

West Dunbartonshire Council

Planning and Performance Framework

Planning and Building Standards Service



July 2015

Foreword

Welcome to the fourth 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 2014-15. It also outlines our proposed service improvements for 2015-16.

The feedback we received from the Scottish Government was once again positive and has helped shape the Planning Performance Framework for 2014-15:

"Evidence of a range of activities that contribute to an Open for Business approach. Collaborative working through regular internal meetings and clearly publicised protocols and this is supported by positive customer experience."

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. Previously we have highlighted the challenges and opportunities which have faced the Council area. In the past year and in this forthcoming year the Council has been making steady progress in addressing the challenges and exploiting the opportunities within the area. The Council's ambitious Capital Programme is well underway and Planning and Building Standards are a key service in the delivery of its outcomes. The private sector has also shown renewed interest in the local area with the highest number of housing completions since 2006 and new accommodation being provided for businesses.

Significant progress has been made to unlock the Queens Quay site in Clydebank with the Council investing in partnership with the landowners enabling the regeneration of this important riverside site. Another significant regeneration opportunity - the Exxon site in Bowling - is a Glasgow and the Clyde Valley City Deal project. Both projects will depend on a large planning and building standards input to allow development to progress.

As a result of the improved economic conditions planning application fee level exceeded projected budget level by more than £80,000 in 2014/15. The Council still faces substantial financial challenges in the coming years with a funding gap of £16 m for 2016-17. As a result all services have been addressing this gap in the past year through management adjustments, bringing in additional income and through savings. Again, it is expected in the coming year the pressure to address the funding gap will continue.

The Local Development Plan is progressing to adoption.



Our partnership working continues to be recognized with the charrette at Bowling Basin undertaken with Scottish Canals winning an award at the annual Scottish Planning Awards in the category of community involvement.

In March 2015 the service moved into new modern offices on the Clydebank waterfront next to the West College Scotland. Staff have adapted well to new ways of working and greater interaction between team members and other teams.

Pamela Clifford

Planning and Building Standards Manager

July 2015

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Part 1: National Headline Indicators (NHIs)

Key Outcomes	2014-2015	2013-2014
Development Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> age of local/strategic development plan(s) (years and months) at end of reporting period Requirement: less than 5 years Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? (Y/N) Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? (Y-earlier/Y-later/N) Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year? (Y/N) 	5 years 0 months No Yes – later Yes	4 years N/A N/A N/A
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established housing land supply 5-year effective housing land supply 5-year housing supply target 5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place) Housing approvals Housing completions over the last 5 years Marketable employment land supply Employment land take-up during reporting year 	5,873 units 1,747units 1,600 units 5.4 years 193 units 1,164units 35.05ha 0.83ha	N/A N/A N/A N/A 382 units 35.66ha 0.87ha
Development Management Project Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice Number of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan Percentage planned timescales met 	43% 1 85%	43% 0 N/A
Decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application approval rate Delegation rate 	96% 86%	97.6% 81.9%
Decision-making timescales Average number of weeks to decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major developments Local developments (non-householder) Householder developments 	19.8 10.5 6.8	32.4 15.2 7.5
Legacy Cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number cleared during reporting period Number remaining 	1 7	
Enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time since enforcement charter published/reviewed (full years). Requirement: review every 2 years Number of breaches identified / resolved 	15 months 38/24	1 34/23

Contextual Statement

The proposed Local Development Plan was submitted to the Scottish Ministers for Examination in June 2014. The 2013 Development Plan Scheme in place at that time had indicated it would be submitted in March 2014. The reason for the slippage was a modification made to the Proposed Plan by elected members following consultation on an earlier version of the Proposed Plan. Adoption of the new Local Development Plan has not been achieved within 5 years of the adoption of the previous local plan owing to elected members declining an Examination Report recommendation, and the subsequent processes related to that decision.

Housing figures are based on the draft 2015 Housing Land Audit (dated 31/3/2015) prior to consultation with Homes for Scotland and RSLs. Housing approvals include all housing approvals on sites of 4 or more units, and includes changes of house types, permissions in principle and in detail. Owing to a change in indicators, direct comparison with housing figures in 2014 PPF is not appropriate. Employment land figures are based on the 2015 industrial and business land monitoring (based 31/3/2015).

43% of all applications were subject to pre application advice which is a very similar percentage as last year. All 7 major applications were subject to pre application advice which is consistent with the developer's protocol. One processing agreement was concluded in this period although there are a number of processing agreements in the process of being concluded in 2015-16. The agreed timescale for the processing agreement concluded slightly slipped as the application went to a Committee a month later than agreed and the legal agreement took slightly longer to conclude.

The approval rate for applications fell slightly however the delegation rate increased again from 82% in 2013/14 to 86% this year. This has been due to the impact of the amended scheme of delegation and that some Council applications did not require to be determined by Committee.

There were 7 major applications in this period and they were determined on average of 5 months which is very good given that they were often requiring complex issues to be addressed. They included a new care home for Dumbarton, new leisure centre, large residential developments and new schools.

The local development applications saw a decrease in average weeks to determination by 5 weeks. This again is very good as these types of applications often require difficult issues to be resolved such as roads matters, design adjustments, land contamination issues. The average numbers of weeks for householder applications decrease from 7.5 weeks to 6.8 weeks.

The Enforcement Charter was published in December 2013 and will be reviewed in late 2015. The number of enforcement cases remains very similar to previous years.

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

Open for business

Pre-Application Consultee Events

These events were held for two of our key regenerations sites - Queens Quay in Clydebank and the Exxon site in Bowling - and a site for a new football stadium for Dumbarton Football Club. The purpose was to discuss the issues and information requirements for forthcoming masterplan submissions. Several “issue specific” sessions were held over the day and consultees were asked to come prepared to raise any potential issues and/or information requirements. Consultees such as Environmental Health, SEPA, SNH, SPT and the Roads Service were involved. Sessions were tightly managed by the Lead Planning Officer to ensure that they did not overrun and that requests for information were clear and proportionate and the applicant received all the necessary information to allow them to progress the application.

“SNH are keen to engage with developers and local authorities in an open, positive way from the earliest stages in the planning process. We have found the Queens Quay pre-application event very useful as it gave us the chance to highlight likely natural heritage issues, as well as mitigation and enhancement opportunities, from the outset. We hope that this ultimately assists developers in making key decisions on how to take their proposal forward.” John Shelton Operations Officer SNH

“GVA James Barr are instructed as planning advisors on the Queens Quay, Clydebank Masterplan project. The site extends to 24ha and there are a number of consultants working on varying disciplines to bring this scheme together. Therefore, it was key that from the outset the project team and West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) worked collaboratively to clarify expectations from all involved. A key part in this was the Stakeholder Meeting which invited all key stakeholders (statutory and non-statutory) to provide initial feedback on the Masterplan and the key issues. The attendee list was well prepared by WDC and the sessions were well attended. The time given to each session was adequate and allowed the key issues to be discussed and expectations made clear. The event worked well and the feedback from our client was that they found it very useful.” Tracy Hughes, Principal Planner, Planning, Development and Regeneration, GVA James Barr

Exxon/City Deal

This 63 hectare site formerly accommodating the Bowling oil terminal is one of 20 projects identified as part of the Clyde Valley Infrastructure Fund which is a key component of the Glasgow and Clyde Valley “City Deal”. The site is to benefit from £27.89m City Deal funding. It involves the construction of road network accesses at the eastern and western extents of the site linked by a distributor road through the centre of the site and the creation of development platforms. The project will deliver substantial economic benefits to West Dunbartonshire. This is a land-use project with Planning a key member of the Project Team and Board. Extensive support and advice has been

given in terms of scoping the Environmental Impact Assessment, helping to formulate the masterplan, ensuring timescales are realistic and that key stakeholders and the community are engaged.

Former Kippen Dairy site Main Street Alexandria

The site is within the heart of Alexandria town centre and it has been vacant for a number of years. There have been previous proposals for this important site which did not come to application stage. The development of 11 terraced houses and 44 flats for social rent, which is now on-site, was subject to detailed pre application discussions. A new civic space will be formed at the corner of Main Street and Bank Street which will include landscaping and seating. As the site is within the town centre and Christie Park is located on the opposite side of Main Street it was considered reasonable to require a developer contribution towards improvement of the park in lieu of onsite provision. Following negotiations the housing association agreed to pay a commuted sum which would enhance the large quality open space nearby which also can be used by the wider community. By engaging in pre application discussions and being clear and proportionate in terms of developer requirements a high quality development has been delivered which will assist in the regeneration of Alexandria town centre.

Stirling Road Bonhill

The site has been identified in the proposed local plan as suitable for residential development, with an indicative capacity of 113 units. The Protocols on Pre Application Advice and Processing Agreements set out the framework for the preferred progression of development proposals within West Dunbartonshire. The developer is making use of the Council's pre-application service and has agreed to enter into a processing agreement. The discussions to date and the use of a processing agreement have provided the developer with clarity on timescales, processes and information requirements. The developer has also agreed to trial the aligning of the planning and Roads Construction Consent application processes. The pre-application discussions have resulted in significant revisions to the proposals to better reflect the 'Designing Streets' guidance.

Commuted Payments for Parking Planning Guidance

Occasionally planning applications for developments within town centres are received, which are in the main acceptable, but because of the surrounding high density pattern of development are not able to meet parking standards. Developments within town centres are generally within close proximity to sustainable transport modes and to areas of public parking. The planning guidance establishes a commuted sum which may be requested in lieu of full parking provision and outlines which types of parking/transport-related measures the payments will support. The guidance therefore provides clarity for developers where they are unable to provide parking in town centre locations.

High quality development on the ground

Lomondgate Development Dumbarton

A petrol filling station was a key component of the roadside services masterplan at Lomondgate and is now trading. There had been several proposals for a petrol filling station which had not progressed for a number of reasons. However, the regular liaison meetings between the Council and the developer continued to focus on this key component and when the most recent proposals came forward it allowed all parties to react quickly. The design and siting of the petrol filling station has taken advantage of its unique location on the main gateway to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. The single storey building uses a large element of timber and the filling station has been specifically designed for this site with a concave roof canopy.



The petrol filling station and associated shop and catering outlets provide additional attractive and convenient facilities for those travelling along the busy A82 and help to strengthen the roadside services offer at this location. The roadside services have been further strengthened by a new diner, which is also designed to take advantage of this unique location. Over 277 houses have been built on the residential part of Lomondgate and the location now provides 300 more jobs than the J&B plant which previously occupied the site.



Beardmore Place Clydebank

This development of 54 three storey flats sits within an existing residential area and adjacent to the Forth and Clyde Canal. The layout and design of the development has been informed by the Councils Supplementary Guidance on Residential Developments. It was desirable to provide an attractive frontage onto adjacent streets and onto the canal. Two linear blocks are



positioned along Beardmore Street in a traditional tenement-style arrangement with entrance doors opening onto the street. These follow the building line established by the existing properties to the west which strengthened the streetscape along Beardmore Place. The two smaller blocks at the north of the site were designed to have principal frontages overlooking the canal. The design of the flats is contemporary with a mix of pitched and feature monopitch elements, which echo the design of the adjacent houses thus providing visual continuity. The Councils pre application service was used and the development was subject to a processing agreement which provided a degree of certainty to the applicant regarding timescales, information requirements and the provision of a financial contribution towards upgrading the adjacent community park.

Kilpatrick Hills Statement of Importance

The Kilpatrick Hills Statement of Importance was prepared to support the designation of the Local Landscape Area within the emerging Local Development Plan. The Kilpatrick Hills Local Landscape Area covers an extensive upland area, which forms a high quality and scenic backdrop to West Dunbartonshire's urban area and helps frame the gateway to the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. The designation of the Local Landscape Area is intended to give greater protection to the character and qualities of the Hills and will ensure their landscape value is given appropriate recognition in response to any development proposals. The Statement of Importance describes what is special about the Kilpatrick Hills and explains why they should be protected. The special qualities of the Hills identified in the Statement include the unique diversity of views on offer and the strong sense of remoteness and wildness that can be experienced. The Statement gives weight to the Local Landscape designation, by providing the justification for the designation and provides a framework for managing change within the Hills. The Statement was prepared with active involvement from Scottish Natural Heritage and in full consultation with neighbouring East Dunbartonshire and Stirling Councils. The Statement of Importance was subject to full public consultation, alongside the Proposed Local Development Plan, ensuring interested organisations, communities and individuals had the opportunity to help shape the final document.

Bowling Basin

Following on from the Bowling Basin charrette run jointly by the Council and Scottish Canals, bi-monthly liaison meetings with Scottish Canals continue to oversee proposals for the redevelopment of the Bowling Basin area.

The first phase of the redevelopment, the refurbishment of the swing bridge arches to the south of the canal, has been completed with a cycle sale and hire business occupying 2 of the 5 arches. An arts charity has made use of another on a temporary basis, and negotiations are advanced for the occupation of the remaining arches. Planning permission was recently granted for the refurbishment of arches to the north of the canal and work is expected to take place in late 2015. Together, these refurbishment projects will enable the introduction of a mix of businesses and activities, increasing footfall and establishing Bowling Basin as an important tourist destination within West Dunbartonshire.



Monitoring of Quarries and Landfill Sites

Monitoring of the 2 quarries and 2 landfill sites within this Council area takes place formally on an annual basis usually during the month of May unless specific issues require more frequent visits. An annual report is presented to the Planning Committee in August following the formal monitoring of the sites. Work has been carried out by external consultants on the restoration bonds for Auchencarroch landfill site and Dumbuckhill Quarry site which reviews the implementation of restoration proposals and provides updated cost breakdowns of the restoration plans which determine the levels of the bonds. Both site operators received a copy of the report and we have been working with the site operators to secure adequate bonds and revised restoration schemes for each of the sites. Furthermore an application for the reworking of the landfill site at Rigangower has allowed a bond to be secured on a site which previously had no bond to secure the full restoration of the site.

Pay Day Lending and Betting Offices

As part of the Scottish Government town centre planning pilot programme the Council is developing supplementary guidance on pay day lending and betting shops. Working closely with the Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council, the project will develop a robust evidence base as to the impact that these uses have, particularly when clustered, on the vibrancy of town centres and the impact on community well-being. The supplementary guidance is scheduled to be prepared by Autumn 2015.

Certainty

“Our Green Network” Supplementary Guidance

This guidance complements the green network strategy of the Local Development Plan (chapter 8) and seeks to ensure new development enhances and expands the green network by improving existing open space assets and the connections between them, and creating new multifunctional green and open spaces. The document has developed out of a series of area-based workshops with officers from the Council’s Greenspace, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership and elected members. It comprises three parts: part one comprises a mapping exercise which identifies the most important assets and key enhancement opportunities, part two sets out the level of open space provision for new developments in order to enhance and expand the green network, and part three provides design guidance for green infrastructure. The document is presently out for consultation and it is intended that it will be adopted as part of the Local Development Plan and used to assess planning applications and direct resources towards the key enhancement opportunity sites. It will make clearer to developers the expected level of contribution to the green network, where/how it will be spent, and design expectations in respect of the green network.



Elected Members Pre-application meeting – Bowling Basin Masterplan

The charrette process had been used to prepare a masterplan for the redevelopment of Bowling Basin. Following the agreement by the Council of the procedures and protocol for Elected Member involvement at the pre-application stage, Scottish Canals requested the opportunity to advise Elected Members of their forthcoming major application. A briefing note was produced by officers which provided details of the site and development, planning policies and main issues requiring to be addressed as part of any planning application. Scottish Canals 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 consider the application ought to address.

The event was well attended and well received by the Elected Members attending.

“In terms of the experience of presenting to the Council members we found it a very valuable exercise. It was great to meet the members and get time to present to them and explain the rationale behind our proposals and our engagement work in Bowling to date. We had a very useful discussion at the meeting and we were also able to give detailed answers to the Members. The Committee room and the setting up provided by West Dunbartonshire Council staff was particularly helpful. Also Karen McChesney was really clear and helpful about what would be required in advance of the presentation.

I am confident that when we come to finally submitting our PPiP application that the members will now be much more fully briefed on the proposals and the background to the scheme. On the whole we were really happy and grateful for having the pre-application meeting and the organisation and arrangements made by West Dunbartonshire staff in helping set the meeting up.” Chris Breslin Strategic Planning and Design Manager Scottish Canals

Communications, engagement and customer service

Charrettes

The Bowling Basin charrette which last year's Planning Performance Framework covered in detail won an award in the 2014 Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning in the Community Involvement category.

The Council has continued its charrette programme in 2014/15. Successful bids were made for Scottish Government mainstreaming charrette funding to hold charrettes for Clydebank Town Centre and Dumbarton Rock and Castle.

The purpose of the Clydebank charrette was to develop a community-inspired vision for the future of the town centre, therefore the involvement of the community was central to the success of the charrette. Preparations for the charrette involved visits by a community arts company to both of Clydebank's high schools and a nursery, as pre-school and school age residents have been recognised as 'hard-to-reach' in previous planning consultation exercises. Pupils wrote 'postcards from the future' setting out their vision of how Clydebank town centre will look in 10 year's time. The pupils were then invited to the opening session of the charrette to see their postcards displayed. Pre-charrette work was also undertaken in the Clyde Shopping Centre, Playdrome Leisure Centre and with the Y-sort-it youth organisation. The charrette received significant press coverage, was heavily promoted through the Council's social media, and had a dedicated Twitter account. The charrette ran over 4 days (11-14 February 2015) with morning, afternoon and evening sessions to maximise attendance, with a follow-up session on 25 March to present outcomes. There were around 200 attendees over the different charrette sessions including from the community, the Council, Key Agencies and other interested organisations.

The purpose of the Dumbarton Rock and Castle charrette was to provide all parties with an interest in the area, from the local community through to national agencies, an opportunity to formulate a shared long term vision for the Rock and Castle and its surrounds. Key aims were to consider how the tourism, cultural and heritage assets within the area could be maximised and to identify how Dumbarton could benefit from the Rock and Castle being promoted as a major visitor attraction and from the redevelopment of adjacent waterfront sites. The charrette was promoted by the Council with support from Historic Scotland. Careful preparation and communication with the local community and key stakeholders in the run up to the charrette laid the basis for a successful event. Pre-event workshops took place with local schools and the charrette was widely publicised via mainstream and social media. People were able to follow the charrette on twitter at #dumbartonrock. The event ran over 4 days from 25 and 28 February 2015. Days 1 and 2 (at Dumbarton Football Club) involved morning, afternoon and evening sessions around themed discussions and design workshops to capture the views of all stakeholders. On days 3 and 4 a design studio, with scheduled public drop in sessions, was set up at Dumbarton Burgh Hall cumulating in a public exhibition on the

final day. A follow up session to present outcomes was held on 26 March. Throughout all the charrette sessions 289 people attended.

The spatial and action plans from the charrette reports are to be adopted and taken forward by the Council.

Customer Survey

A customer satisfaction survey was commenced in February 2015. It comprises 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. The survey has been emailed with all decisions notices. 100% of responses rated the service received either excellent or good, although completion rates for the survey have been low despite a link to the online survey being emailed with all planning application decisions. A copy of the customer survey has been shared with the HoPs Development Management sub group which is investigating a survey to be used by all Planning authorities. We are now looking at measures to encourage higher completion of the customer survey.

Complaints continue to be low with 2 received and resolved in 2014/15. The developers of our major sites are always willing to give feedback regarding the service they received.

Use of the Planning Enforcement Charter

Planning enforcement is of interest to the community in West Dunbartonshire however it can be a lengthy and complicated process. The Planning Enforcement Charter was revised in 2013 explaining how the enforcement process works in West Dunbartonshire in a more simplified way. It identifies possible breaches of planning control and outlines that in some cases that enforcement action may not be appropriate if it is not considered to be in the wider public interest. The Charter is used by officers when dealing with enforcement complaints and members of the public are often referred to the Charter if they are unhappy that enforcement action is not being taken for minor breaches of planning control.

Social Media

The Planning Service continues to make good use of social media to encourage engagement. The Council's Facebook page has been used for a number of years to publicise planning applications, and consultation documents and events. In September 2014, the Planning Service launched its own Twitter feed (@wdcplanning), which is also used to advise of current planning applications and other consultations. The Clydebank charrette also had its own Twitter feed (@cbankcharrette) which was used to promote the event and encourage debate.

Efficient and effective decision-making

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 good performance statistics whilst maintaining a good balance between the use of delegated powers and committee applications. In 2014/15, 31 applications were determined by Planning Committee. 12 applications involved a hearing. Types of applications determined by Committee included renewal of a permission for a recycling centre, erection of the Clydebanks asbestos memorial and new workshops in the Vale of Leven Industrial Estate. 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.



Asbestos Memorial

The Committee also considered 24 other reports on matters such as the Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance, the outcome of appeals, consultations from neighbouring authorities and the Kilpatrick Hills Statement of Importance. Prior to the Committee a workshop format was adopted for certain issues such as for the supplementary guidance and local development plan reports. This allowed elected members to be informed of the content in an informal manner and allowed them to discuss and help shape the documents. Therefore when the report was presented at Planning Committee the members were very aware of its content and were able to address any issues with a greater understanding and awareness.

Effective Decision-making: New Clydebanks Leisure Centre

A new four storey leisure centre was proposed adjacent to the Clyde Waterfront and its delivery is a key priority of the Council. The major development was viewed as significantly contrary to the adopted local plan, although it complied with the SDP and the emerging Local Development Plan. A pre-determination hearing took place at the Planning Committee in the morning with the full Council considering and determining the application in the afternoon of the same day. As the Council had an interest in the development the application required referral to the Scottish Ministers under the notification procedures. By tight management of the decision making process and extensive use of the Councils pre-application service this decision was released in just over 5 months.



Local Development Plan Examination

The consultation period on the Proposed West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (as modified) ended on 4 April 2014. This allowed for the preparation of Schedule 4s to begin. The preparation of these was project-managed by the Forward Planning Team Leader to enable them to be reported to the Council's May Planning Committee, and submitted to the DPEA on 20 June. The Council's Examination paperwork was found to be in order by the DPEA allowing the Examination to commence on 21 July 2015. Significant effort had gone into making the Schedule 4s as thorough as possible, and this resulted in the Council receiving only 7 Further Information Requests and a ½ day Hearing on housing land issues. The Examination Report was received by the Council on 8 January 2016.

"The recent examination of the West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan was completed within ministerial target dates. The council's officers played an important role in the efficient operation of the examination with timeous submission of documents, responses to further information requests, help with arranging an accompanied site visit and through their participation in the hearing session. Such well organised and helpful co-operation is essential to the smooth running of the examination and we would wish to extend our appreciation to the council in this respect." Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals

Effective management structures

Office Move/New way of working

The Planning and Building Standards Service completed a major office move in March 2015. In the lead up to the move staff at all levels in the service were involved in cross-departmental discussions to ensure the new office space was fit for purpose and that the move itself went as smoothly as possible. Preparations included a significant level of electronic file and email clearance ahead of the installation of new software for all staff, thus reducing pressure on Council server space. A significant thinning of paper files in preparation of scanning also took place. The move itself was from a dated office building to a new building on Clydebank Waterfront.



Aurora House, Clydebank

The new office accommodation offers a flexible working environment, with a desk staff ratio of 7:10 saving on accommodation space and costs, which are also reduced by being in a more efficient building. All staff have been issued with laptops to enable home/remote working, thus facilitating the flexible working approach. Rationalisation of paper files will continue and the Council continues to promote electronic submission of planning application and LDP material with 67% of all planning applications submitted online in 2014/15, and work towards the implementation of e-Building Standards. In the next year, the Planning Service will introduce a flexible working protocol to encourage and enable staff to work remotely from the office.

Major Application Meetings

Fortnightly meetings are held between the Planning and Building Standards Manager and senior Planning Policy and Development Management staff to discuss the progress of major planning applications or locally significant applications. This is an opportunity to discuss any issues at an early stage and facilitate early decisions on issues. Through these meetings application progress is monitored and Committee dates can be programmed. This allows early decisions with major applications in 2014/15 being determined within an average of 19 weeks. The Roads Service is now part of these major applications meetings.

Collaborative Working

Liaison meetings continue to take place with the Manager and Team Leader of the Roads Service on a monthly basis, usually a few days before the Planning Committee. Items on the agenda include speed of responses to consultations, and parking

contributions and standards. The agreed Roads Protocol continues to determine the level of service between Roads and Planning.

Given our new working environment we have been working with the Roads Service to progress joint working whereby a Roads officer would work in our office once a week and a planning officer in the Roads office. We have also progressing work on joint consents and this is being taken forward for the Stirling Road Dumbarton site which is discussed in more detail on page 6.

Within our new office we are located adjacent to the Environmental Health and this has substantially assisted creating closer links between the two services. Monthly meetings with the Manager and Team Leader in Environmental Health are taking place and presently the Planning and Environmental Health Protocol is being reviewed.

We continue to meet with our colleagues in Regeneration and Asset Management to provide an update on activity on our key development sites. The Forward Planning Team Leader is also part of the Strategic Land Disposal Group.

Collaborative working as a member authority of the Strategic Development Plan Authority with officers taking 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 also a partner in the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership and the West of Scotland Archaeological Service.

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 at Team Leader and Management Team meetings. The revenue budget continues to be heavily weighted towards employees costs and related items. The main payments to other agencies and bodies are 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. Planning application fee income in 2014/15 exceeded the original estimate by more than £80,000. This has been assisted by a number of major applications which brought in the maximum fee.

Reviewing Payments to other Bodies

This Council still faces substantial financial challenges in the coming years and all services are required to take forward measures to address the gap in the past year. We have been reviewing the payments to other bodies in order to identify savings. A service review of the “Clydeplan” team is being undertaken and this Council is part of the review team together with Glasgow City, Renfrewshire and South Lanarkshire Councils.

West of Scotland Archaeological Service

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

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 Councils Organisational Development team as well as with neighbouring Planning Authority. This year Development Management Planning Officers attended joint training with the National Park Authority on report writing

External events attended included the National Development Planning Forum, HoPs events, including the annual conference and development management and development plan sub-groups, and Improvement Service workshops of the Planning Performance Framework and project managing development plans.

Training and development needs will continue to be identified through Performance and Development Planning work. This coming year joint training events with our benchmarking partners are being explored and progressed.

Our 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. Appendix 2 includes a range of topics discussed at our meetings in 2014/15 and these included benchmarking feedback received on the Planning Performance Framework, High Hedge appeal decisions and the different approaches to pre application councillor briefings. The email group continues to be used at Manager, Team Leader and Planning Officer levels to exchange information and to get views on specific planning issues such as part approvals, attaching conditions to Local Authority applications.

Local Development Plan Benchmarking

The Glasgow and Clyde Valley LDP Forum consists of the eight Clyde Valley authorities and the SDP Core Team. The Forum is scheduled to meet every 6 months. Its principle purpose is to share and exchange best practice in respect of LDP and SDP development and implementation. At the February 2015 meeting the Forum discussed:

- Supplementary Guidance - Authorities discussed what Guidance they had/will produce and reflected on recent guidance from the Scottish Government. As a result information on guidance produced/proposed was collated with a view to discuss consistency and best practice at the next Forum.

- Examinations – Authorities discussed key recommendations from their LDP Examination including shared themes. The administration of Examinations was also discussed in order to share best practice.
- MIRs – Authorities considered approaches to the next round of Main Issues Reports.

Planning staff are regular participants at HoPS Development Planning, Development Management, and Performance and Practice sub-committees.

Improvement Plan for Planning Performance Framework 2013-14

This was put together to address matters raised from feedback and performance indicators of PPF3 and is contained in Appendix 2. The improvement plan addressed matters such as decision making timescales, monitoring delegation rates, producing a protocol on legal agreements and promoting the use of processing agreements. The improvement plan was reported to the January Planning Committee and it allowed these matters to be progressed.

Part 3: Supporting Evidence

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

Open for Business

Protocols on Pre application Advice and Processing Agreements (Protocol 1 and 4 in this document) http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/2115391/facilitating_appropriate_development_inc_protocols_34.pdf

High Quality Development on the Ground

Protocol on Liaison meetings (Protocol 2 of this document) http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/2115391/facilitating_appropriate_development_inc_protocols_34.pdf
Kilpatrick Hills Statement of Importance <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4307970/kilparick-hills-local-landscape-area-may-2015.pdf>

Certainty

Green network guidance <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4307855/supplimentary-guidance-our-green-network-june-2015.pdf>
Elected members pre application procedures (Protocol 3 of this document) http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/2115391/facilitating_appropriate_development_inc_protocols_34.pdf

Communications

Clydebank Charrette <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/planning-building-standards/clydebank-town-centre-design-charrette/>
Dumbarton Rock & Castle Charrette <http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/planning-building-standards/dumbarton-rock-charrette/>
Customer survey <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/77MLCDN>
Planning Enforcement Charter 2013 http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/3199135/planning_enforcement_charter_2013.pdf
Social Media <https://twitter.com/wdcplanning>

Efficient and effective decision-making

Committee reports <http://wdccmis.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/cm5/Home.aspx>
West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (Proposed Plan) http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4307506/ldp-adopted-version-march-2015-web.pdf_fc.pdf

Effective management structures

Planning and Roads Protocol http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4051800/planning-roads_protocol_2014-09.pdf

Financial Management and local governance

West of Scotland Archaeological Service <http://www.wosas.net/>

Culture of continuous improvement

Appendix 2 Topics discussed at Benchmarking Group 2014/15

Part 4: Service Improvements 2015-16

In the coming year we will:

- Develop Spatial Plans from the Clydebank and Dumbarton Charrettes and implement action plans.
- Prepare supplementary guidance on renewable energy and pay day lending and betting shops.
- Review the Environmental Health Protocol.
- Prepare a Flexible Working Protocol.
- Promote the Protocols on Processing Agreements and Elected Members involvement in the pre application stage.
- Promote and implement a Protocol on Legal Agreements.
- Formally monitor landfill and quarry sites and present report to Planning Committee.
- Review our pre application service.
- Review Committee report format.
- Review our working practices to further improve performance levels
- Review our systems performance.
- Benchmark with other authorities on processes, best practice and cost
- Hold an annual Planning and Building Standards Forum to enable contact with frequent users of the service,
- Hold an annual Service Development Day
- Progress training plan for elected members with Improvement Service,
- Review and undertake individual PDPs and prepare training implementation programme.

Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2014-15:

Committed improvements and actions	Completed
Prepare Development Briefs for Council disposal sites as required so to ensure high quality development on the ground Development briefs have been prepared when requested by Asset Management.	Yes
Hold a Planning and Building Standards forum to enable contact with frequent users of the service This was not achieved in 2014/15 due to other commitments but one is scheduled for October 2015. It is an action for 2015/16.	No
Carry out Customer surveys to measure customer satisfaction A customer survey for both Planning and Building Standards has been implemented and is circulated with all decision notices.	Yes
Provide guidance on trees and publicise trees protected by TPO Supplementary guidance on the green network has been produced and more detailed guidance will be provided for trees.	Partial
Promote the Protocols on Processing Agreements, and Elected Members involvement in the pre application stage One processing agreement signed in the period and another 3 processing agreements being progressed. One developer used the elected member's pre application meeting and a number of requests being taken forward next year.	Yes
Review the Environmental Health Protocol This is presently being reviewed with our colleagues in Environmental Health.	Partial
Review restoration bonds for quarries and landfill sites This has been achieved with negotiations taking place with operators and regular updates to Planning Committee.	Yes
Formally monitor landfill and quarry sites and present an updated report to Planning Committee This has been implemented and an annual report is presented to the August Planning Committee	Yes
Preparation of supplementary guidance on the green network This has been achieved and is presently out for consultation.	Yes

Committed improvements and actions	Completed
Benchmark with other authorities on processes, best practice and cost The Benchmarking Group continues to meet every 3-4 months to share best practice and to benchmark on specific planning issues.	Yes
Promote and implement a Protocol on Legal Agreements There have been initial discussions with Legal but a Protocol has not yet been produced due to other commitments. It is an action for 2015/16	No
Scan and archive planning records A significant thinning of paper files has taken place in preparation of scanning.	Yes
Review Planning Website and continue to encourage use of electronic communication This has taken place and continues to be undertaken on a regular basis	Yes
Hold away day for all staff to view examples of good development. This was not achieved in 2014/15 due to other commitments but is scheduled for August 2015 It is an action for 2015/16.	No
Introduce new ways of working associated with our new offices This has been implemented due to the new flexible working environment.	Yes

Part 5: Official Statistics

A: Decision-making timescales

Category	Total number of decisions 2014-15	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2014-15	2013-14
Major developments	7	19.8	32.4
Local developments (non-householder)	82	10.5	15.2
• Local: less than 2 months	56.1%	6.9	7.0
• Local: more than 2 months	43.9%	15.1	28.0
Householder developments	98	6.8	7.5
• Local: less than 2 months	90.8%	6.3	6.9
• Local: more than 2 months	9.2%	11.7	12.6
Housing developments			
Major	2	23.5	15.9
Local housing developments	15	13.2	24.9
• Local: less than 2 months	20%	5.9	7.4
• Local: more than 2 months	80%	15.1	45.3
Business and industry			
Major	1	11.7	N/A
Local business and industry	18	9.1	9.8
• Local: less than 2 months	72.2%	7.4	6.1
• Local: more than 2 months	27.8%	13.4	20
EIA developments	0	0	90
Other consents*	28	9.6	11.1
Planning/legal agreements**			
• Major average time	1	32.8	
• Local average time	0	0	
Local Reviews	1	12	5.0

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld	
		2014-2015 No. %	2013-2014 No. %
Local Reviews	1	0 (0%)	1 (0%)
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	2	1 (50%)	3 (33%)

C: Enforcement activity

	2014-15	2013-14
Cases taken up	38	65
Breaches identified	38	34
Cases resolved	24	23
Notices served***	2	5
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	1
Prosecutions	0	0

D: Context

The average timescale for major development of 19.8 weeks is well below the Scottish average of 36.6 weeks. The overall average was 12 weeks less than last year even though there were 3 more major applications. This good performance level has been achieved by front loading applications at the pre application stage and working very closely with our stakeholders. The average timescale for local development was reduced by 5 weeks this year and the householder applications timescales fell to under 7 weeks. Both timescales are well below the Scottish average for local developments of 12.9 weeks and 7.5 weeks for householder developments.

One of the major applications was subject to a legal agreement which took 32 weeks to issue a decision. Work is underway to look at ways to conclude a legal agreement in a shorter timescale.

Appeals and Local Reviews remain low compared to the number of applications determined. There was only one local review held this year which was achieved within 12 weeks and 2 appeals to the Scottish Ministers of which one was upheld.

Enforcement activity was largely similar to last year in terms of breaches identified and cases resolved although the cases taken up did fall. There was also a reduction in the number of enforcement notices issued.

Part 6: Workforce and Financial Information

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

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

		DM	DP	Enforcement	Other
Managers	No. Posts	1	1		0.5
	Vacant				
Main grade posts	No. Posts	4	2.5		
	Vacant				
Technician	No. Posts	0.5	1		
	Vacant				
Office Support/Clerical	No. Posts	2.5	0.5		
	Vacant	1			
TOTAL		9	5		0.5

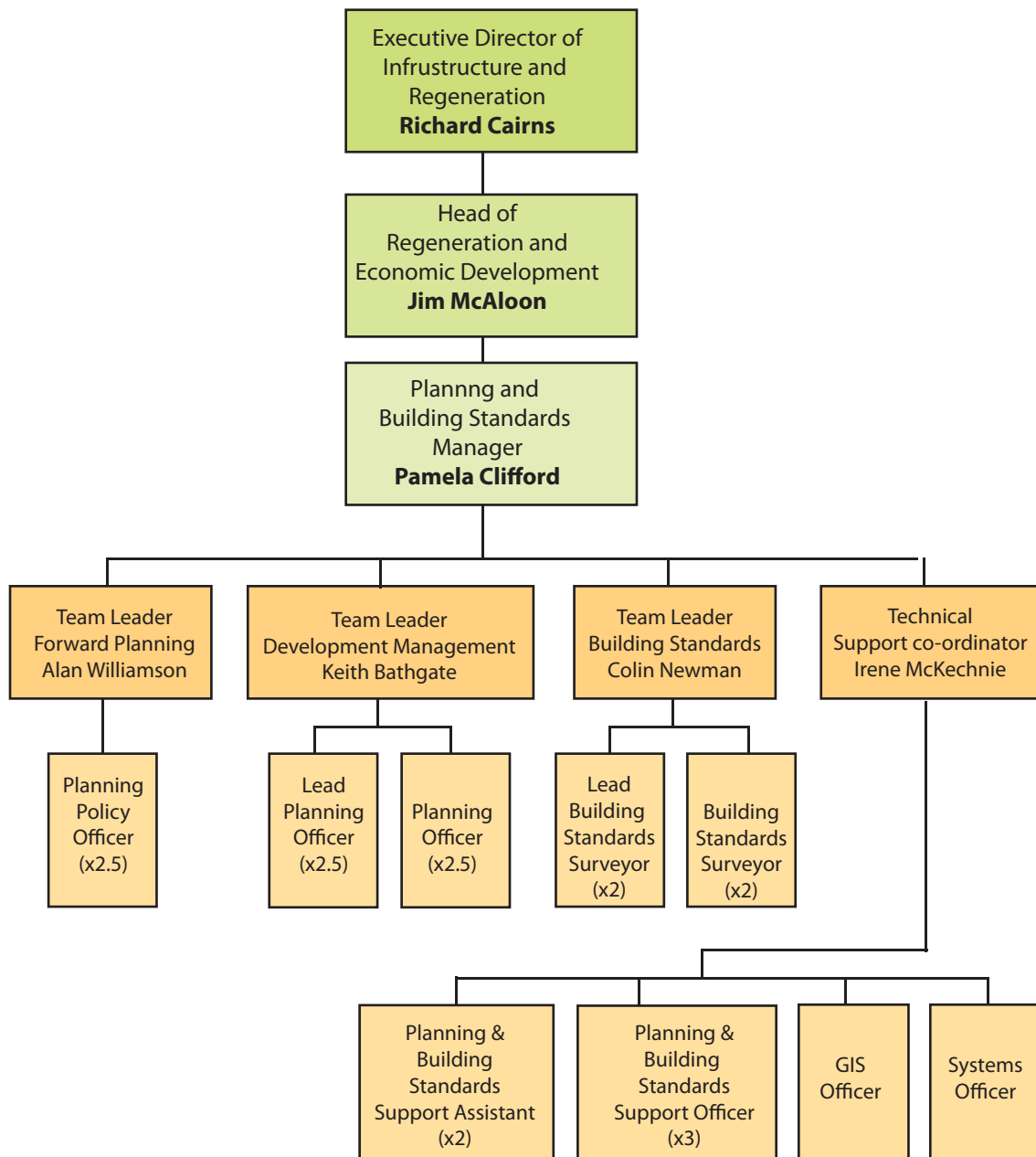
Staffing Profile	Number
Under 30	3
30-39	4
40-49	5
50 and over	7

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

	Total Budget	Costs		Income
		Direct	Indirect	
Development management	£226,008	£290,800		£304,789
Development planning	£187,481	£171,700		
Enforcement	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Other		£221,245	£250,400	
TOTAL	£879,966			

Appendix 1

Planning and Building Standards Service Structure



Appendix 2

WEST OF SCOTLAND PLANNING BENCHMARKING GROUP 2014-2015

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 three times between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2015: 29th May 2014 (at East Renfrewshire); 23 September 2014 (at North Ayrshire) and 27th January 2015 (at Inverclyde). The meetings are minuted, with the host council and chairperson rotating around the councils.

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

1. Planning Performance Framework
2. Scottish Minister call-in of applications
3. Decision Notice contents
4. High Hedges Act and DPEA appeal interpretation
5. Restoration Bonds
6. Electric car charging points in new developments
7. Pre-application briefings & guidance for councillors
8. Legal Agreement procedures
9. Retention of planning registers procedures
10. Charging for pre-application enquiries
11. Certificates of Lawful Use or Development
12. Charging for street naming and numbering
13. Costing the planning service
14. Local Review Body procedures & judicial review
15. Processing agreements
16. Staffing levels
17. Review of quarries and landfill sites
18. Validation standards guidance note
19. EPlanning and EBuilding Standards portal and agency agreement
20. Content of reports of handling
21. Hearings procedures
22. Section 42 applications
23. Advertisement Stop Notices
24. Policy on houses in the countryside
25. Obtaining archaeological expert advice
26. Pay-day loan government consultation
27. Format of EIA screening opinions
28. Procedures for Rights of Way diversion orders

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 to be shared.

Of particular note this year have been our discussions on:

- The Planning Performance Framework, where the Councils' submissions and feedback reports were discussed, with the Council's learning from each-other's reports.
- The High Hedges Act, where policy and practice was shared, leading to a better understanding of the legislation, and experiences shared of the approaches which can be taken on a range of issues on this new subject.
- Pre-application councillor briefings, allowing the authorities to share how they are implementing the government advice.
- Staffing levels within the authorities, looking at how each authority's service is staffed, allowing comparisons with performance statistics.
- Archaeological advice and how the authorities purchase this service through either the West of Scotland Archaeological Service or from private consultants, and whether value-for-money is obtained.

In addition to the formal meetings, the participants also use the email list as a 'forum' for quickly asking questions on areas of uncertainty.

This group concentrates on development management issues. Development plans teams benchmark extensively with the eight Councils who prepare the Glasgow & Clyde Valley Strategic Development Plan (including sub-groups); as well as through Heads of Planning and the national Development Plans Forum. Benchmarking also takes place supporting environmental and technical functions, including through the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership; the Scottish Outdoor Access Forum; the Scottish Strategic Environmental Assessment Forum; the Local Authorities Historic Environment Forum; the Corporate Address Gazeteer Forum; the One-Scotland Mapping Agreement Group; and the Ordnance Survey User Group.

Appendix 3: Improvement Plan - Planning Performance Framework 2014-2015

Ref	Action	Milestone	Target Date
PPF1	Record and conclude legal agreements/ section 69 agreements within 6 weeks of planning decision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a protocol on legal agreement process and timescales. Make officers and legal officers aware of the timescales. Promote protocol to developers. 	28/2/2015 30/3/2015 30/3/2015
PPF2	Review all remaining legacy applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate progression of applications. 	30/3/2015
PPF3	Monitor on a monthly basis, decision making timescales for all applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce monthly list of applications decision timescales. Identify applications which have not met target and reasons for this.team Leader weekly meetings with officers. Identify problematic applications at registration and project manage. 	30/1/2015 30/1/2015 30/1/2015 30/1/2015
PPF4	Monitor delegation rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify applications determined by Planning Committee and reasons for this. 	30/3/2015
PPF5	Continue to promote and publicise the use of processing agreements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the protocol with developers. 	30/3/2015

