more contemporary and simple design to avoid competing or clashing with the ornate façade. This development is very important as it will be one of the main civic buildings in the Council area and will bring back to life an 'A' listed building. It is hoped that it will also make a significant contribution to the regeneration of Dumbarton town centre. The Planning and Building Standards team have been involved in this development from inception and have worked hard to ensure that high quality design features and materials are retained, especially when the project team were looking for budget savings. The new office building is expected to open in 2017.



## Queens Quay Design Framework

The 100 acres Queens Quay site in Clydebank is the most significant regeneration opportunity in West Dunbartonshire. The pre application consultation event was detailed in last years PPF, and this outlined the issues and information requirements for the forthcoming masterplan submission.



This year the Planning Permission in Principle application was submitted. The approved Design Framework sets out how the site is likely to be developed and identifies uses for different zones of the site, key road and path connections, and civic / open spaces. It divides the site into twelve individual development parcels incorporated within three broad land use zones of residential, mixed use, and health and care. As part of the assessment and testing of the principles of the Framework and Design and Access statement, a series of internal focus groups were held with other services of the Council and discussions were held with managers of West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust and Libraries and Culture who have interests in property immediately adjoining the site (a new leisure centre, Clydebank Library and the Titan Crane). Discussions were also had with representatives of the Scottish Government's Planning and Architecture Division and Architecture & Design Scotland (A&DS). Their feedback and comments were fed into the Framework and Design and Access statement in order to ensure that the proposals will provide high quality of urban design within this important regeneration site for the area.

## Area 5 Lomondgate, Dumbarton

This represents the final phase of a large residential development comprising over 300 houses and flats, of which 345 have already been built. It is part of a major mixed use development, which includes a Business Park, major roadside services and BBC Scotland studios including the River City set, straddling the A82 to the north west of Dumbarton, and incorporating the former J&B bottling plant. Details of this major development and the important role played by Planning and Building Standards has been included in previous Planning Performance Frameworks (2014 and 2015). Area 5 is a greenbelt addition to the original regeneration area, which has been identified through the West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan. Fifty-eight detached and

semi-detached private houses are proposed along with green network enhancements to the surrounding grassland and woodland, which will improve biodiversity and to improve the surrounding green network and provide an attractive setting for the housing and settlement edge for Dumbarton. The development was assessed against the principles for good design of residential development set out in the Supplementary Guidance detailed in Planning Performance Framework 2015. During the processing of the application it came to light that there were significant issues regarding ground gas conditions. Complex discussions were required between the Council's Environmental Health section and the developer, and Planning and Building Standards had a significant role to play during these to ensure that an acceptable outcome was achieved, and that the mitigation measures proposed to deal with the ground conditions were proportionate, reasonable and enforceable so that the development could ultimately be delivered.

"Planning officials, primarily the Planning Manager and the Planning Officer, worked closely with the Walker Group and the wider team and were instrumental in arranging and facilitating a considerable number of discussions and meetings with Environmental Health Officers thus affording a full opportunity to the applicants to deal with the concerns raised. The Planning Manager also extended the timescales to keep the planning application live when in other circumstances a refusal could have been forthcoming." Mike Edwards Development Director Walker Group.

### **Kilpatrick School**

Scheduled to open in 2017 and one of the Council's major capital projects, Kilpatrick School provides education for children who have additional support needs and is located within a woodland setting, in the heart of Clydebank. This is an example of a new development which had to integrate with existing buildings such as the existing hydrotherapy pool and primary school. The development site is adjacent to Auchentoshan Woods, therefore the design and location of the building were key considerations. The development was subject to detailed pre-application discussions as per the Protocol on pre-application discussions. The building has been designed to address its woodland surroundings and includes a new synthetic sports pitch, landscaping and parking. External areas will have sensory planting and soft/hard landscaping which can function as outdoor classrooms in addition to woodland and wetland exploration areas. A series of pre-application discussions took place in order to shape the development and ensure that the design and layout of the development maximized its woodland setting as well as meeting the requirements of the school.

## Lomond Galleries

This is an important and distinctive listed building occupying a prominent location on Main Street, Alexandria. The property is an “A” listed building which opened in 1906 as the offices of the Argyll Motors Work factory. Before it became a shopping outlet centre in the 1990s it was vacant for almost 25 years. However, in recent years it has struggled to attract custom and many of the units are vacant. It is a complex building which could not be easily converted to other uses. Therefore, it was important to prevent the whole building from falling into disuse again and ultimately into disrepair. The centre owner’s solution was to extend the centre to provide a new anchor store to ensure the viability of the entire centre and building. This involved the construction of an extension to the north wing of the building along with internal alterations to convert this wing and the extension into a single large unit. This development had significant policy issues, primarily as it was outwith the town centre, as well as heritage/design issues. In order to create the single unit the free standing stone façade which is attached to the northern wing of the building would be taken down and the recovered stone used to construct a new northern side elevation for the existing building. Close working with Historic Environment Scotland from an early stage was required. Although the creation of a foodstore is a departure from the retail policies contained in the adopted and proposed plans, the potential benefits from the continuing use of the building and preserving the listed building were sufficient to justify supporting the development. The foodstore proposal allows the shopping centre to have a future and increases the likelihood that it will continue to operate.

## Restoration of Islay Kerr House

A substantial Victorian sandstone property which formed part of the former Keil School estate in Dumbarton. The property is typical of the Kirktonhill Conservation Area Dumbarton in which it is sited. It has been derelict for more than 16 years and during this time had gradually fell into a state of disrepair and parts of the roof were open to the elements. Had work not commenced to restore the building, there was a risk that it would eventually be beyond repair and at risk of being lost. The restoration and



conversion of the property has recently been completed and the main building now consists of four large flats. As part of the work, the exterior of the building has been restored with a new slate roof installed and the stonework repaired and replaced where necessary. Although the building has been converted to flats, it has been restored to close to its original condition externally and no longer detracts from the surrounding



area. Prior to the submission of an application, detailed pre-application discussions were undertaken and Planning and Building Standards has worked very closely with the developer to ensure that the design and materials are comparable with the Conservation Area in order to deliver a high quality development which will contribute to the surrounding conservation area.

### **Dumbarton Walkway**

One of the key actions coming out of the Dumbarton Rock and Castle Charrette (which was undertaken in February 2015) was the creation of a new waterfront path linking the Rock and Castle with the town centre. There has always been a desire that a path be created along this route, and this is reflected in the development plan. However, this requirement has added to the complexity of bringing forward development in an area which is in multiple ownership and has several other development constraints. Rather than leaving implementation to the individual developers of development sites, the Council has adopted a co-ordinating role, and will 'front-fund' the provision of the path from its Regeneration Fund and through accessing external funding from organisations such as Sustrans. Planning and Building Standards has worked very closely with the Council's Regeneration Team to ensure that the walkway proposals tie-in within the development proposals for each site. Agreements will be put in place to recover a proportionate cost of the walkway from each developer as they develop their respective sites.



### **Use of the Green Network Guidance**

Approved in November 2015, the green network guidance is already making an impact on the way the green network is integrated into new development. The guidance is being used early in the planning process. At pre-application stage, officers routinely direct applicants to the guidance, to ensure that green network requirements are treated as fundamental elements of the design process and development viability considerations, helping to avoid obstacles further down the line. The guidance promotes the pooling of developer contributions to achieve larger, more valuable enhancements where appropriate. For example, in assessing two current proposals for housing developments in Clydebank, in close proximity to each other, successful discussions have secured two contributions totalling approximately £65,000,

which will allow for significant improvements to be made to an existing open space area in poor condition. A similar approach in Dalmuir has resulted in approximately £53,000 from two separate housing developers being pooled to provide significant enhancements to a community park.

The guidance is also making a difference to the integration of the green network within major housing developments. A proposal for housing development on Stirling Road, Bonhill has taken on board the principles of the guidance by making strong links to the existing green network around the site.

The supplementary guidance is already helping to achieve more effective internal working arrangements. The guidance supports early dialogue between developers, Planning and Building Standards and the Council's Greenspace section, to ensure that green network contributions compliment and add value to Greenspace priorities and spending plans. An effective monitoring system is also being put in place to ensure there is a transparent audit trail to monitor how financial contributions are being spent.

### **Pay day lenders and betting shops planning guidance**

This planning guidance was prepared as part of the Scottish Government's Town Centre Planning Pilot programme in order to address growing concerns within the Council and the community about the number and clustering of pay day lending and betting shops in West Dunbartonshire's town centres. The guidance follows on from an identification of an action in the Clydebank town centre charrette report for the Council to improve its evidence base on the impact of these uses on West Dunbartonshire's economic and general well-being.

To gather this evidence, two pieces of primary research were undertaken. One involved a survey of the Council's Citizen's Panel of 1500 residents, seeking views on their attitude towards betting and pay day lending shops in town centres and their impact on community well-being. This prompted 1,028 responses – a 68% return, and two focus groups were also held. The second was footfall/customer counts of a variety of town centre uses in order that the number of visitors to pay day lending and betting shops could be compared to other uses.

The guidance provides the Council with a robust evidenced-based policy position to manage future applications for pay day lending and betting shops, the numbers of which, it was felt were already having an impact on the quality of West Dunbartonshire's town centres. It identifies areas where such uses will not be permitted and others where they will be more strictly controlled. This should result in no further deterioration in the attractiveness of the town centres owing to an increased concentration of these uses.

## Quality of service and engagement

### Effective Decision Making: Queens Quay Processing agreement

The delivery of the Queens Quay site is a key priority of the Council and significant resources have been deployed to engage with the developer in a number of ways to ensure effective decision making. Although there have been significant pre application discussions it was considered that a processing agreement would help to manage the project and ensure effective and efficient decision making due the scale of the development site and the complexity of the issues. The developer was willing to sign a processing agreement and it gave certainty over key stages in the development process. By tight management of the development management process, involving collaborative working with colleagues of different disciplines within the Council, the Planning Permission in Principle application (PPP) was presented to Planning Committee by the agreed target date, and within 5 months of its submission.

*“On behalf of Clydeside Regeneration Limited I am pleased to report that the PPiP application process we went through for the Masterplan at Queens Quay was a positive and worthwhile experience. I have consulted my colleagues and they can confirm that from the outset the consultation and application process was dealt with efficiently on an open and professional basis.*

*The early involvement of the major consultees in relation to the EIA was particularly important. This assisted in the smooth progression of the reports through the application process.*

*Queens Quay is obviously a very complex and challenging project. All the main agencies did contribute in a positive manner and I am sure we will deliver a very impressive regeneration project.*

*I'd like to thank you for your contribution and coordination of the application and I can genuinely say I look forward to dealing with your department throughout the duration of this project.” Paul O'Donnell Development Director Dawn Developments*

### Exxon/City Deal

In PPF 2015 details were provided of the West Dunbartonshire Council City Deal project which involves the construction of road network accesses and development platforms on the former Bowling oil terminal site. Planning and Building Standards continues to be represented on the Exxon Project Board and gives advice and support on key processes and procedures. This year, good progress has been made to secure access rights to the site in order to allow key studies to be undertaken and we have been liaising with the key statutory consultees such as SEPA and SNH to ensure that their requirements are being met. We will continue to offer support in terms of formulating the masterplan, achieving all necessary consents for infrastructure and ensuring key stakeholders and the community are engaged.



The City Deal is a collaborative project involving the 8 Glasgow and Clyde Valley authorities. As well as progressing the West Dunbartonshire project, Planning and Building Standards has been involved in regional governance of the City Deal scheme, primarily through the Forward Planning Team Leader's involvement in the strategic assessment of all the City Deal projects against land use strategy and development capacity considerations.

This year we have also commenced discussions with Renfrewshire Council regarding the Renfrew Riverside/Clyde Waterfront City Deal project which includes a new vehicular crossing over the River Clyde. The crossing may 'land' in West Dunbartonshire, but even if it does not, it will have significant traffic and economic impacts on the area. These discussions will increase this year as the screening and scoping for the Environmental Impact Assessment is carried out, a final location for the bridge end is decided, and a planning application is submitted.

### **Increasing young people's awareness of the Antonine.**

The Antonine Wall is one of only 6 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Scotland and is a one of West Dunbartonshire's most valuable heritage assets. In conjunction with the Antonine Wall Management Plan, the Proposed Local Development Plan seeks to protect the Wall and promote understanding and enjoyment of it.

Organised and facilitated by Planning and Building Standards, a project to improve the presentation of the remaining Wall rampart in Goldenhill Park, has been taken forward with a clear focus on engaging local children at nearby Goldenhill Primary School, to increase their understanding of the important heritage on their doorstep. Pupils have



benefitted from a range of activities including getting hands-on with an archaeological dig, learning about how the Wall was built by taking part in a construction role play exercise, and using tools and clay to learn about traditional roman blacksmith techniques.

## **Stirling Road Residential Development, Bonhill**

A persistent criticism from developers is that there are significant delays between the granting of Planning Permission and Roads Construction Consent. Whilst developers are pleased if a planning application is determined promptly, it does not necessarily speed up the development process if they apply for Roads Construction Consent once Planning Permission has been granted. These delays can cause uncertainty when attempting to programme works and project manage a development. In light of these issues and following Government guidance, the applications for Roads Construction Consent and Planning Permission were submitted at the same time for a residential development of 85 houses at Stirling Road Bonhill. The Council's Roads Service was heavily involved during pre-application discussions and they were able to indicate at an early stage what their expectations would be for the planning application and Roads Construction Consent application. This provided the developer with a degree of certainty as the roads issues had been addressed at the planning stage. Due to the involvement of the Roads Service and Planning and Building Standards at a very early stage, this residential development embraced the principles of the Scottish Government Designing Streets document through the use of shared surfaces and a more pedestrian focussed layout.

## **Balloch charrette**

LIVEinBalloch was an innovative design charrette aimed at shaping the future of Balloch. The charrette process was designed and driven by a focus on maximising engagement, with a range of communication methods used, including a clear focus on social media.

At the outset of the charrette preparation process, an advisory group was established, drawn from a cross section of the local community (including representatives from the community council, local shop owners / businesses, school PTA and local environment trust). The group were involved in decisions regarding the organisation of the charrette such as dates/times, venue and publicity and its input is considered a key contributing factor to the charrette's high turnout - a feedback survey revealed 85% of respondents found the timing and location of the charrette events to be convenient.

From the outset, LIVEinBalloch placed prime importance on maximising the number and range of people engaged. The project team that managed delivery of the charrette, involved communications officers as well as planners. Guided by a Communications Strategy, social media was used extensively to have a conversation with the community. In the three weeks prior to the first charrette event, frequent Facebook posts on the 'LIVEpark' page attracted over 350 comments, whilst over the course of the charrette over 5,500 users commented, shared or liked the 'LIVEpark' page. During the charrette period there was a 47% increase in followers of the LIVEpark facebook page. #LIVEinBalloch was used extensively on Twitter to further promote the charrette. Social

media was complemented by alternative forms of publicity: local press articles were placed; all local school children went home with a flyer; a charrette blog was regularly updated; and local businesses were personally visited to encourage participation. All these measures helped to get the message about the charrette into the community, backed up by results of the feedback survey that reveal over 70% of respondents thought the charrette was well publicised.

The number of people attending the community workshops exceeded expectations; over 250 people attended the 3 evening workshops, 3 afternoon drop-ins and final exhibition session. For a small village the size of Balloch, this is considered a real success and can be contributed at least in part to the marketing and publicity of the event.

The feedback survey carried out tells us that (i) 75% of respondents found the charrette interesting and worthwhile and (ii) 78% of respondents would recommend other communities take part in a charrette. This positive feedback demonstrates that the community agrees with the partners that the charrette was a positive and valuable process and is an excellent example of two planning authorities working together with the local community and local businesses.

### **Corporate working**

The Planning & Building Standards Service continues to liaise closely with other services of the Council. Senior planning and roads staff continue to meet on a monthly basis to discuss live applications and proposals and to maintain the efficiency of liaisons between the services. A roads officer continues to work from the planning office on a regular basis. Bi-monthly joint liaison meetings with our Regeneration and Asset management colleagues continue, along with more frequent catch-ups on specific matters. These meetings have ensured that communications have not suffered as a result of Planning & Building Standards moving under a different Strategic Lead in the April 2016 restructure. That restructure has brought Planning & Building Standards under the same Strategic Lead as Environmental Health and Legal and this has strengthened relations with those sections of the Council. Planning is working closely with Regeneration on the project to deliver the Dumbarton walkway in partnership with waterfront developers.

Planning officers are members of the project team for some of the Council's capital projects. Most notably the Planning Manager is on the project board for the Exxon City Deal project. This site raises complex planning issues and close working with colleagues in roads, environmental health, regeneration, finance and legal is proving essential to allow it to progress. A similar grouping of services, also including the Council's Community Health and Care Partnership, have worked closely together to agree the Council's investment in the Queens Quay development and progress the site to the Planning Permission in Principle stage.

The ultimate purpose of this and all corporate working is to provide customers with greater certainty and a more efficient decision making process.



## Governance

### Elected Member Pre-Application Meetings – Clydebank Community Sports Hub

Procedures and a protocol for Elected Member involvement at the pre-application stage were first established during 2014-15, and were reported in PPF2014 and PPF2015 in relation to the masterplan for the redevelopment of Bowling Basin, which was the first proposal to be presented to Members as part of this procedure. The process has been developed to allow the early engagement of Members on major applications and complex developments and the procedure is offered at the pre application stage to developers. The most recent elected member pre-application meeting was for a community sports hub development in Clydebank. This was an important strategic development involving redevelopment of sports pitches and a new sports facility building which will act as a central hub for a variety of sports and clubs. However the development was set within an established residential area and issues such as traffic, noise and disturbance and general amenity issues required to be addressed.

A briefing note was produced by officers that provided details of the site and development, planning policies and main issues requiring to be addressed as part of any planning application. The Project Architect and Chair of Clydebank Community Sports Hub Board gave a short presentation of their proposals. All

Elected Members were invited to attend the presentation and were given an opportunity to highlight any additional issues which they considered the application ought to address.



This early consultation was important as it allowed Members who were Ward Members but not part of the Planning Committee to highlight issues. From the developer's perspective it highlighted matters which they needed to address in their application submission but gave them certainty and confidence in relation to less contentious issues.

The event was well attended and well received by the Elected Members and pre-application meetings are now established as a mechanism to inform Elected Members of proposals for major applications at an early stage.

*"I found the pre-application meeting with members very useful. It provided a forum to present a project and receive valuable feedback from councillors who represent the community within which the project is to be built. Having the consultation some weeks prior to application allowed the design team to address concerns raised, update the design and provide additional information as appropriate." Marc Kilkenny Project Architect*

*"I have attended two elected members briefing meetings and was also part of the Planning Committee that approved the procedures and protocol. I have found both meetings to be very informative and beneficial as it allows Councillors to be aware of development proposals at an early stage. Elected members who are not part of the Planning Committee can also attend and ask questions about development proposals and it gives all elected members an opportunity to highlight issues which the application should address." Councillor O'Neill Convenor of the Planning Committee*

### **West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan**

The West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan progressed timeously to the post-Examination stage. At that stage, Councillors declined to accept a recommendation of the Examination Report and entered correspondence with the Scottish Ministers to seek to adopt the Plan without incorporating the recommendation (relating to a greenfield housing site in Clydebank). The Scottish Ministers directed that the plan should not be adopted unless the housing site was included in the Plan. Councillors have continued to reject this and a final decision was taken by Councillors (in April 2016) not to adopt the Plan and for preparation of the next Local Development Plan to commence. Throughout the formal stages of the Local Development Plan process, officers of the Council have continuously recommended to Councillors that the disputed site be included in the Plan as it was important to ensure that the Council has an up to date development plan that met Housing Supply Targets.

From an officer's perspective, it is very disappointing that it has not been possible to bring the Local Development Plan process to a final conclusion and have an up-to-date development plan. But the final decision to not adopt the Plan has allowed work on the new plan to commence. A Development Plan Scheme and Participation Statement for the new plan will be taken to Planning Committee in August 2016. This will include a detailed project plan for preparation of the Main Issues Report which is scheduled to be taken to Planning Committee in April 2017. Pre-MIR engagement with elected members that was a feature of the last plan process will be replicated, including ward-based workshops with all members, and workshops with the Planning Committee in the lead up to the Main Issues Report being taken to Committee. Also as per the previous plan process, there will be one-to-one meeting with all Key Agencies, followed by multi-agency meetings on specific issues if these prove necessary. There will also be a call-for-sites and one-to-one meetings with developer/landowner interests.

### Charrette governance

The Council is aware that charrette events are not an end in themselves. Rather, they are the starting point of making better places. West Dunbartonshire Council has held four successful charrettes over the past two years, looking at Bowling Basin, Clydebank town centre, Dumbarton Rock and Castle and Balloch. Each charrette report has identified a set of actions to help deliver the charrette visions for these places.



In order to focus on delivery, the Council has established governance procedures. For the Clydebank and Dumbarton charrettes, separate charrette implementation groups have been established involving all of the parties with responsibility for delivering actions. These meet quarterly to review progress against the established actions and to determine expected progress for the next quarter. Also on a quarterly basis, a charrette governance board sits. This provides senior management with an overview on progress on both charrette action plans, and provides the officers with delivery responsibility with direction on how to progress higher profile/more complex actions. It is anticipated that the delivery of the Balloch charrette will be brought under this governance structure.

For the Bowling charrette, the Council meets with Scottish Canals every two months to discuss progress on the masterplan that emerged from the charrette. This has proven invaluable in progressing a complex project on a site which is rich in built and natural heritage and has numerous technical constraints e.g. flooding, contamination, access. To date 5 railway arches have been brought into commercial use. More railway arches are under restoration and planning permission in principle has been recently issued for development of the whole site.

### **Planning Enforcement Charter**

The Planning Enforcement Charter was reviewed in 2015. It is an important document as it explains how the enforcement process works in West Dunbartonshire, the current powers available to the Council and the service standards that the Council sets itself. Although the layout of the Enforcement Charter has been updated, the general focus and content of the enforcement procedures and guidance are still relevant. However given the nature of enforcement complaints received in the 2 years since the previous

Enforcement Charter, a section addressing how the Council deals with ad hoc banners and signs located remotely from business premises or activity has been added. A section has also been added on how the Council monitors the quarries and landfill sites in the Council area.

The Enforcement Charter recognises the important role that the public play in reporting potential breaches of planning control and in monitoring the conditions that are placed in certain planning consents. The enforcement process can be a complicated process for the public to understand therefore it is important that key points of enforcement are highlighted, such as any enforcement action will be proportionate to the scale of the breach, that enforcement is a discretionary power and any enforcement action must be in the public interest.

### **eDevelopment.scot**

This Council has been involved in the eDevelopment.scot project which was initiated by the Scottish Government. The project once fully implemented will provide a single point of access for users to both ePlanning and ebuildingstandards with applicants able to submit applications electronically to both services.



Within West Dunbartonshire Council ePlanning has been very successful with 70 % of planning applications being submitted electronically. It has helped to bring financial savings and more efficient business processes and provided an overall improved customer service. Applications can be received and processed more quickly and the



public can view applications and make comments from their own home without coming into the office. The issuing of electronic planning decisions is instant providing a very efficient customer service as well as providing financial savings for this Council in terms of postage costs and staff time. The ePlanning.scot element of the project was launched in January 2016 and has continued to build on the success of its ePlanning predecessor.

Since the launch of ePlanning in 2009 feedback from our customers who have used ePlanning has included questions as to why a similar service is not available for eBuilding standards. The eBuildingStandards.scot element of the project will be launched in August 2016 and we are presently transferring our internal business practices in readiness for the electronic changes.

### **Committee Structure**

The Planning Committee continues to meet on a monthly basis with the exception of July. Major and contentious applications continue to be determined by the Planning Committee. This allows a good balance between the use of delegated powers and committee applications. In 2015/16 29 applications were determined by Planning Committee of which 19 applications involved a hearing. Types of applications determined by Committee included changes of uses, new flats, wind turbine, quarry extension and football pitches.

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 17 site visits took place.

The Committee also considered 32 other reports on matters such as the Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance, the outcome of appeals, consultations from neighbouring authorities, the Glasgow and Clyde Valley SDP- Clydeplan, Review of the Planning System and the Draft Planning Delivery Advice: Housing and Infrastructure. The Assistant Manager of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Authority also gave a presentation to the Planning Committee on the Clydeplan. This increased the awareness of the main issues and allowed direct input into Clydeplan.

### **Major Application Meetings**

The fortnightly meetings between the Planning and Building Standards Manager and senior Planning Policy and Development Management staff continue to be a very valuable way to discuss the progress of major planning applications or locally significant applications. This is an opportunity to discuss detailed policy issues and development management issues at an early stage. It allows all parties to update each other on meetings which have been held or to be held in the future. It allows applications to be determined more quickly with Committee dates being programmed.

## **Financial Management**

The service budget is monitored on a monthly basis by the Manager and the Service accountant to ensure that budgeted outturn is being achieved. The budget is discussed at Team Leader and Management Team meetings. The revenue budget 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, and the Archaeology Service. The main source of external income is from application fees and related income. Planning fees for 2015/16 was £320,000. This increase in income helps to assist the Council in meeting the funding deficit.

## **Joint Working**

The Council is a partner of the West of Scotland Archaeological Service. This shared service maintains the Historic Environment Record and offers development management advice in respect of archaeological resources to 11 planning authorities, offering a good value, high quality service. Elected members attend the Joint Committee of the Service which approves its Business Plan, annual report and accounts, and officers attend quarterly steering group meetings which monitor implementation of the business plan and finances. In March 2014 the Council gave notice of its intention to leave the Service with a view to assessing whether it offered best value. In March this year it withdrew its notice, having concluded that good value was being derived from being a member of the Service. The Council therefore remains committed to this shared service and in the coming year will be working with partner local authorities to remodel the service so that it remains sustainable and offers good value and a quality service into the future.

The Council is also a partner of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership, along with the other 7 Glasgow and Clyde Valley authorities, the Forestry Commission, SNH and the Glasgow Centre for Population Health, SEPA and Scottish Enterprise. This is the regional delivery partnership of the Central Scotland Green Network(CSGN). Through the Partnership, green network strategic development areas have been identified in the Strategic Development Plan, and CSGN Trust development officer time has been allocated to the Council to identify and implement strategic green network improvement projects.

## Culture of continuous improvement

### People Management

All Staff have a Performance and Development Plan (PDP) which is undertaken on annual basis in April/May 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 corporate budget to ensure 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.

External events attended include the National Development Plan Forum, the joint SEA/HRA forum, events organised by the Improvement Service and the RTPi and included topics such as trees and Hazardous Substances. HOPS events were frequently attended including the annual conference, and the development management and development plan sub-groups.

Training and development needs will continue to be identified through Performance and Development Planning work.

### Service Development Day

The annual staff service day, held in October 2015, involved visits to the nationally recognised housing development at Polnoon, East Renfrewshire and the award winning Commonwealth Games Village in the East End of Glasgow. All Planning and Building Standards staff including technical and administration staff attended. We were also joined by colleagues from the Council's Roads Service.



At Polnoon we were shown around by the Planning Officer who dealt with the application and the Development Director of Mactaggart & Mickel. They explained the background to the innovative form of development, the feedback they have received and problems and issues they required to resolved.

In the afternoon we were shown around the Commonwealth Games village by one of the principal developers. The form, layout and design of the houses, and particularly how elements of the green network were integrated into the development were of particular interest in relation to forthcoming developments in West Dunbartonshire.

The benefits of seeing such development on site are that officers are better placed to influence and seek improvements to developments forthcoming in West Dunbartonshire and developers can be directed to see the quality of development we are seeking to achieve, for example the use of informal play equipment similar to Polnoon, the use of the design features to provide interest and activity to the elevations of houses.

*“The residential developments at Polnoon and the Commonwealth Games village provide good examples of Designing Streets and integrating green infrastructure into layouts. I found it useful to visit these sites to see first-hand how government guidance might be applied, and this experience has been of benefit in discussions with developers over a number of residential sites in West Dunbartonshire.” Karen McChesney Lead Planner Development Management*

### **New ways of working – Aurora House**

Following an office move in March 2015, the Planning & Building Standards team have continued to settle in to its new office environment in Aurora House, Clydebank. This offers a hot-desking environment, which has led to a significant saving on office space required to accommodate the team. A flexible working protocol was introduced by the Service during 2015/16 to encourage staff to work remotely, and this has been taken up by a number of staff. The introduction of ‘thin client’ has allowed staff easier access to their desktop and IT systems when working remotely. The hot desking environment has also allowed staff from related sections to work alongside the Planning & Building Standards team. An example of this is a Roads Engineer now sits within Planning & Building Standards at least one day a week, thus improving communications between the teams. The Service is now also sharing office space with the Environmental Health and Community Development, enhancing relationships with these teams.

Associated with the move has been a project to digitise historic planning application and building warrant files. Planning applications from 2006 onwards were already stored in electronic format, but files prior to that were still in paper format. The project involved the thinning and digitising of planning application records back to 1990. Approximately 7500 applications are being digitised containing over 200,000 A3/A4 images and approximately 15,000 large format plans. The benefits of the project are a reduction in storage space and the relevant planning application files being more accessible to staff and the public.

### **Customer Survey**

A customer satisfaction survey introduced in February 2015 continues to be emailed with all decisions and involves 5 short questions which ask the customer to rate the service they received from Planning in general terms and then be more specific in terms of meeting timescales, responding promptly to problems and communicating clearly and

effectively. 100% of respondents rated the service they received as excellent or very good. 78% believed that the staff was excellent in terms of professionalism and being helpful.

Use of the website was very popular with 90% of respondents visiting the website. Suggestions received included improving the online forms especially for first-time applicants and the co-ordination of application submission and fee payment. The Planning and Building Standards website is identified as a service improvement for 2016-17 and the suggestions from the survey will be incorporated within the review. We continue to receive feedback from developers of our major developments and some has been included in this document.

### **Our Benchmarking Partners**

The West of Scotland Planning Benchmarking Group is a good example of Councils working collaboratively in a cost effective way. The group (West Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire North Ayrshire and Inverclyde Councils) continues to meet every 3-4 months with a high attendance levels. It met four times between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016 to share good practice and benchmark on specific planning issues. The meetings are minuted and chaired by the host council. Topics discussed this year included the Planning Performance Framework, City Deal, High Hedges procedures, legal agreements and short term holiday lets in residential properties. Appendix 2 includes the full list of topics discussed at our meetings in 2015/16. When the Benchmarking Group was held in West Dunbartonshire a short presentation was given by the Technical Support Co-ordinator on how the Council is intending to take forward its Geographic Information System (GIS) in the future. Also, there was a walk about our new office, which embraces a flexible working environment. The email group continues to be used by all levels to exchange information and to get views on specific planning issues.

The Council also participates in the national (Solace) benchmarking group (including Glasgow City, Edinburgh, Dundee City, Aberdeen, Falkirk, North Lanarkshire and East and West Dunbartonshire Councils) which is held twice a year and is primarily used to discuss the Planning Performance Framework submissions together with general planning and enforcement issues.

## Part 3: Supporting evidence

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

### Quality of outcome

Protocol on pre application advice (Protocol 1) [http://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)

Protocol on Liaison meetings (Protocol 2) [http://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)

Payday lenders and betting shops [www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/public-consultations/pay-day-lenders-and-betting-shops-planning-guidance/](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/public-consultations/pay-day-lenders-and-betting-shops-planning-guidance/)

Green Network Guidance [www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4309581/our-green-network-supplementary-guidance.pdf](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4309581/our-green-network-supplementary-guidance.pdf)

### Quality of service and engagement

Protocol on Processing Agreement (Protocol 4) [http://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)

West of Scotland Archaeology Service [www.wosas.net/](http://www.wosas.net/)  
Balloch Charrette [www.ourlivepark.com/liveinballoch/](http://www.ourlivepark.com/liveinballoch/)

### Governance

Elected members pre application procedures (Protocol 3) [http://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)

West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan [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/)

Planning Enforcement Charter [www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/planning-building-standards/planning-decision-notice-appeals-and-enforcement/planning-enforcement/](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/planning-building-standards/planning-decision-notice-appeals-and-enforcement/planning-enforcement/)

Committee reports [www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/councillors-and-committees/minutes-agendas-and-reports/](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/councillors-and-committees/minutes-agendas-and-reports/)

### Culture of continuous improvement

Appendix 2 Topics discussed at Benchmarking' Group 2015/16



## Part 4: Service Improvement 2016-17

In the coming year we will:

- Establish a Design Forum.
- Identify and implement training requirements of Community Councils.
- Hold an annual Service Development Day.
- Implement new Committee report format.
- Hold an annual Planning and Building Standards Forum.
- Benchmark with other authorities on processes, best practice and cost.
- Review the Environmental Health Protocol.
- Review our systems performance and website.
- Promote and implement a Protocol on Legal Agreements.
- Review enforcement service.
- Consult and implement Conservation Area Appraisal for Kirktonhill Conservation Area and consider other Appraisals for Conservation Areas.
- Review and undertake individual PDPs and training implementation programme.
- Publish a Planning and Building Standards newsletter.
- Establish system for recording and monitoring developer contributions.



## Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2016-17

Committed improvements and actions	Completed
<b>Develop Spatial Plans from the Clydebank and Dumbarton Charrettes and implement action plans</b> Governance arrangements have been set up for the Charrettes and the actions plans are being implemented –one example is the Dumbarton Walkway.	Yes
<b>Prepare supplementary guidance on renewable energy and pay day lending and betting shops</b> Both have been approved by Committee and is issued for consultation.	Yes
<b>Review of Environmental Health Protocol</b> This was commenced but was not completed due to other work commitments and Environmental Health restructuring.	Partial
<b>Prepare a Flexible Working Protoco</b> This has been implemented with a number of staff now working from home and more flexible.	Yes
<b>Promote the Protocols on Processing Agreements and Elected Members involvement in the pre application stage</b> Processing agreements actively promoted and one processing agreement signed in the period. One developer used the elected member's pre application meeting.	Yes
<b>Promote and implement a Protocol on Legal Agreements</b> We are working with Legal Services to make the legal agreement process more straightforward and quicker.	Partial
<b>Formally monitor landfill and quarry sites and present report to Planning Committee</b> A process has been established whereby all landfill and quarry sites are monitored annually and if required more frequent. A report is presented to the August Planning Committee on the outcome of the monitoring.	Yes

Committed improvements and actions	Completed
<b>Review our pre application service</b> This has taken place and Certificates of Lawful Use and Development are being used more frequently to determine if planning permission is required or not. We had drafted a report regarding charging for pre application advice however this has not progressed beyond the Legal stage.	Yes
<b>Review Committee report format</b> A review and benchmarking with other authorities regarding the Committee report format has taken place. The testing of the new layout has been delayed due to other workload commitments.	Partial
<b>Scan and archive planning records</b> A significant thinning of paper files has taken place in preparation of scanning.	Yes
<b>Review our working practices to further improve performance levels</b> This has taken place in the context of the new office environment and the new ePlanning portal.	Yes
<b>Review our systems performance</b> This has taken place but a further more full review is required once eBuilding Standards is implemented.	Yes!
<b>Benchmark with other authorities on processes, best practice and cost</b> The Benchmarking Group continues to meet every 3-4 months to share best practice and to benchmark on specific planning issues.	Yes
<b>Hold an annual Planning and Building Standards Forum</b> This was not achieved as it was to be held as a joint event with Building Standards once eBuildingStandards went live and this was not achieved in 2015/16 due to supplier and system issues.	No
<b>Hold an annual Service Development Day</b> This took place in October 2015. The visit to Polnoon and the Commonwealth Games village is detailed within the report.	Yes
<b>Progress training plan for elected members with Improvement Service</b> This has not been progressed with the Improvement Service due to other commitments but elected members have attended training events and received direct training from officers.	Partial
<b>Review and undertake individual PDPs and prepare training implementation programme</b> This has been achieved with staff attending training events as per their PDP needs.	Yes

## Part 5: Official Statistics

Category	Total number of decisions 2015-2016	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2015-2016	2014-2015
Major developments	5	24.6	19.8
Local developments (non-householder)	93	10.7	10.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months</li> <li>Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	54.8% 45.2%	6.9 15.4	6.0 15.1
Householder developments	115	7.3	6.8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months</li> <li>Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	80.9% 19.1%	6.2 11.9	6.3 11.7
Housing developments			
Major	1	50.0	23.5
Local housing developments	17	13.9	13.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months</li> <li>Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	41.2% 58.8%	6.8 18.9	5.9 15.1
Business and industry			
Major	0	n/a	11.7
Local business and industry	25	10.2	9.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months</li> <li>Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	60% 40%	6.9 15.2	7.4 13.4
EIA developments	0	n/a	n/a
Other consents*	57	7.5	9.6
Planning/legal agreements**			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major average time</li> <li>Local average time</li> </ul>	1 n/a	50 n/a	32.8 n/a
Local Reviews	1	9.2	12.0

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

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2015-2016		2014-2015	
		No	%	No	%
Local Reviews	1	1	( 100%)	0/1	(0%)
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	3	1	(33.3%)	1/2	(50%)

## C: Enforcement activity

	2015-2016	2014-2015
Cases taken up	68	38
Breaches identified	45	38
Cases resolved	27	24
Notices served	4	2
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

## D: Context

The average timescale for major development of 24.6 weeks was higher than last year but below the Scottish average of 38.8 weeks. As explained in Part 1 of the report this is due to 2 legacy applications taking 350 and 294 days respectively. These were important applications economically for the local area and includes an extension to an existing quarry and a housing development by a local company on a brownfield site. This housing development application was subject to a legal agreement and although the application was presented to the Planning Committee within 4 months of submission the legal agreement took 34 weeks to conclude due to the applicant failing to progress the legal agreement and implications for an adjacent site.

The average timescales for local development and householder development are very similar to last years average timescales and are below the national average for local developments of 12.3 weeks and householder developments of 7.5 weeks.

Appeals and Local Reviews continue to remain low compared to number of applications determined. There was one local review held and timescales improved by just less than 3 weeks for decision.

Enforcement activity showed an increase from last year in terms of cases taken up and breaches identified with the number of Enforcement Notices increasing to 4.

## Part 6: Workforce and Financial Information

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

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	4	2.5		
	Vacant				
<b>Technician</b>	No. Posts	0.5	1		
	Vacant				
<b>Office Support/Clerical</b>	No. Posts	2.5	0.5		
	Vacant	1			
<b>TOTAL</b>		9	5		0.5

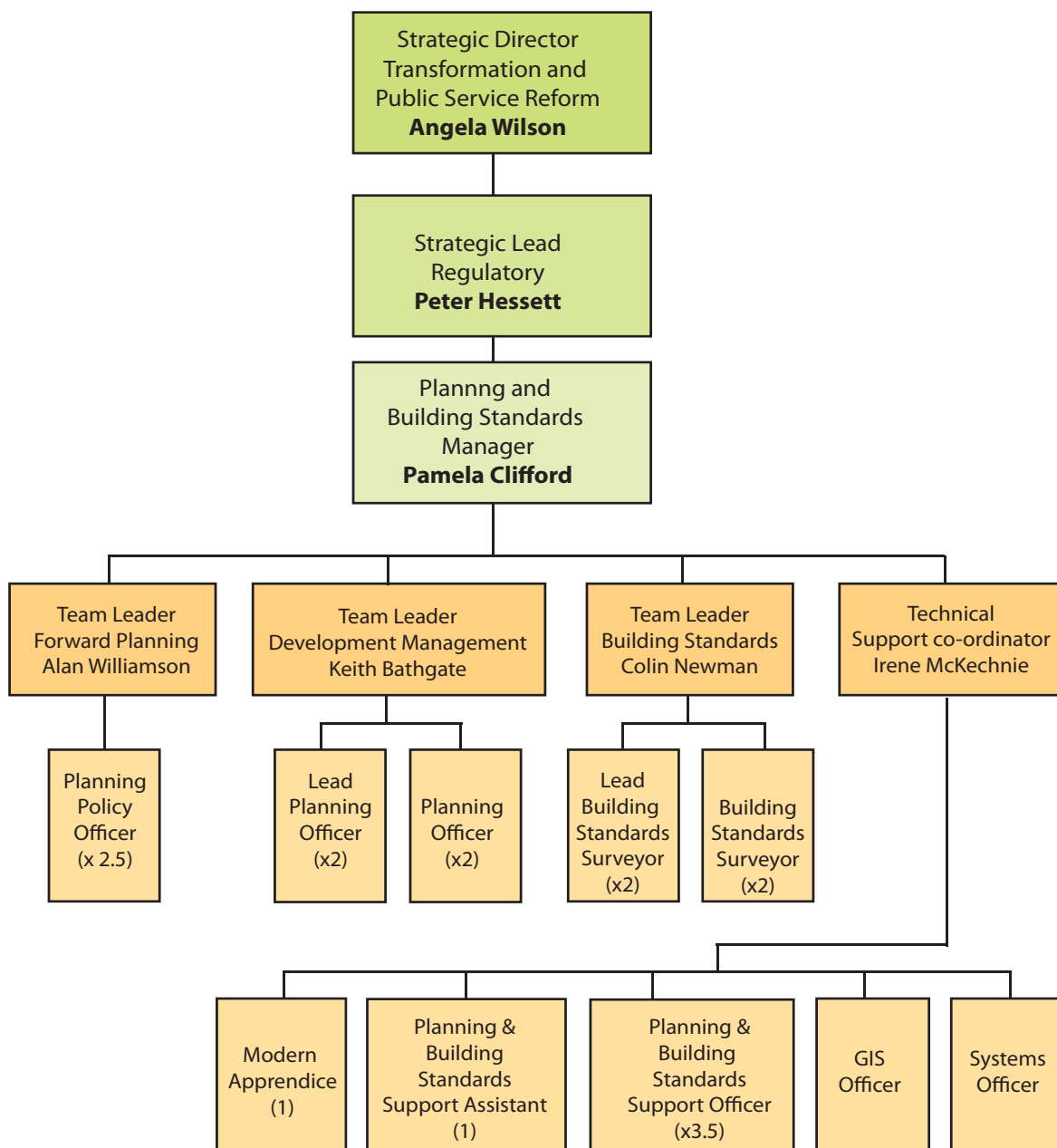
Staffing Profile	Number
Under 30	2.5
30-39	4
40-49	6
50 and over	3

Committee & site visits	Number per year
Full Council committees	4
Planning Committees	11
Area Committees (where relevant)	0
Committee site visits	17
LRB	2
LRB site visits	1

	Total Budget	Costs		Income
		Direct	Indirect	
<b>Development management</b>	£229,042	£230,010		£320,000
<b>Development planning</b>	£189,543	£179,156		
<b>Enforcement</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	
<b>Other</b>		£211,000	£260,578	
<b>TOTAL</b>	917,740	409,166	260,578	£320,000

## Appendix 1

### Planning and Building Standards Service Structure





## Appendix 2

### WEST OF SCOTLAND PLANNING BENCHMARKING GROUP 2015-2016

The Benchmarking Group consists of participants from the following Councils: East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire & West Dunbartonshire. The Group normally meets every 3 – 4 months and met four times between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016 as follows: 7th April 2015 (at Renfrewshire); 28th July 2015 (at West Dunbartonshire); 6th October 2015 (at East Dunbartonshire) and 20th January 2016 (at Inverclyde). The meetings are minuted, with the host council, chairperson and minute-secretary rotating around the councils.

A wide range of topics were discussed at these meetings, including:-

1. Planning Performance Framework
2. City Deal
3. High Hedges Procedures
4. Planning Fees and Resources
5. Costing the Planning Service
6. Workload and Staffing Levels
7. Committee Report Structures
8. Standard Conditions
9. Legal Agreements
10. ePlanning/eDevelopment including the use of tablets
11. Agile Working
12. Aligning Planning and Roads Construction Consents
13. Geographical Information Systems
14. The Application of Conditions to Planning Applications by Councils
15. Joint Training
16. Part Approval & Part Refusals
17. Solar Farms
18. Pay-day Loan/Betting Offices
19. Short-Term Holiday Lets in Residential Properties
20. Changing of Descriptions in Planning Applications
21. Enforcement Charters and Issues
22. Flood Risk and Drainage Impact Assessments

The meetings allow for the sharing of experiences and of best practice. This does not necessarily lead to standardisation of practice, but allows for legislative interpretation and practice of practical issues to be shared.

Of particular note this year has been our discussions on:

- **The Planning Performance Framework** and the feedback reports which the Council's received from the Scottish Government. This allowed the sharing of experiences and practices and learning from best practice elsewhere.
- **Planning resourcing** was discussed, including experiences of making savings and raising income. The Local Government financial settlement implications were raised and charging for pre-application enquiries was also explored. The experience and results from the Costing the Planning Service exercise were discussed.
- **Staffing levels** within the authorities were explored, allowing each Council to compare staffing and performance statistics in the light of discussions on the profile and practices of each authority.
- **Geographical Information Systems** were discussed – Renfrewshire Council gave a presentation on the QGIS system that they use.
- **Agile working** experiences were shared, including the use of shared desks and mobile technology such as tablets. This allows the participants to learn from what works well (or not well) in the other authorities and to design service improvements.

# Appendix 3 – Performance Markers

## DRIVING IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

Performance Marker	Evidence
1 Decision making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types	The average timescale for major development is 24.6 weeks (Scottish average of 38.8 weeks); local development is 10.7 weeks (Scottish average of 12.3 weeks) and householder development is 7.3 weeks (Scottish average of 7.5 weeks). Source <a href="http://gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Planning/Publications/planapps2016annual">http://gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Planning/Publications/planapps2016annual</a>
2 Project management: offer of processing agreements (or other agreed project plan) made to prospective applicants in advance of all major applications and availability publicised on planning authority website	Protocol on Processing Agreement <a href="http://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</a> Processing agreements offered to all applicants of major development and important local development One processing agreement signed this year. Case Study on Queens Quay and feedback from the developer on the process.
3 Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications: - availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications - clear and proportionate requests for supporting information	Protocol on Pre application advice <a href="http://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</a> Case studies New Dumbarton Council offices, Kilpatrick School, Islay Kerr House, Green Network Guidance, Area 5 Lomondgate, Lomond Galleries.
4 Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications within 6 months of 'resolving to grant' * * <i>this will require production of supporting guidance, following wider stakeholder input</i>	One legal agreement last year which took 50 weeks to conclude due to the applicant failing to progress the legal agreement. See Part 1 Contextual Statement
5 Enforcement charter updated / re-published	Case Study - Updated Enforcement Charter taking into account the nature of enforcement complaints over 2 years
6 Continuous improvement: - show progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators - progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report	Development Plan –Local Development Plan case study Most development land statistics broadly stable. Increase in housing approvals and completions. Decision making timescales continue to below the Scottish average. Enforcement Charter up to date-case study Good progress made on last years service commitments Good feedback from developers and customer survey

## PROMOTING THE PLAN-LED SYSTEM

Performance Marker	Evidence
7 LDP (or LP) less than 5 years since adoption	Six years since Local Plan adoption. 'Local Development Plan' case study for further information.
8 Development plan scheme demonstrates next LDP: - on course for adoption within 5-year cycle - project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale	Most recent Development Plan Scheme ( <a href="https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4309983/development-plan-scheme-participation-statement-2015.pdf">https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4309983/development-plan-scheme-participation-statement-2015.pdf</a> ) relates to current Proposed Plan that will not be adopted (see 'Local Development Plan' case study). First Development Plan Scheme for next Local Development Plan being taken to August 2016 Planning Committee.
9 Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	N/A. No pre-MIR engagement in past year. Elected members were involved early in the preparation of current proposed Local Development Plan, and this will be replicated for preparation of next plan.
10 Cross-sector stakeholders, including industry, agencies and Scottish Government, engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	N/A. No pre-MIR engagement in past year. There was wide ranging stakeholder engagement at an early stage in the preparation of current proposed Local Development Plan, and this will be replicated for preparation of next plan.
11 Production of regular and proportionate policy advice, for example through supplementary guidance, on information required to support applications	Guidance has recently been prepared on: Pay day lenders and betting shops – see case study and <a href="https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4310659/pay-day-lenders-and-betting-shops-planning-guidance-consultation.pdf">https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4310659/pay-day-lenders-and-betting-shops-planning-guidance-consultation.pdf</a> Green network – see 'Green Network' case study and <a href="https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4309581/our-green-network-supplementary-guidance.pdf">https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4309581/our-green-network-supplementary-guidance.pdf</a> Residential development - <a href="https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4309580/residential-development-supplementary-guidance.pdf">https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4309580/residential-development-supplementary-guidance.pdf</a> Commuted payments for parking - <a href="https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4308013/commuted-payments-for-parking.pdf">https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4308013/commuted-payments-for-parking.pdf</a> Renewable energy - <a href="https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4310794/draft-supplementary-guidance-renewable-energy.pdf">https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4310794/draft-supplementary-guidance-renewable-energy.pdf</a>

## SIMPLIFYING AND STREAMLINING

Performance Marker	Evidence
12 Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (e.g. protocols; joined-up services; single contact; joint pre-application advice)	<p>Case Study – Protocols on pre application advice, processing agreements and elected member involvement in pre application discussions <a href="http://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</a></p> <p>Case studies – eDevelopment.scotland, Major Application meetings, corporate working, Roads Liaison meetings, Regeneration Liaison meetings, West of Scotland Archaeology Service, Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership and Bonhill /Stirling Road realigning planning permission and RCC.</p>
13 Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Case study evidence – West of Scotland Benchmarking Group and Solace Benchmarking Group

## DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT

Performance Marker	Evidence
14 Stalled sites/legacy cases: conclusion/withdrawal of planning applications more than one year old	Progress being made to clear legacy cases. All 9 applicants have been contacted with 2 cases cleared during the year.
15 Developer contributions: clear expectations - set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan,) and - in pre-application discussions	Main contributions expected are towards the green network. See case study and <a href="https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4309581/our-green-network-supplementary-guidance.pdf">https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4309581/our-green-network-supplementary-guidance.pdf</a>

