

Modernising Planning: Planning Performance Framework 2011-2012

Planning Committee
4 October 2012

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek Committee approval of the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) 2011-2012 and its submission to Scottish Government.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The Scottish Government has introduced a new PPF to provide a more rounded way of assessing the performance of planning authorities. The PPF sets out a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures to represent a more comprehensive and balanced toolkit of measures to provide a more effective scorecard for scrutiny and assessment purposes. The Committee is invited to approve the City of Edinburgh Council's PPF for submission to Scottish Government.

3 Main Report

Background

- 3.1 The Scottish Government has worked with the Heads of Planning Scotland, and other stakeholders to provide a 'balanced score card' approach to performance, enabling each local planning authority to demonstrate its achievements, successes, individuality and personality. Whilst the speed of decision making will still feature as an important factor, it will be set within a wider supporting context of quality, workloads, resources, organisation and outcomes achieved on the ground.
- 3.2 It is intended that the PPF will serve all the users of the planning system well and be seen as a positive, proportionate response to the various challenges facing the Planning Service.
- 3.3 The key component parts of the Planning Performance Framework consists of:
- **Part 1** – National Headline Indicators;

- **Part 2** – The performance assessment across 8 areas of agreed activity - defining and measuring a high quality planning service;
 - **Part 3** – Supporting evidence and links to related reports and studies; and
 - **Part 4** – Service Improvement and timescales for the delivery of improvements.
 - **Appendices**
 - 1: Official Statistics – decision making timescales; and
 - 2: Workforce and Financial Information.
- 3.4 The City of Edinburgh Council's first Planning Performance Framework sets out in Part 1 our National Headline Indicators - highlighting that all our Development Plans are less than five years old and; our effective land supply is closely monitored within the scope of the current Structure Plan. In terms of Development Management, the relatively high take up of our pre application advice (32%) and for major applications, our processing agreement processes (69%) input into the overall percentage of planned timescales met (82%), which can now easily be compared with other local authorities. Our current achievement of over 90% of householder applications being decided within 2 months translates well when the average number of weeks is calculated, with our average being 7.09 weeks.
- 3.5 Part 2 – Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service, allows us scope to highlight our achievements over the past year, including the Strategic Development Plan being ratified by Council in September; the Edinburgh Local Development Plan Main Issues Report being published by October; the increased use of our Planning Concordat and processing agreements to project manage the processing of major applications; the successful implementation of the householder permitted development changes which came into force in February; and the completion of the Area Development Frameworks, and City Centre Action Plan and Canal Strategy.
- 3.6 The qualitative focus allows us to outline various initiatives including the use of a Design Panel, and our work to assess the impact of Planning decisions on the ground. The PPF gives the opportunity to explain how our service is organised and aligned to ensure efficient and effective decision making within the Council. Our accreditation of Customer Service Excellence and implementation of a range of customer engagement initiatives like the Edinburgh People's Survey, Mystery Shopping and the Customer Satisfaction Measurement tool are all highlighted as is the work undertaken on our Communications Toolkit and use of social media to ensure we use a wide variety of the available media.
- 3.7 Part 3 – sets out our supporting evidence as hyperlinks to the relevant website addresses or Council Committee papers. These are embedded in the PPF and produced in list form here.
- 3.8 Part 4 highlights our proposed Service Improvements for 2012- 2013. Our culture of continuous improvement is exemplified by our annual Business Plan which focus on key areas of change at a high level within Development Management and Building Standards, and the main products from Development Planning and the Design Initiative which the Service Improvement Plan then articulates through indicators to manage performance.

3.9 Appendix 1: 'Official Statistics' sets out our decision-making timescales, local reviews and appeals provided by the Scottish Government, drawn from the data provided by the City of Edinburgh Council as a planning authority.

3.10 Appendix 2: 'Workforce and Financial Information' comments on financial and workforce information. This will be detailed further in the guidance for the next round of performance reports for 2012- 2013.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5 Equalities Impact

5.1 There is no relationship between the matters described in this report and the public sector general equality duty.

5.2 There is no direct equalities impact arising from this report.

6 Environmental Impact

6.1 A key objective of the Planning Service is the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment.

7 Conclusions

7.1 Edinburgh's Planning Performance Framework 2011-2012 is the first 'balanced scorecard' approach to highlighting the work of the Planning Service over the last financial year. It provides a valuable opportunity to showcase our achievements, successes, and specific characteristics within the guidance set by the Scottish Government. This first Framework is our 'solid baseline'. The Scottish Government has made it clear that it expects to see continuous improvement and will be assessing next years Edinburgh Planning Performance Framework in comparison to that achieved this year. Therefore whilst we are considered generally to be one of the top performing Planning Services in Scotland, we must continue to improve and to adapt to the changing needs of the city and the customers of the service.

8 Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that Committee approves the Planning Performance Framework 2011-2012 and agree its submission to the Scottish Government.

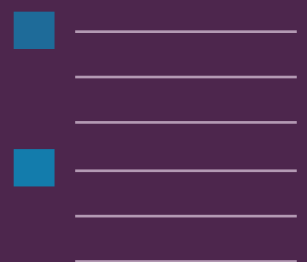
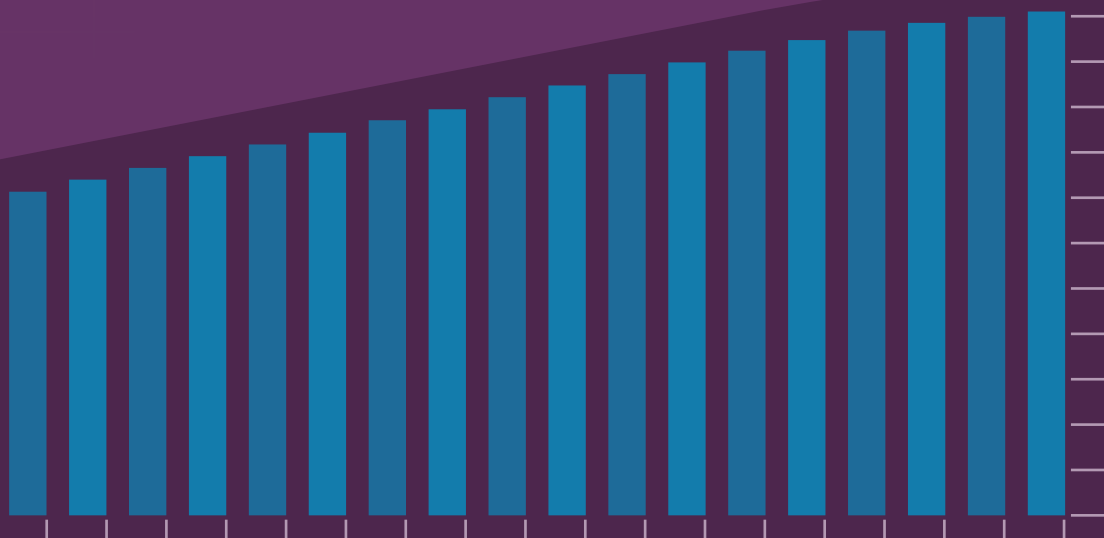
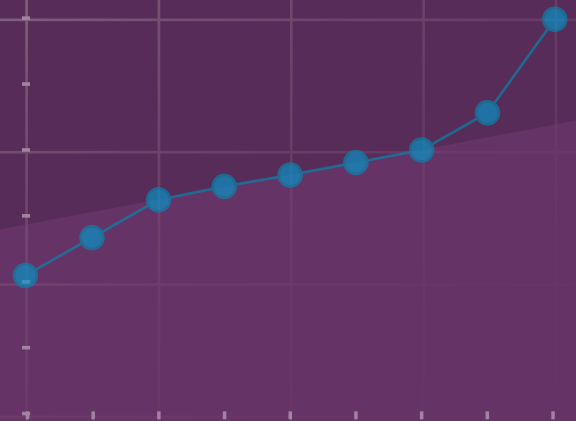
Mark Turley
Director, Services for Communities

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|--------------------------|---|
| Appendices | Appendix 1: City of Edinburgh Council, Planning and Building Standards, Planning Performance Framework 2011-2012 |
| Contact/tel/Email | Catriona Reece-Heal 529 6123 catriona.reece-heal@edinburgh.gov.uk |
| Single Outcome Agreement | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Edinburgh's economy delivers increased investment, jobs, and opportunities for all 2. Edinburgh's citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health 3. Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric |
| Wards affected | City-wide * |

Planning Performance Framework

Services for Communities
Planning

2011 - 2012
2011 - 2012



What our Customers say about us...

Customer Service Excellence - March 2012:

"The feedback from customers and partners regarding the openness and approachability of the service was overwhelmingly positive and overall a very competent assessment".

CSE Assessor

Planning Customer survey - January 2012:

Our most recent survey revealed 81% of respondents found our planning application process to be excellent (30%) or good (51%).

Edinburgh People's Survey 2011:

56% of residents in Edinburgh are satisfied with quality of new buildings and spaces around them.

Comments from residents attending Local Development Plan Main Issues Report workshops 2011/2012:

"The Community Consultations and workshops were very informative and well presented".

Edinburgh resident

"Congratulations to the team on a clear and readable (MIR) report"

Morningside Community Council

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Awards

Award:

The City of Edinburgh Council Planning and Building Standards Service received the Special Recognition Award at the Homes for Scotland Quality Awards in 2011, for the proactive, innovative and imaginative way it has approached working in partnership with the home building sector.

"This is an excellent example of leadership, which blazes a trail for other Local Authorities to follow".

Homes for Scotland, 2011

Award:

The Canal Strategy received a 2012 Waterways Renaissance Award from the Waterways Trust.

"Development of the Strategy involved extensive consultation with canal related and local community groups and it is proving to be a valuable vehicle for getting ideas together and providing a platform for people to have their say about the canal's future development."

The Waterways Trust, 2011



Commendation:

Edinburgh's Planning Concordat received a commendation by the Royal Town Planning Institute. Another city project, the Grassmarket public realm, was also shortlisted.

"Its cooperative, informed, managed and transparent approach makes a significant contribution to culture change in Scotland's modernising planning system."

The Royal Town Institute, 2011

Award:

The Grassmarket Public Realm improvements received a Scottish Award for Quality in Planning 2011. The Judges were impressed by the way planners have driven the process of improvement in this key area of the capital city.

"They have used their skills to manage the broad range of views of the stakeholders from outwith the Council but also to improve co-operation within the Council to achieve more effective delivery."

Key Objectives of shifting the dominance of the car to pedestrian have been achieved, as has a shift in the perceived use of the area to be more family and café culture oriented."

Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning Judges, 2011



Introduction

This is the first Planning Performance Framework for the City of Edinburgh Council. The Framework includes an evaluation of the Council's performance and highlights key evidence to support our delivery of a high quality service.

The Framework is supported by hyperlinked references to key evidence throughout. A full index of evidence is in Part 3 – Supporting Evidence.

Despite the financial challenges facing Scottish local authorities, the City of Edinburgh Council Planning service remains committed to driving forward change and has delivered considerable achievements for our customers.

The Council's development plans are currently being updated. [The Proposed Strategic Development Plan](#), has been submitted to Scottish Ministers for examination and approval. The [Edinburgh Local Development Plan](#) has been through its [Main Issues Report](#) stage and the Proposed Plan will follow examination of the Strategic Development Plan.

Both plans have been the subject of extensive consultation and discussion with communities, stakeholders and partners. In addition to development plan preparation, innovative strategies, such as the [Area Development Frameworks](#) for the [Waterfront and Leith](#) and the [City Centre Southern Arc](#) have been prepared. Furthermore, the Council's planning guidance is being reviewed to provide briefer and more customer focused advice.

The Council's development management service (planning applications) performs at a high level. [The Planning Concordat](#) with the Chamber of Commerce sets a framework for processing of major developments. Benchmarking with Scottish Cities and other councils handling a high volume of applications indicates Edinburgh is generally the best performing. Edinburgh also processes the highest volume of applications per case officer. Recently agreed delegation from Historic Scotland, in relation to Category A listed building applications, in addition to those already in place, should improve performance and signals the Government's confidence in Edinburgh's handling of the historic environment.

Development activity has increased over the past three years and in 2011 developments with a value of £10.6bn were in the development pipeline. This includes planning applications, consents, sites under construction and recent completions. This represents an increase from £10bn in 2010.

Edinburgh has a top performing Planning Service with an ethos of continuous improvement. New initiatives such as the Planning Concordat are designed to show Edinburgh is Open for Business whilst delivering Customer Service Excellence. In order to continue being a top performing Service we must continue to improve and to adapt to the changing needs of the city.

Part 1 - National Headline Indicators

DEFINING AND MEASURING A HIGH QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE

Development Planning

- age of local/strategic development plan(s) (full years)
Requirement: less than 5 years
- development plan scheme: on track? (Y/N)

Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan (RWELP) – 6 years
RWELP alteration – 1 years
Edinburgh City Local Plan (ECLP) – 2 years

Yes

Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs

- effective housing land: 5-year supply (Y/N)
- effective housing land supply (units)
- housing approvals
- effective employment land supply
- employment land take-up
- effective commercial floor space supply
- commercial floor space delivered

No ^{*1, *2}

5,118 (2010/11 HLA) 5,242 (draft 2011/12 HLA) ^{*2}
3,386 (2010/11) 3,260 (draft 2011/12 HLA) ^{*3}

230.9 ha. (Aug. 2011 ^{*4})
11.8 ha. (year to Aug. 2011 ^{*4, *5})

2,391,497 m² gross ^{*6}
26,688 m² gross ^{*7}

Development Management

Project Planning

- percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice
- number of major applications subject to processing agreement or other project plan
- percentage planned timescales met

32 %^{*8}

69 %

82 %^{*9}

Decision-making

- application approval rate
- delegation rate

79.0 % (excludes CEC, EIA, ELC, MLC, OPA, PNA, TCO, TPO, WLC, VARY)

91.7 %

Decision-making timescales

Average number of weeks to decision:

- major developments
- local developments (non-householder)
- householder developments

77.4

12.1

7.1

Enforcement

- time since enforcement charter published / reviewed (full years) Requirement: review every 2 years
- number of breaches identified / resolved

2

798

Explanatory notes

*1 No calculation is currently available to say what the 5 year housing requirement should be. As the Edinburgh & the Lothians Structure Plan runs to 2015 the remaining time horizon only allows for a 4 year housing requirement based on the 2010 / 2011 Housing Land Audit (HLA), or a 3 year housing requirement based on the draft 2011 / 2012 HLA.

*2 The latest agreed housing land audit (HLA) is for 2010 / March 2011 (i.e. agreement reached with the house builders re. sites that are effective, and future programming of development). Figures for 2011 / March 2012 are not agreed, and are draft only.

*3 Approvals include outline consents.

*4 The latest available figures are from the 2011 Employment Land Audit which relates to August 2011. Figures for 2012 should be available in September 2012 (survey carried out in August).

'Effective' employment land is assumed to comprise category 1 and 2 employment land.

Category 1 refers to land with planning consent and / or allocated in an adopted local plan which is readily available and serviced, and is marketable. Category 2 refers to land with planning consent and / or allocated in an adopted local plan and considered suitable for development, but restricted or requires full servicing / completion of servicing.

*5 Note that 11.8 ha. refers to the amount of employment land taken up for employment uses. An additional 2.4 ha. was taken up for non-employment uses, making a total of 14.2 ha. Note also that this is take-up in all categories of employment land (1, 2 and 3).

*6 This is a very problematic indicator (at least in Edinburgh). The definition of 'effective commercial floor space' supply is not standard. In the absence of more specific guidance, the figure here is the amount of office+retail+industrial floorspace which was either under construction or had unimplemented planning consent at the end of December 2011 (obtained from annual development schedules). The figures are very large because they include many large outline consents, and many historic (but still valid) consents which are never likely to be implemented in their current form. Unfortunately there is no way of determining which of these consents remain 'effective'.

*7 The definition of commercial development that has been used is the total new floorspace completed for office, retail and industrial developments, as recorded in the respective development schedules for the calendar year 2011. Note that these schedules only include larger scale developments with a floorspace of 500 sq.m. or larger. There has also been significant development of hotels and other tourist accommodation in Edinburgh; also significant amounts of commercially operated student housing. However, these are not included in the figures as such developments are monitored in terms of rooms

or bedspaces rather than floorspace (407 hotel rooms and 486 student bedspaces completed in year to December 2011).

*8 This data is not currently collected and this figure is from a sample check of application forms. Back office systems are not currently set up to record all pre-application discussions.

*9 Target completion dates are based on the target committee date rather than the decision issued date. This is due to the potential delays in signing legal agreements, which means the decision date cannot be guaranteed. This is as agreed with applicants.





Part 2 - Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service

Open For Business

Positive actions to support sustainable economic growth and social needs:

- Holistic approach to economic development and investment opportunities in partnership with others, internal and external to the authority -

The Council has prepared an Economic Resilience Action Plan, adopting a flexible approach towards developer contributions to ensure that they were not a barrier to development proceeding. It made provision for agreements to defer payments to help with development cash flows, thus allowing development to proceed.

The Action Plan also made a commitment to review and revise our developer contribution policies where necessary. A number of policies have subsequently been revised.

A further positive factor has been the implementation of the award winning [Edinburgh Planning Concordat](#), which demonstrates the commitment of the Planning service to working with the business community to deliver economic development within the city.

Planning is also taking forward the Council's '[Delivering Capital Growth](#)' strategy which focuses on the next stages of the city's transformation, how to make it happen and setting a clear but flexible context for the Development Plans to take this ambitious change agenda forward.

The Council's approach includes extensive partnership working with our key stakeholders including Scottish Enterprise, Forth Ports and the Chamber of Commerce.

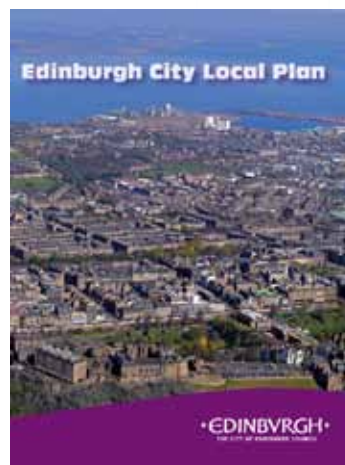
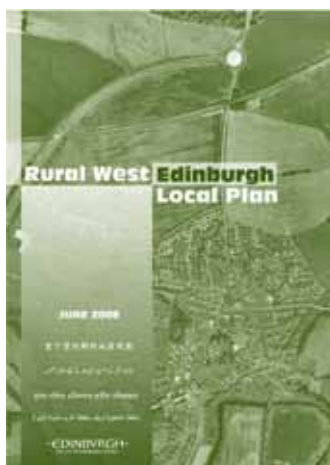
- Development Plan action programmes; evidence of efforts and success of delivery -

The Council worked with its partner SESplan authorities to prepare the Proposed [Strategic Development Plan](#). This is accompanied by a comprehensive action programme which identifies strategic actions and their owners needed to implement the Regional Development Strategy.

The Council intends to publish the Local Development Proposed Plan, and Action Programme in early 2013. However, the Council has experience of monitoring the implementation of its plans: for example it published an [Action Plan for the Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan](#) in 2010 and a report monitoring progress with actions for the [Edinburgh City Local Plan](#) (February 2011). In December 2011 it published a [monitoring report for its Open Space Strategy](#). These identified which actions and proposals had been implemented or were being implemented.

- Management structure in place to facilitate/handle specific applications meeting business and social priorities; use of project managers as appropriate -

There is a structure in place to handle national and major applications effectively. The use of planning processing agreements is now standard for major applications and is a proven project management process. The Head of Planning and Building Standards has an open door policy to facilitate meetings with developers.



- Single point of contact allocated for duration of application; appropriate level of authority to provide reliable advice

Principal planners co-ordinate pre-application advice for more significant and complex proposals. There is a [help desk service](#) for general enquiries. Team email boxes are used for easy access to advice.

- Positive and proactive policy on pre-application discussions and follow-up contacts/advice to developers post-decision; evidence of policy in practice; measure (i) percentage of major and local applications preceded by PAD, and (ii) resources given to customer-facing service for pre-application and post-decision activity

The [Council website](#) has extensive information on policies and procedures. Pre-application discussion is encouraged although this is not currently measured. Post decision monitoring is regularly carried out by case officers.

- Proportionate information requests: evidence of reasonable, risk management approach to requests for supporting information alongside applications -

[Validation guidance](#) gives information on what supporting evidence is needed. Planning Processing Agreement meetings with consultees on major developments identifies supporting information needed.

- Proportionate and reasonable expectations for contributions to infrastructure etc.; clear on expectations at early stage –

[Economic Resilience Plan](#) and working with economic development ensures that expectations are realistic, as well as policies and guidelines on [developer contributions](#).

- Policy in place on engagement standards: quick response to meeting requests; telephone calls taken or returned quickly; early dates set for meetings –

The Council has [Communication and consultation toolkits](#), and was accredited with Customer Service Excellence.

- Early consideration of detail and quality aspects of proposals during application process, in addition to the principle of development –

The Council has a procedures manual in place for handling applications and encourages pre-application discussion.



High quality development on the ground

Creating and shaping places of which we can all be proud:

- In context of development plan and changes in land use, positive steps to examine and produce case studies into how physical environment has changed; learn from experiences -

A set of [Environmental Quality Indicators](#) which aim to measure the effect of planning decisions on the ground has been produced. This combines the outcome from the [Edinburgh Residents Survey](#) and Customer Focus Groups with the agreed Biodiversity Index indicators as well as Key Awards which are based on an impartial assessment by independent agencies. This is the first baseline year and it is anticipated that this will become a useful measure of our success in creating high quality development on the ground.

- Development proposals have been the subject of negotiated or conditioned design improvements through the planning process -

The Planning service includes expertise in design, conservation, landscape and biodiversity to ensure existing quality is maintained. Design officers work across teams and meet weekly to discuss cases, advise case officers and assist with negotiations.



- Development plans provide a clear policy context for placeshaping and quality design -

The [Edinburgh City Local Plan](#) has design policies which are underpinned by our [Edinburgh Standards for Urban Design, sustainable buildings, streets and housing](#).

- Design panel; operate local design awards -

The [Edinburgh Urban Design Panel](#) is part of the pre-application process for major development proposals in the City. The panel meets monthly and its members are drawn from a range of organisations with particular expertise to offer to the design review process. The [Edinburgh Urban Design Panel Map](#) displays the reviews on a map of the city. The Council has a Design Leader with a wide ranging role to promote and support good design and placemaking across the Council and among external stakeholders.

- Promote understanding and provide support/training for community interests -

Planning participates in the quarterly [Civic Forum](#) events, providing awareness raising and training for a range of community and interest groups. We have also undertaken thematic based training for community groups on key legislative changes – like the [New Permitted Development](#) rights where seminars were held for Councillors, Agents, and Community Councils. Planning staff regularly attend Neighbourhood Partnerships and Community Councils to give presentations, provide support and training.

- Demonstration of investment and benefits; recognise value to area of consented/completed development and if possible, development plans -

Our [Annual Development Activity Bulletin](#) summaries the Total market value of development proposed, approved, under construction or completed in 2011 is £10.6 billion up 6% from last year.

- **Local environmental improvements, regeneration and town centre activities and enhancements -**

The World Heritage status of the City Centre requires an appropriate Management Plan which should specify how the Outstanding Universal Value of the Site will be protected. A [new Management Plan for 2011-16](#) was approved in June 2011 following consultation and an action plan was approved in March 2012.

In June 2011, the Council approved a [Retail Strategy for the City Centre](#) to improve and diversify the retail offer across the city centre.

A [Royal Mile charrette](#) involved over 80 stakeholders and examined how the street could be better managed and developed in the interests of the city as a whole. An early action was the introduction, in October 2011, of a regulation restricting deemed planning consent for shopfront advertising in the Royal Mile.

The Council commissioned a study of opportunities for public realm improvements from internationally acclaimed Gehl Architects. A series of temporary projects were implemented in Princes Street in December during a break in the tram works.

The Leith Townscape Heritage Initiative is a five year project that began in 2007. The project involves repairs to priority buildings, third party grants, public realm and training programmes. In 2011 the refurbishment of the Hindu Mandir Cultural Centre was completed and the Shore Public Realm, as well as a number of shopfront improvements and training courses in traditional building skills.



- **Design context set out in Strategic Development Frameworks, Masterplans, Design Briefs or similar -**

Design Context is set out in various strategies, masterplans and design briefs including a strategy for the development of the Union Canal proposed in partnership with Scottish Canals. The [strategy](#) was prepared following extensive consultation with local stakeholders. It identifies seven strategic hubs where activity should be focused. The strategy was approved in December 2011 and the actions are now being taken forward.

The Council has prepared several area specific frameworks to guide development including [Area Development Frameworks](#), for the [Waterfront and Leith](#) and [City Centre Southern Arc](#), in partnership with Architecture + Design Scotland.

A programme is underway to consolidate the majority of planning policy guidance into a small number of guidelines focused on customer groups. The first one to be approved was [Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing](#) in May 2011. The remaining ones will be submitted for committee approval during 2012.



Certainty

Consistency of advice, process, engagement and decision-making:

- Key Agencies and Lead Persons engaged over development plan action programmes' ability to deliver planned development -

Edinburgh's statutory [Development Plan Scheme](#), sets out the Steering Group, key agencies and lead persons involved.

- Robustness of development plan: measure percentage of applications decided contrary to plan; benchmark level of departures considered acceptable -

The robustness of the Development Plan is highlighted by less than 1% of 3673 decisions were approvals contrary to the Development Plan. Successful appeals as a percentage of planning determinations at 0.56% was well below our benchmarking target of 1%.

- Protocols/concordats in place with other local authority services and agencies about reliability of advice and working timescales for development management and development planning -

The [Edinburgh Planning Concordat](#) (2010) has created confidence and transparency in working with the business community. It charts a process for managing major development proposals, with services across the Council, in a manner which is transparent and expectations and responsibilities are clarified. It advocates the use of process agreements (PPAs) which have proved to be successful as a project management tool and giving developers the certainty they need in making investments in the City.

- Positive support for processing agreements/project management approach to timetabling decisions; set clear and realistic timescales for actions and decisions -

In 2011-12, decisions were issued on 16 major applications, 11 (68%) of which had PPAs and 9 (56%) of the PPAs met the target date. This represents the increased willing by developers to enter into a PPA. It compares to only 50% of our 12 major applications including PPAs in 2010/11.

- Clear project management in place for development planning with development plan schemes setting out project plans -

The Council's statutory development plans implement the city-wide strategy "[Delivering Capital Growth](#)". The programme proceeded smoothly during 2011/12 and all the agreed milestones were achieved. The [Strategic Development Plan](#) was published in November 2011. At the local level, the Council adopted an alteration to the [Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan](#) in June 2011. Work has continued on the [new local development plan](#), which will eventually replace the two existing local plans. The first major stage was reached in October 2011 with the publication of the [Main Issues Report](#).

The Development Plan Scheme is supplemented by a Project Plan, Project Initiation Document and Risk Register.

- Consistency and reliability of officer advice on likely decisions; measure applications decided contrary to officer recommendation -

In 2011-12, only 10 applications were determined contrary to officer recommendations and overturned by committee. These amount to 0.27% of all decisions.

- Clear advice on expected standards for application submissions (including assessments etc.); measure percentage applications not validated at first attempt -

The [CEC website](#) provides clear guidance on procedures, policy and information to applicants, developers and the public. The site has kept its SOCITM 4 star ranking from last year. Edinburgh was the first Council in Scotland to achieve four stars last year and is one of only two in the UK to retain that top ranking because of our customer focused approach to providing services online. It includes clear pre-application advice including what is expected to [validate a planning application](#).

Monitoring of registration times is an important part of our customer service. In 2011-12, 4564 applications were received of which 19.7% were invalid.

Communications, engagement and customer service

Planning and Building Standards continues its commitment to customer service with the accreditation of Customer Service Excellence in March 2012, as well as the achievement of the Quality Assurance accreditation ISO 9001. This involved an extensive review of how we communicate with our customers, seek customer feedback and ensure these results inform our Service Improvement Plan.

Communications strategy for engagement and positive customer experience:

- Customer service charter(s) in place; include clear contact points/one-stop-shop for reliable advice; recognise differing needs of regular and occasional customers

[Customer Service Charters](#) and Standards are in place. Our [Planning Help desk](#) continues to provide a clear contact point during office hours for general planning enquiries whether by phone, email or face to face, answered by Planning professionals.

- Customer surveys and local forums, covering range of interests (report in segments); examine experiences and perception of whole service; report on customer satisfaction levels; results inform action plans

The Planning service recently reviewed its communication and engagement with everyone involved in the planning process. This culminated in a [Communication Toolkit and Consultation Toolkit](#) to allow us to work with all parties involved in development proposals.

Edinburgh has also developed a range of customer feedback mechanisms including the [Edinburgh People's Survey](#), where 4000 Edinburgh residents are asked about the quality of new buildings and spaces around them: 56% were satisfied. This survey was complemented by Customer Focus Groups held to present randomly chosen completed developments. The groups rated the developments on a 5 point scale. 2011-2012 is the first baseline year against which future years performance can be assessed.

We have implemented both Mystery Shopping and a

local authority wide Customer Satisfaction Measurement Tool within our Service to enable us to address customer service issues and continually improve the service we deliver.

- Proactive encouragement for constructive feedback of customer experiences

Our Toolkits included Feedback Forms to encourage constructive feedback on our engagement processes. This was implemented through the [Edinburgh Local Development Plan Main Issues Report consultation](#) allowing us to improve our consultation events and engagements in the future.

- Complaints: policy on handling complaints and actions where complaints upheld; report on number of upheld complaints

There were 25 stage 2 complaints over 2011-12, however only 1 was upheld – demonstrating the robustness of our stage 1 complaints process. There were also 128 compliments received during the year making an average of 32 per quarter. This is above the baseline of 19 and indicates the appreciation of our customers for the service we provide.

We have reviewed our [Complaints policy](#). We analyse and assess our complaints and compliments on a quarterly basis with the analysis feeding into our team meetings to ensure all staff are aware of issues. Where complaints are upheld, we undertake remedial action for example, further staff training may be required.

- Electronic communication options: website audits; proactively pursue E-Planning use; measure applications and representations submitted online; and development planning and other consultations online -

Our Planning Website recently retained its four stars from SocITM in its [2012 Better Connected Report](#). In 2011 it was the first Scottish site to receive four stars and is only one of two council websites to have retained the rating.

Social Media – we have a Planning Twitter account used to inform over 600 followers of our latest news and consultations. In September 2011 the Planning service took part in a [national 24 hour Twitter](#) exercise with Councils across Scotland to raise awareness about ‘what we do’. Edinburgh was the only Planning authority to take part in this event and used this as an opportunity allow customers to ask planning related questions.

- **Document quality:** evidence of commitment to easy-to-read; Crystal Mark on key documents; availability of alternative methods of presentation (e.g. Braille; minority languages)

A key component of [Customer Service Excellence](#) accreditation was the requirement to ensure we targeted our customer groups with appropriate information in a way that was easy for our customers to understand.

- **Meaningful and balanced engagement:** evidence of effort to engage with ‘hard to reach’ groups; rolling programme of training for community groups -

The first stage in the [Local Development Plan](#) – consultation on the main issues - is now complete. Consultation involved a wide range of stakeholders using a variety of methods – staffed exhibitions, topic focused community workshops, social media and an online video presentation - to raise awareness and encourage involvement in the LDP process.



Efficient and effective decision-making

Ensuring structures and processes are proportionate.

- Team and committee structures and governance arrangements established; displaying a collective sense of urgency -

The Planning Service has a Head of Service, a leadership team and a team structure compatible with the decision-making process for the Development Plan, planning applications and other services within the function. This structure allows responsibility and accountability at all levels with all staff expected to take ownership for their own work.

The Committee structure is made up of the [Planning Committee](#) which makes high level policy and strategy decisions on planning matters and the [Development Management Sub-Committee](#) which makes decisions on around 10% of planning applications. This committee meets every 2 weeks ensuring that cases are dealt with quickly. Senior managers meet the Convenor and Vice-Convenor on a weekly basis to resolve urgent issues.

- Schemes of delegation effective; committee and local review body cycles meet with appropriate regularity -

The Council currently has two [schemes of delegation](#) covering the Planning Service. This allows more complex and contentious applications to be decided by Committee with planning officers determining those of less public interest. This has led to a highly efficient planning service with performance steadily improving and currently standing at 82.1% of applications being determined within 2 months.

- Dealing with delays: evidence of action to progress projects , e.g. stalled cases, development plans -

Service managers are required to submit a monthly performance report for scrutiny by the Leadership Team.

Active monitoring of Development Plan and planning application performance is embedded into the ethos of the service through the [Business Plan and the Service Improvement Plan](#). In terms of planning applications, [processing agreements](#) are now firmly established as the most effective and efficient way of dealing with major planning applications. Principal planners of the development management teams monitor performance and advise on dealing with any planning delays.

- Time management: training available and policy/procedures in place -

The Council has a full training offering through E-learning and in-house courses ranging from leadership matters to time management. Project management training is embedded in the major development teams. The Planning service has a staff development group which focuses on delivering appropriate training and monthly workshops are held on topics such as development economics, One Door Approach and legislative change so that all staff are aware of them.

- Service agreements/protocols with agencies and other consultees; reviewed regularly -

The Council has aligned its own outcomes to the Government's [Single Outcome Agreement](#). In addition, the Planning service has a number of partnership working relationships including the Edinburgh Development Forum and the establishment of the [Edinburgh Planning Concordat](#). Protocols with transport and economic development staff have been instrumental in assisting joint working with other Council services.

Effective management structures

Ensuring management structures are effective and fit for purpose:

- **Local authority management and team structures capable of delivering planning/development priorities**

The Planning Service Leadership Team is underpinned by several Groups: Within Development Planning – one group deals with the Strategic Development Plan and Local Development Plan and associated research and information, another provides specialist Natural and Built heritage advice and a Delivery and Implementation service, which is a key aspect of planning in a Capital heritage city. In Development Management there are five teams dealing with planning applications - two major, two local and a listed building team, as well as an enforcement, appeals and development contributions group.

- **Good support mechanism in place; mobile/fluid workforce able to react where needed -**

Staff are re-allocated to areas of greatest need when appropriate and additional short-term appointments are made when necessary so that performance overall can be maintained. In the year in question there have been no significant failures to meet [performance targets](#).

- **Planned development of staffing resource; right numbers and skills available to meet future needs -**

The Council's Performance Related Development process and contribution based pay facilitate efforts to develop staff. There is a staff development group which oversees training and development needs. Regular staff seminars, at which attendance is usually compulsory, are held along with away-days when issues facing the service can be considered. A skills audit has recently been undertaken to ascertain which members of staff have particular additional skills which can be called on when working groups and project teams are being assembled.

- **Collaboration: strong relationships with (i) other business areas within local authority, (ii) neighbouring authorities, and (iii) other public bodies, to deliver joint objectives -**

The recent restructuring with the Planning service now being part of Services for Communities means the Head of Planning and Building Standards is now responsible for a wider remit of services within the City Centre and Leith Neighbourhood. This brings together various front-line services with which planning has close working links.

The Council works with five other authorities in South East Scotland through SESplan to prepare the Strategic Development Plan.

The service works with other public bodies, organisations and community groups to improve the service provided, for example; Scottish Enterprise, Forth Ports, NHS Lothian, University of Edinburgh, New Inghliston, and the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland. The award winning concordat is an example of this work. Processing agreements for all major development proposals is another example of this collaborative working ethos.



Financial management and local governance

Demonstrating effective governance and financial management:

- Resources aligned to priorities; demonstrate drawing on workforce survey

Planning has a flexible and agile workforce which can move between teams to deal with casework fluctuations within Development Management. In 2011-2012 we had the highest caseload per officer of Scottish cities.

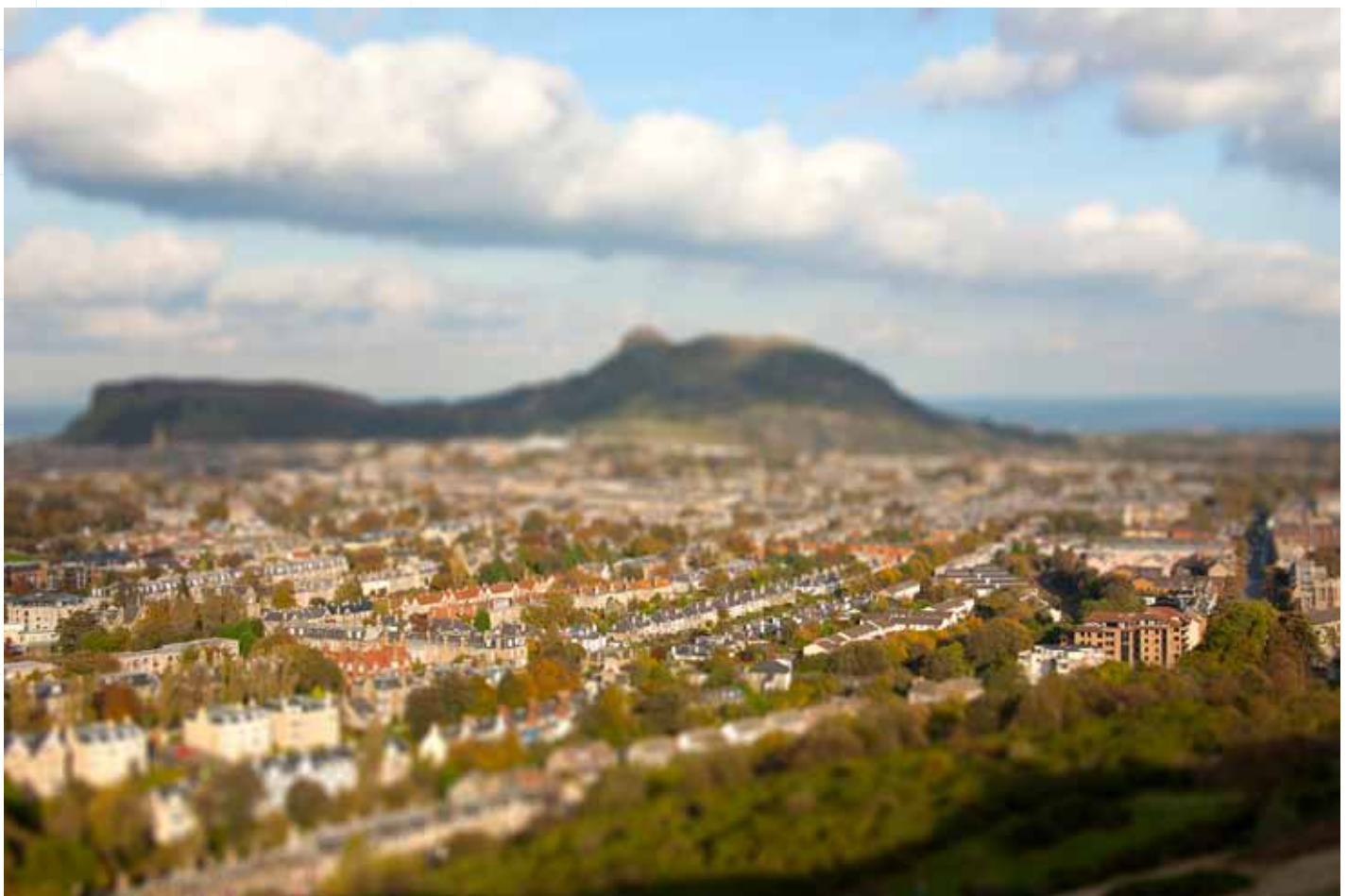
Planning has realigned our Development Planning staff to focus our resources in Strategic Development Plan and Local Development Plan in order to meet our publicly agreed timescales.

- Policy to ensure time and resources committed is proportionate to the value added.

Year out students and interns have been recruited to cover short term staffing vacancies. This allows us to meet the fluctuations in Development Management and undertake shortlife projects within Development Planning.

- Structures in place to procure services/spend effectively

There is a dedicated finance manager and ongoing Council budget monitoring to ensure that we are efficient and effective in procuring services and spend. The Council uses the Oracle system for procurement.



Culture of continuous improvement

Demonstrating a culture of learning and improving:

- **Plan for ongoing development of staff, management and elected members**

As part of our Gold Award for Investors in People, we have a strong commitment to staff development, comprising annual Performance Review and Development appraisal, an annual target of 5 days staff development per officer, and bespoke monthly training workshops. These appraisals also allow staff to express their areas of interest and facilitate team moves.

Members decisions are important to investor confidence and a full programme of training is delivered throughout the year to ensure Councillors are well versed on all planning issues and decisions are justified.

- **Evidence staff, management and members have been well trained and given clear sense of priorities**

The council has its own training programme including 300 online bespoke courses which all staff can access. Staff are encouraged to pursue continuous learning, for example attending external seminars, workshops and conferences, or applying for further or higher educational courses.

This is discussed through Performance Related Development appraisals which are linked to our Planning Service priorities as set out in our annual Business Plan or Service Improvement Plan.

- Previous improvement plan – evidence it has been delivered and benefits realised

Business Plan and Service Improvement Plan 2011-2012 Achievements

The Annual Report on the Business Plan and Service Improvement Plan highlight that 75% of Business Plan targets were completed on or above target including: the Strategic Development Plan ratification; the Edinburgh Local Development Plan Main Issues Report publication; accreditation of Customer Service Excellence; implementation of the householder permitted development changes and completion of the Canal Strategy.

The Service Plan identifies that 77% of the targets are currently exceeded or met this year, including over 90% of householder applications now being processed within 2 months – maintaining this significant achievement of last year. Where performance against existing targets is maintained, the next annual plan either increases the target or agrees that this is embedded within our service delivery and no longer considered an area for improvement.

Part 3 - Supporting Evidence

The submission is supported by Hyperlinked references to key evidence throughout.

A full index of evidence is set out below

[Action Plan for the Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan](#)

[Annual Development Activity Bulletin](#)

[Area Development Frameworks](#)

[Business Plan and the Service Improvement Plan](#)

[Civic Forum](#)

[Communication and consultation toolkits](#)

[Complaints Policy](#)

[Customer Service Charters](#)

[Customer Service Excellence](#)

[Delivering Capital Growth](#)

[Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing](#)

[Development Management Sub-Committee](#)

[Development Plan Scheme](#)

[Edinburgh City Local Plan](#)

[Edinburgh Local Development Plan Main Issues Report consultation](#)

[Edinburgh People's Survey](#)

[Economic Resilience Plan](#)

[Edinburgh Local Development Plan](#)

[Edinburgh Residents Survey](#)

[Edinburgh Standards for urban design, sustainable buildings, streets and housing](#)

[Edinburgh Urban Design Panel](#)

[Environmental Quality Indicators](#)

[Main issues Report](#)

[Monitoring Report for its Open Space Strategy](#)

[National 24 hour Twitter](#)

[New Permitted Development](#)

[Planning Committee](#)

[Planning help desk service](#)

[Performance Targets](#)

[Processing Agreements](#)

[Retail Strategy for the City Centre](#)

[Royal Mile charrette](#)

[Schemes of Delegation](#)

[Single Outcome Agreement](#)

[The Council website](#)

[The Planning Concordat](#)

[The Proposed Strategic Development Plan](#)

[Union Canal Strategy](#)

[Validate a Planning Application](#)

[Validation guidance](#)

[World Heritage New Management Plan for 2011-16](#)

[2012 Better Connected Report](#)

Part 4 - Service Improvements

Culture of continuous improvement

City of Edinburgh Council annually prepares a [Planning and Building Standards Business Plan and Service Improvement Plan](#) to provide a comprehensive overview of service improvements. Customers and front line staff are involved in their preparation as detailed in the Committee Report.

The One Page Business Plan focuses on key areas of change at a high level within Development Management and Building Standards, and the main products from Development Planning and Design Initiative. The Service Improvement Plan then articulates these initiatives through indicators to management performance under the 4 key themes of Key Performance, Customer, Community and People.

Business Plan and Service Improvement Plan 2012- 2103 Proposals Summary

Key Performance

We have set new and challenging targets for timescales on processing planning applications.

Customer

We will implement the Customer Service Excellence Action Plan setting out our actions to maintain our accreditation and continuously improve the customer service we deliver.

Community

We will assess use and effectiveness of communication toolkit.

We will also build on the Environment Indicators to develop an approach to Quality Indicators that will highlight our design quality on the ground.

Staff

Our substantial training investment of 5 days spent on staff development per staff member per year is maintained.

Appendix 1

Decision making timescales

| CATEGORY | TOTAL NUMBER OF DECISIONS | PROPORTION OF DECISIONS | AVERAGE TIME (WEEKS) ¹ |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| All Major Developments | 22 | | 77.4 |
| All Local Developments ² | 2,352 | | 9.1 |
| All Local developments (non-householder) | 919 | | 12.1 |
| Local: less than 2 months | 625 | 68.0% | 6.8 |
| Local: more than 2 months | 294 | 32.0% | 24.8 |
| Householder developments | 1,433 | | 7.1 |
| Local: less than 2 months | 1,310 | 91.4% | 6.5 |
| Local: more than 2 months | 123 | 8.6% | 13.5 |
| Housing Developments - Major | 7 | | 112.3 |
| Housing Developments - Local | 172 | | 15.4 |
| Local: less than 2 months | 105 | 61.0% | 7.1 |
| Local: more than 2 months | 67 | 39.0% | 28.4 |
| Business & Industry - Major | 0 | | - |
| Business & Industry - Local | 98 | | 9.8 |
| Local: less than 2 months | 75 | 76.5% | 6.6 |
| Local: more than 2 months | 23 | 23.5% | 20.1 |
| EIA Developments | 0 | | - |
| Other Consents ⁴ | 1,288 | | 9.2 |

Decision Making: Applications subject to³

| CATEGORY | TOTAL NUMBER OF DECISIONS | PROPORTION OF DECISIONS | AVERAGE TIME (WEEKS) ¹ |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Planning/Legal Agreements | 82 | | 53.2 |
| Local Reviews ⁵ | 80 | | 10.3 |

Decision-making: local reviews and appeals⁶

| | TOTAL NUMBER OF DECISIONS | ORIGINAL DECISION UPHELD (%) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Local Reviews | 80 | 55 |
| Appeals to Scottish Ministers | 70 | 65 |

Enforcement activity

| | NUMBER |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Cases Taken Up | 798 |
| Notices Served | 54 |
| Reports to Procurator Fiscal | 0 |
| Prosecutions | 0 |

Applications Decided after more than 3 years⁷

| | NUMBER |
|--------------------|--------|
| Major Applications | 3 |
| Local Applications | 3 |
| Other Consents | 1 |

1. Average time is calculated from the data of validation to the date the decision is issued.
2. Excludes EIA Developments and Other Consents
3. These applications are included in the categories above.
4. Consents and certificates: Listed buildings and Conservation area consents, Control of Advertisement consents, Hazardous Substances consents, Established Use Certificates, certificates of lawfulness of existing use or development, notification on overhead electricity lines, notifications and directions under GPDO Parts 6 & 7 relating to agricultural and forestry development and applications for prior approval by Coal Authority or licensed operator under classes 60 & 62 of the GPDO.
5. The average time for Local Reviews is calculated from LRB received date to LRB decision date.
6. Applications in this section are based on decisions made in 2011/12 by LRBs and Scottish Ministers.
7. These applications are included in calculations and will increase averages.

Commentary on Performance Statistics

Edinburgh's figures shows consistently high performance in all areas apart from major developments. However, the basic figures for major applications do not reflect the partnership working we undertake with developers with agreed timescales through processing agreements. In addition, the figures do not reflect the inherent delays of concluding legal agreements.

In terms of householder developments, the figures reflect a top performing authority with 91.4% of applications being processed under the 2 months target.

Local development in general is dealt with quickly with over 60% being dealt with in 2 months in all categories. Business and industry development is a priority and this is reflected in the 76.5% of applications processed in the target period. This stimulates business confidence and shows that delivering economic development is a priority for this Council.

Edinburgh intends to build on these figures and display a culture of continuous improvement. A more detailed analysis of actual processing times of major applications for future Planning Performance Frameworks will allow us to show that Edinburgh is Open for Business.

Appendix 2: Workforce and Financial Information

Planning and Building Standards Budget 2011-2012:

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Salaries | £7,321,809 |
| Third Party Payments | £1,490,755 |
| Other Costs | £630,812 |
| Total | £9,443,376 |
| Projected Income | £4,048,443 |

Planning Staffing 2011-2012

| Staffing* including current vacancies | Development Management | Development Planning |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Managerial | 11 | 9 |
| Officers | 34 | 23 |
| Enforcement Officers | 7 | 0 |
| Technicians | 8 | 6 |
| Admin. | 11 | 2 |
| Others | 10 | 11 |
| Total Headcount | 81 | 51 |



Planning Performance Framework

Services for Communities
Planning

2011 - 2012
~~2011 - 2012~~