

PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

REPORT 2017-18

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INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to provide our seventh annual performance report on our planning services.

This Planning Performance Framework reports on our performance across a broad range of areas, covering the 12 months from 1 April 2017.

As well as looking at speed of decision making, we cover other key factors including, quality, workloads, resources, organisation and outcomes.

Our case studies demonstrate how we add value to our communities and contribute to the enhancement of our natural and built environment.

We welcome this opportunity to highlight our achievements, successes and individuality with you.



YOU SAID...

Time scales are too long and planning applications should be turned around more quickly

WE DID...

We reviewed our scheme of delegation and our committee processes to streamline and make our processes efficient



Photograph by Brian Cairns

NORTH LANARKSHIRE

North Lanarkshire forms a geographically diverse area between the urban conurbation of Glasgow which we border to the west, and the moorlands of central Scotland to the east. The southern part of our area is heavily populated, particularly in the south west around the large town of Motherwell, and nearby settlements.

The towns of Airdrie and Coatbridge form the central area, while Cumbernauld, our largest town, is situated to the north. The south eastern and northern parts are more rural in character with lower population densities and more extensive areas of open countryside. Although agricultural land accounts for over 18,000 hectares, the population density is 6.8 people per hectare, making us the fifth most densely populated local authority area in Scotland.

With a land area of approximately 47,000 hectares, and a population of over 339,000, we are the fourth largest local authority in Scotland.

North Lanarkshire's historical development of the coal, steel and heavy engineering industries has resulted in one of the largest areas of vacant and derelict land in Scotland, accounting for 1,222 hectares*.

These traditional industries have now largely been replaced by a modern business infrastructure and newly formed employment sectors.

*(Source: Scottish vacant and derelict land survey 2016)



North Lanarkshire Council's Business Plan outlines what the council aims to achieve for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire up to 2020.

The plan sets the strategic direction for the council and guides the work of the services.

OUR FIVE PRIORITIES ARE TO

- **IMPROVE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND OUTCOMES**
- **SUPPORT ALL CHILDREN TO REALISE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL**
- **IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND CARE OF COMMUNITIES**
- **IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITIES AND THE THIRD SECTOR**
- **IMPROVE THE COUNCIL'S RESOURCE BASE**

These five clear corporate priorities set out a strong emphasis on a one council approach. It is recognised that this holistic approach across the whole organisation is essential to drive more effective partnership working which will bring about significant transformation. It will deliver broader economic and social benefits for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.

Our planning service is part of Enterprise and Housing Resources and has a central role in the delivery of priority outcome 'Improve Economic Opportunities and Outcomes' by making our areas attractive business locations, improving employment opportunities, encouraging strong sustainable communities, and enhancing and protecting our natural and built environment.



The 'North Lanarkshire – Our Ambition' report outlines the key projects that will be developed and implemented to contribute to the delivery of 'Improve Economic Opportunities and Outcomes'.

The future plan for growth, 'Building a Better Future' in North Lanarkshire, includes the regeneration of place, the future re-provisioning of town centres and the reinvigoration of land, buildings and housing, including the ambitious council NL Homes new build programme that aims to deliver 5,000 affordable new homes by 2035.

Further supporting growth in North Lanarkshire is the [Glasgow City Region City Deal](#) which will create economic growth and attract investment by improving transport and regenerating or developing sites over the next 20 years.

Through the City Deal infrastructure fund, £172.5 million will be invested across North Lanarkshire in three core roads projects:

- [A8/M8 corridor access improvements](#)
- [Gartcosh/Glenboig community growth area](#)
- [Pan-Lanarkshire orbital transport corridor](#)



PART 1

QUALITATIVE NARRATIVE AND CASE STUDIES

There are many ways of defining and measuring a high quality planning service.

The Scottish Government has asked that we cover our:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement
- Governance
- Culture of continuous improvement

QUALITY OF OUTCOMES

The quality of our outcomes can be demonstrated by analysing the value our planning service adds to development in our area.

We ensure a proactive approach to protecting and enhancing our natural and built environment through our design policies, local plan, development frameworks and by engaging positively with developers before and during the application process.

We continue with our challenging commitment towards raising standards and achieving quality change we can be proud of, our [North Lanarkshire Local Plan](#) is used to guide development, inform decisions and planning policy for the area.

The policies and guidance within, and that evolve from the plan contribute to the delivery of improved economic opportunities and outcomes for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire through the delivery of high quality development on the ground.

To ensure the plan is effectively implemented, our main focus remains on the continuation of the successful process of urban renewal through environmental and town centre improvements. Our [masterplanning](#), the promotion of [Ravenscraig](#) (Scotland's biggest regeneration site and a national development within National Planning Framework 3), and our identified [Community Growth Areas](#) all contribute to high quality development.

Our case studies demonstrate our approach to managing change in the built environment in a positive way. Our comprehensive planning policies, guidance and collaborative approach has led to high quality development using innovative design to create comfortable, accessible places to live, work and visit.

CASE STUDY 01 highlights how our planning policy, cross service and partnership working arrangements have been successful in making environmental improvements. They addressed the challenging issue of contaminated deep ground water on the site of the former Ravenscraig Steelworks in Motherwell.

Although the regeneration of this site has been underway since the mid 1990's, the inherited industrial legacy of deep groundwater contamination is a potential environmental issue that is being addressed through ongoing remediation monitoring and activities.



Photograph by Brian Cairns

CASE STUDY 01

RAVENS CRAIG ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF CONTAMINATED DEEP GROUNDWATER

Location and Dates:

2009 to present

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):

Quality of outcomes

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

12

Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):

- Regeneration
- Environment
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working

Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):

- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

The redevelopment of the site of the former Ravenscraig Steelworks in Motherwell is a National Development in the National Planning Framework and is one of Europe's largest regeneration projects.

This 400 hectare site has seen site clearance, decontamination, infrastructure and redevelopment works take place since the mid 1990's. The site is still in the early stages of its overall development, and it now is the home of New College Lanarkshire Motherwell Campus, the Ravenscraig Regional Sports Facility, BRE (British Research Establishment) Innovation Park, a family pub/restaurant, a hotel and more than 500 new homes.

The site's industrial heritage presented some significant issues in terms of ground conditions, and major site works have been required to make the site suitable for development. In addition to the near-surface ground conditions, there was an issue with deep groundwater under the site, at depths of up to 80 metres below ground. The site is underlain by a complex geology, including mine workings and geological faults.

During the operation of the steelworks, from the 1950s until the 1990s, large quantities of industrial liquors were disposed of (under licence) by means of boreholes into the mine workings. As a consequence, the deep groundwater is known to be heavily contaminated, including the presence of free product (oil). The outline planning permission for the overall site redevelopment required actions to deal with contamination and, specifically, to protect controlled waters.

Goals:

Our goals were to ensure that the issue of contaminated deep groundwater was addressed in a satisfactory and proportionate manner that will give confidence to both developers and the environmental regulators.

In 2009 a working group involving representatives of North Lanarkshire Council, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Ravenscraig Limited, the developer of the site, was set up to consider the matter of the deep groundwater, and to reach agreement on the best way forward. Further site investigations were carried out, and a Conceptual Site Model (CSM) prepared to assess the potential impact of existing deep groundwater contamination and how future developments at the site may impact on groundwater.

It was Ravenscraig Limited's intentions to use the provisions of Article 6(3)(e)(ii) of the Groundwater Daughter Directive 2006 to seek an exemption from the 'prevent and limit' requirements of the Directive, but it became apparent during discussions with senior Scottish Government officials that although the Directive had been transposed into Scots Law, there was no specific legislative provision that covered the process that would be involved for an application for exemption to be made. It was therefore agreed that the best mechanism to use was the planning system as the vehicle to deliver the Article 6 Exemption, given that a planning permission can apply conditions and can be enforced, and SEPA (as 'Competent Authority') would be consulted. The Deep Groundwater Working Group continued to meet to discuss and agree what was required to take the process forward, and to explore better ways of working.

Outcomes:

In 2014, with the working group having agreed the number and locations of additional Oil Characterisation Boreholes, a planning application was submitted for permission for structures associated with the boreholes. That application was granted, subject to conditions requiring further investigation of the groundwater and the removal of oil, up to a 'technical end point' to be agreed.

The investigation works have been carried out, and agreement has been reached on a Monitored Natural Attenuation (MNH) scheme.

The purpose of deep groundwater remediation at Ravenscraig is to ensure that pollution of surface waters is prevented and that pollution of groundwater does not become worse. MNH is the monitoring of groundwater to establish if pollutants are being naturally broken down in the soil, or if they will require further remediation work as they surface.

The working group has demonstrated cross agency working, inter-disciplinary working (geologists, contaminated land specialists, planners), and co-operation between agencies and the private sector.

The objective was to ensure that a potential environmental issue can be investigated and addressed in a way that allows continuing progress on a national development that will bring significant environmental, economic and social benefits to the area.

With the submission of the revised Masterplan during 2017-18, the regeneration and impressive transformation of Ravenscraig will continue into the future.

Name of key officer:

Les Stevenson

The cross agency and inter-disciplinary working group bring together Ravenscraig Ltd (the developer), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and the local authority planning and protective services. The group has cooperated to investigate and address this issue in a proportionate manner that will give developers confidence in the environmental conditions and allow continuing progress for the regeneration of the area.

The new masterplan for the Ravenscraig site has now been submitted for consideration. Boosted by the [£190 million roads programme](#) approved by the Glasgow City Region City Deal, it is anticipated the regeneration of the site will continue to be an attractive and sustainable investment for the private sector. We will carry on working with Ravenscraig Ltd and our key partners in working to evolve and finalise the Masterplan, ensuring the impressive transformation of the site continues over the next ten years and beyond.

Town centres are, once again, being increasingly recognised as the core of communities which should be protected, promoted and enhanced. Positive intervention is required to encourage and deliver town centre regeneration and sustainable growth.

Our [town centre framework and action plans](#) and Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS), including the current Coatbridge CARS, support and guide the growth and resilience of our town centres.

Last year we chose to highlight the [Coatbridge CARS](#) scheme as a prime example of how the ambitions of a community can influence and guide the positive conservation and successful regeneration of a town centre. This CARS scheme has been particularly successful in using feedback, creating opportunities for partnership working and involving the local community.



Giving an update on the progress of Coatbridge Conservation and Regeneration Scheme (CARS), **CASE STUDY 02** focuses on the former Carnegie Library building.

The 'category B listed' building was vacant and had been designated a 'Building at Risk'. Its prominent position and historical importance meant the building played a central role in the regeneration of Coatbridge town centre.

The regeneration of this historic building demonstrates how the application of our policies and partnership working with stakeholders including the local community can lead to positive outcomes. It shows how we can protect our built heritage while promoting and enhancing our town centres.

The flexible, collaborative approach taken to this development from the outset meant this important building was successfully brought back into use, providing high quality affordable housing and contributing a high profile example of the regeneration of the town centre.



YOU SAID...

A more transparent enforcement process was needed to help understand what type of enquiry will be prioritised

WE DID...

We updated our enforcement charter to include examples of works that would receive high priority

CASE STUDY 02

CARS UPDATE COATBRIDGE LIBRARY, COATBRIDGE

Location and Dates:

2015 to present

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):

Quality of outcomes

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

12

Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):

- Design
- Conservation
- Regeneration
- Town Centres
- Housing Supply
- Affordable Housing
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working

Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):

- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

Coatbridge has a historic core centred around the Monkland Canal and the original residential expansion to the east and later development to the west. The area includes listed buildings such as churches and public buildings, and structures such as bridges and war memorials. Defining characteristics are the buff and red sandstone buildings and many significant public buildings.

The former library in Coatbridge is one such building. It was designed by Alexander Cullen, built in 1905 and was financed by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. The building, including boundary walls and gate piers, was category B listed by Historic Scotland in 1993.

Located prominently within the boundary of the Coatbridge Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS), the former library building had been vacant since 2010 and was designated a 'Building at Risk'.

The building was actively marketed by the council's property section with a brief prepared in consultation with the planning service providing advice on possible uses and implications relating to the listed building status and location within the Conservation Area.

The building was sold to Clyde Valley Housing Association (CVHA). Having taken a number of years to find an end user for the building, the council and CVHA worked together to create an innovative and viable redevelopment scheme.

With help from Historic Environment Scotland, funding through Coatbridge CARS, Clyde Valley Housing Association have brought this vacant property back into use with the development of 12 modern flatted dwellings with outdoor amenities.

Goals:

Careful consideration was given to the overall design proposal. Early pre-application engagement by Clyde Valley Housing Association and M.A.S.T Architects with Elected Members, the council's housing, regeneration, property and building standards teams ensured a sensitive scheme in design terms.

A public exhibition in the new library by M.A.S.T Architects ensured the local community was kept informed of the proposal.

To ensure the building was redeveloped in a positive way to complement the character of the Conservation Area, the prominent two storey principle public elevations and interior of the building were retained and renovated sympathetically

Minimal maintenance work was carried out to the perimeter walls and railings.

Internally, levels were raised to provide a more practical and usable space. As many original features as was practicable were retained and the unique flats each reflect the character of the original building.

The redevelopment involved the partial demolition of the former book stores - two sections to the rear. This work was necessary to make sure the floor plan was compatible with residential conversion. The rear of the building was finished using a modern vertical timber cladding, with a newly formed deck access of a modern steel design and an outdoor amenity area for residents.

Outcomes:

The impact of this work has been significant. The scale of the building, its prominence and quality, noted by its B listed status, made saving the building key to preserving the unique character and appearance of Coatbridge.

Historic buildings can play a critical role as a focus for regeneration in our town centres and the redevelopment of the old library has an immediate impact with high quality affordable housing meeting local need while higher population and increased footfall benefit local businesses.

Ultimately, this historically important B listed 'at risk' building was saved by ensuring the conservation, planning, funding and construction issues were approached in a collaborative way that focused on the outcome and making a positive difference to the local community.

The flexible and collaborative approach between the council, Clyde Valley Housing Association and Historic Environment Scotland has been successful in bringing the old Carnegie Library building into use and will continue to be a landmark in Coatbridge for many years to come.

Name of Key Officer:

Paul Williams

QUALITY OF SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT

We are committed to delivering a high quality planning service in a professional manner that exceeds the expectations of our stakeholders. Our [customer service strategy](#) gives us the building blocks to delivering excellent customer service and we ensure our policy and advice offers stakeholders a consistent and intuitive service.

Our [North Lanarkshire Local Plan](#) gives stakeholders certainty by delivering more consistency in decision making and in our advice to any party interested in new development. As a result, of the decisions made by the council, last year 1013 were consistent with the plan with only six departing from the plan.

Our use of [Masterplanning](#) and our identified [Community Growth Areas](#) (CGA) offer further certainty to developers looking to invest in North Lanarkshire. By providing a structured approach and framework across a wide range of complicated issues, they provide a vision for each area and set out clear aims, objectives and design principles, as well as expertly guiding the process.

Our [town centre framework and action plans](#) and successful Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes ([CARS](#)) schemes, support and offer consistent guidance to stakeholders and developers around our regeneration and town centre activities.

While our planning policy contributes to the delivery of 'Improve Economic Opportunities and Outcomes', it is only by working together across the council and with partners that we can deliver for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.

Demonstrating how our service delivery can be supported through joint working arrangements, **CASE STUDY 03** highlights the inter-disciplinary approach taken within the council to dealing with development on contaminated land in North Lanarkshire.

Recognising that our service delivery could be more cohesive for dealing with development on contaminated land, we have worked closely with our colleagues in pollution control and building standards to establish a consistent and coordinated way of working.

Following a workshop that involved staff from all three disciplines (planning, pollution control and building standards), we have strengthened communication across the teams, developed a protocol for dealing with contamination issues and we have standardised guidance for developers.

This working arrangement has been successful and we will again bring the teams together to use their skills and experience to review and develop our contaminated land processes.

Further supporting development, we continue to monitor and update our online information. The promotion of pre-application advice for major development has been successful. By guiding customers to an online pro forma, we ensure they provide us with the relevant information we need to do a pre-application appraisal on proposed major development.

CASE STUDY 03

JOINT WORKING ARRANGEMENTS WITH POLLUTION CONTROL/PLANNING/BUILDING

Location and Dates:

2015 to present

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement
- Governance
- Culture of continuous improvement

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

11, 12

Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):

- Environment
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Process Improvement
- Skills Sharing
- Staff Training

Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

Due to the legacy left behind by North Lanarkshire's industrial past, there is the potential for some contaminated land to remain.

Contamination can pose a threat to the health of future users of the site and to the surrounding environment. Few sites are so badly contaminated that they cannot be re-used at all, but the contamination may limit the range of potential uses. The re-use of these so called brownfield sites is in line with the principle of sustainable development, because it effectively recycles the land and reduces pressure for development of greenfield sites.

It is a key role of the planning system to ensure, if necessary, that land being developed does not carry an unacceptable risk from contamination and that it is made suitable for a proposed end-use in line with current best practice.

To do so it is important that we work closely with our colleagues in the Pollution Control team and Building Standards.

Following feedback from the teams and from customers, our Pollution Control took the lead and invited Planning and Building Standards to set up a working group to look at how the issue of pollution and contaminated land is dealt with in North Lanarkshire.

Some of the issues to be considered were the format of site investigations submitted by applicants for planning applications, potential duplication of work across the services and timescales for responses to planning consultation requests.

Goals:

The purpose of this working group was to consider how we could better provide a coordinated and joined up approach to dealing with contamination issues and to establish standardised practice and guidance for customers.

We wanted to:

- Develop a shared understanding across the teams to allow us to work collaboratively
- Develop a protocol for how consultations around contamination issues are handled
- Improve communication between the teams
- Improve consistency of service for customers
- Work together on a standard form of wording for planning conditions

To find out how we could best do this, we set up an information exchange session. Staff from all three disciplines were invited along to this training and awareness event.

Outcomes:

On the day workshops were held to improve understanding of what we do in our respective regulatory services and to discuss and establish how we could perhaps work more efficiently together during the 'development timeline'.

We are all striving to make improvements and efficiencies in the way we work and feedback from the day was positive with several improvement actions being identified. The working group now meet quarterly to progress these actions and to keep an open dialogue that will allow us to continue to work better together.

We consider this new working arrangement successful and to date we achieved the following:

- A protocol has been developed for how consultations will be managed that has allowed us to better manage expectation of timescales.
- Tailored responses to consultation allow us to greater highlight specific site issues.
- The group has established a standard form of working for conditions that will improve consistency for customers.
- Communication between the teams has improved.

To build on this work, in the coming year it is planned to hold another staff session to review how our new protocol and coordinated working arrangements are working and they could be further improved.

It is also proposed to hold an information session with Agents to promote the new guidance currently being produced by Environmental Protection Scotland; Introduction to Land Contamination and Development Management and to discuss the standard format of site investigation reports.

Name of Key Officer:

Graeme Lee and Lindsay Kellock

This enables us to provide a bespoke response for each and every proposal, requesting supporting information relating to the particular development that is both clear and proportionate. This approach to early collaboration also allows us to discuss requirements for developer contributions at an early stage. Our requests for supporting information and for developer contributions are based on the scale and nature of the proposal, the guidance contained within our SPGs and discussions with key consultees who would be commenting on planning applications.

Positive intervention and application of our policies helps to shape our communities in various ways. **CASE STUDY 04** focuses on the development of Lidl's distribution centre in Eurocentral.

In this instance our proactive 'open for business' approach gave the developer confidence and ensured that this area of vacant and derelict land was brought back in to use in a way that has a number of positive impact on the local area and community.

This example highlights the value and impact effective pre-application discussion, including clear and proportionate requests for supporting information, has on the efficient handling of major development in the area.



Photograph by Brian Cairns

Due to prioritising resources and a focus on a smarter approach to working, householders and agents dealing with local development enquiries are guided to our website where they can obtain key information, including [Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) (SPG) and guidance on what [information and supporting documents are necessary to support a planning application](#).

This information covers expected standards of development and contains advice that is clear and guides on matters that require to be addressed. The supporting documents and the circumstances where it would be appropriate to include them with a planning application to ensure we receive a comprehensive and proportionate submission.

The SPG forms an essential element for consistency, not only in the area of decision making, but also in pre-application advice and submission making. Feedback via consultation had led us to review and modify our Local Development Plan. The requirements and content of the SPG are being evaluated as part of this process.

We continue to offer processing agreements with all major development applications. Our direct and proactive approach to encouraging their use has had a positive response, with 55% of major development applications over 2017-18 being subject to processing agreements. This commitment to timescales offers certainty to applicants and allows greater efficiency around case management.

While we continue to deliver a wide range of services we must communicate effectively to our customers and stakeholders to ensure we manage and meet expectation. Our [customer charter](#) tells our customers the level of service we strive to provide.

Our methods of communication with customers and stakeholders are designed to communicate with them in the ways they like to hear from us. This includes our website, Govdelivery (an email subscription service), social media, press and email.

A link to our published Planning Performance Framework was circulated to our Govdelivery subscribers last year. As a result there was a large spike in online activity, highlighting that stakeholders were interacting with our publication.

Further enhancing the quality of engagement we have with customers and stakeholders, we have established regular agents forums. We have scheduled an event for 2018-19 that will cascade information to stakeholders on our service delivery, the new planning bill and will promote our joint working arrangements around contaminated sites. This will also be a valuable opportunity to get feedback on our service that will help inform future improvement actions.

CASE STUDY 04

DEVELOPMENT OF LIDL DISTRIBUTION CENTRE

Location and Dates:

Eurocentral Industrial and Business Park. From September 2015 to present.

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement
- Governance

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

3, 11, 12

Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| • Design | • Planning Applications |
| • Regeneration | • Interdisciplinary Working |
| • Environment | • Collaborative Working |
| • Greenspace | • Community Engagement |
| • Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance | • Skills Sharing |
| • Economic Development | • Transport |
| • Development Management Processes | • Active Travel |

Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| • General Public | • Authority Planning Staff |
| • Key Agencies | • Authority Other Staff |
| • Planning Committee | |

Overview:

Planning permission has been granted and ground work has now started on the development of Lidl's regional distribution centre at Eurocentral in North Lanarkshire. This multi million pound project includes storage, warehousing and offices together with parking, servicing, a new access road, landscaping and drainage.

The distribution centre is one of the largest in the UK and will support Lidl's Scottish stores.

Having outgrown their current premises in Livingston, the relocation to Eurocentral, a Strategic Economic Investment Location in North Lanarkshire, will safeguard approximately 300 existing jobs and create up to 360 new jobs.

The project is being developed on a vacant site extending to almost 21 hectares and was formerly used in part for coal mining, quarrying and landfill activities. The proposed building will be to a vast scale and will measure 58,000 square metres.

The scale of this proposal and the necessity to relocate meant Lidl, as the applicant, made extensive efforts during pre-application discussions to establish the likely level of technical information required to support the consideration of the proposed planning application.

The volume of work and the coordination and organisation involved in this major application, through pre-application discussion and from point of receipt to approval within tight timescales, demonstrates that major development in North Lanarkshire is managed and processed efficiently and effectively.

Goals:

This development will have a significant impact on the local area. The application secured the development of a key site bringing back into use vacant and derelict land. With over 360 new jobs created, there will be increased employment opportunities for the people of North Lanarkshire.

With every application our goal from the outset is to build a positive working relationship with developers and applicants. This is of particular value when the proposed development site brings unique challenges. To develop this positive working relationship, a single point of contact within our service was established.

The operational requirements of the building meant that the site needed to be level. Due to the topography of the site, significant engineering works would be necessary to create a level development platform. One of the main challenges we faced was how to ensure a building that is 400m long and constructed on a level platform was built in such a way as to ensure the development successfully created a sense of place.

To make sure our decision making process was as efficient as possible, early multi-disciplinary collaboration through the pre-application process was key. The outcome of this cross cutting approach was positive and highlighted issues, many which were complex such as; site levels, former mining, contamination, the proximity to local housing, the impact the development would have on the transport network, local cycleway and footpaths and the visual impact of such a large building.

Our mutual ambition for this site was to ensure the impact of the development was positive and that it would:

- Support and contribute to sustainable economic growth in North Lanarkshire
- Deliver a high quality design that had a positive impact on the local area
- Create a development that would ensure greenspace formed an integral part of the design, rather than be marginalised
- Have minimal impact on existing local housing
- Have minimal impact on local amenities
- Have minimum impact on the environment
- Use landscaping to break up impact of such a large building

Outcomes:

This case study demonstrated the success of our plan-led development management service that supports sustainable growth in North Lanarkshire.

Clearly the smooth and speedy passage through the planning application process was aided by the fact that the site is zoned in the adopted Local Plan as an 'Industrial and Business Site', however the presence of Supplementary Planning Guidance on matters such as Landscaping, Trees and Development, Flooding and Drainage, Industrial and Business Development and Biodiversity provided additional clarity including what supporting information should be provided alongside the planning application.

(Continued on next page)

CASE STUDY 04

DEVELOPMENT OF LIDL DISTRIBUTION CENTRE (continued)

Outcomes (continued):

Our multi-disciplinary pre-application process allowed us to work with the applicant and key stakeholders towards the articulated design and layout and to address the complex technical requirements of the development early in the process.

Addressing and resolving these issues early meant that the submitted application was robust from the outset, with the exception of further clarity on technical documents that would be reviewed by external consultees.

We believe the development is achieving what it set out to, not only bringing vacant and derelict land back into use, but also having a positive impact on the local area.

The high quality design of the building contributes creating a sense of place, featuring prominent contemporary frontages whilst being bringing a practical element for the operational function of the building. The proposed landscaping screening will successfully give this large building a context that fits with the site and local environment.

It is standard practice for planning permissions of this scale and nature to have a requirement for a Green Travel Plan and this permission is no different. However, in recognition of the fact that the scheme involves the relocation of the firm's Livingston facility, a Travel Plan Coordinator will be appointed by Lidl three months prior to the new site becoming operational to assist current employees of the existing Livingston facility to plan their journeys to the new site.

Throughout the process successful communication and trust meant all pre-application advice was taken on board by the applicant, meaning the application was turned round efficiently and effectively while maintaining a focus on high quality design.

In terms of our efficient processing of this major development application, we achieved a 12 week turn-around from the date the valid application was received to the committee approval decision date. This time frame falls well within the four month target for this type of proposal and has contributed to the overall aim of encouraging development to achieve economic growth in North Lanarkshire.

Name of Key Officer:

Joanne Delaney

To reach our communities we have scheduled 'Community Engagement with Planning' events for 2018-19. These events will look at the planning system and 'walk' through the process to ensure it is as transparent as possible, and to give an insight as to how best to make comment or to address concerns at each stage in the planning process.

We will continue to carry out consultation around the key indicators of customer satisfaction for development management through customer survey questionnaires. These measures include an overall satisfaction with our service delivery. To date all feedback we have received through this method of consultation on our service delivery has been overwhelmingly positive.

Our '[Listening to You](#)' customer complaints procedure demonstrates that we value feedback and we welcome the opportunity to review our service delivery.

Our front line staff are also key to gauging opinion on our service delivery and many improvements have been made from listening to customers at all stages of their journey.

The improvements made by listening to feedback are highlighted by '**YOU SAID... WE DID...**'

Our communication strategy encourages a planned, two way approach to internal communication in supporting the delivery of our service. Information from regular senior management team meetings is cascaded to staff meetings and via Govdelivery bulletins. The aim being that all staff are informed and involved with our service developments.



GOVERNANCE

Our planning service sits within Enterprise and Place forming part of the councils Enterprise and Housing Resources.

The organisational structure within Enterprise and Housing Resources has been designed to promote greater collaboration and integration of services. This facilitates a truly corporate approach to the delivery of the council's priorities and contribute to the achievement of improved outcomes for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.

The statutory elements of planning have now been brought together and in the coming year will work under one manager, forming the Planning and Place team. It is anticipated that the realignment of the teams will enhance our smarter approach to working, and will continue to develop the principle of concentrating appropriate and proportionate resources that will allow us to focus on our core business and address our priorities.

Workloads, resources and performance are closely monitored through our regular management team meetings. Our commitment to continuous development of staff is supported through our updated Performance Review and Development (PRD) process.

Recognising that the services are now configured better to deliver the councils priorities, mandatory training took place for all staff during the reporting year to drive a corporate approach to risk management and project management. This consistency will allow us to deliver the councils priorities in a coordinated and efficient way.

We have ensured that a significant number of staff have broad experience of the functions of the service. This gives us a well experienced staff base; a stable, reliable, multi-skilled and committed workforce that strikes a healthy balance between continuity of a high quality service and staff development.

Furthermore, all senior planners have undertaken management development training to prepare them for the next stage in their career and to ensure good succession planning.

Our committee processes are robust with the new Planning Sub-Committee meeting on a four weekly cycle, in addition to regular special meetings of the Committee outside this cycle to deal with any urgent matters. Adding to the efficiency of our decision making, a new protocol has been agreed in relation to when hearings into planning applications will be held. This [protocol for planning application hearings](#) is published online.

We provide training on local development planning and on development management within the council's formal programme for Elected Members'. Topic related briefing sessions are given to the Planning Sub-Committee monthly, and tours of development on the ground have been carried out to allow particularly new members to see the outcome of decisions.

CASE STUDY 05 is an example of how our fresh approach to Elected Members' training and briefing sessions has successfully led to raised awareness and understanding of specific issues that will support informed decision making.

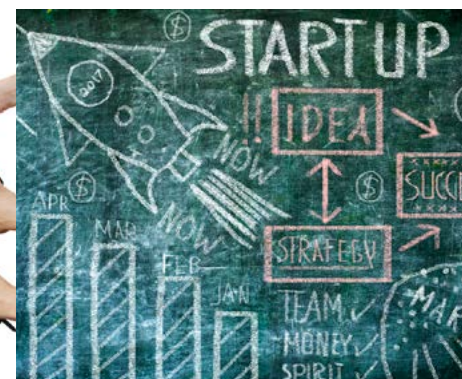


YOU SAID...

More information on whether planning permission was needed for small businesses, such as dog grooming.

WE DID...

We enhanced our website information to include specific examples



CASE STUDY 05

ELECTED MEMBERS TRAINING

Location and Dates:

Various from May 2017 to March 2017

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement
- Governance
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

12

Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):

- Design
- Conservation
- Regeneration
- Town Centres
- Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Housing Supply
- Affordable Housing
- Enforcement
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Process Improvement

Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):

- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff

Overview:

Following the Local Government Elections in May 2017 there was a major change to the elected members serving on the council. A review of the council's operations saw the Planning and Transportation Committee being replaced by a Planning Sub-Committee of Enterprise and Housing Committee. There were new appointments to the Convener and Vice-Convener positions and of the 25 committee members, only 13 had served on the Planning Committee before.

To ensure there was continuity of service, and that there would be no delay to the determination of applications, we had to very quickly start a broad programme of elected member training that would be accessible to all Planning Sub-Committee members.

To enable this, we decided to take a new approach by shortening our training sessions. We began with an introductory session in advance of the first meeting of the Planning Sub-Committee on how planning applications are assessed. After that we held 20 minute sessions on different aspects of planning such as the Development Plan, the role of the Local Review Body, Planning Enforcement and Full Council Hearings at the end of each monthly Committee meeting. These short focussed sessions were successful in encouraging questions and discussion on the issues.

To further enhance the quality of the training we could provide, we made a successful bid to the Scottish Government for grant funding for planning authority elected member training. This grant funding was used to pay for the hire of buses and the members were conducted on a series of

tours of the council area. This approach ensured that all the new members were familiar with planning issues facing the council area and that they could see the quality and outcome of decisions on the ground.

These site tours have been very popular, with their success lying with the fact that the councillors can see live examples of development issues. This approach has prompted greater discussion and promoted a better understanding of planning issues.

Goals:

Our goal was to ensure as many elected members received the training as possible. To maximise the numbers attending, we held the training events as short extensions to the Committee meetings.

This helped us to deliver the training in focussed relevant chunks, tailoring the subject matter to cover issues which we knew were current for the members or which would be most important in the coming months, based on what development would be coming forward.

North Lanarkshire is not only the fourth largest planning authority in Scotland, but covers a large and varied area, extending to some 47,000 hectares with distances of 34 km north-south and 28 km east-west; consequently, new members from one particular area may not be familiar with the planning issues facing different parts of the council area.

With that in mind, we wanted to give the members the opportunity to see at close hand not only the issues faced, but also the positive impact the planning system had and the range of outcomes that could be achieved for the people and communities of North Lanarkshire.

We focussed on:

- Important scenic areas, such as the Kilsyth Hills
- Areas under significant development pressure from future housing, such as the "Northern Corridor", including Stepps, Moodiesburn and Chryston
- Progress being made in our Community Growth Areas
- Improvement works carried out in our major town centres
- Examples of joint working, for example with NHS Lanarkshire in joint developments with the council
- Examples of award winning new housing developments, introducing the members to principles such as Designing Streets
- Examples of the council's Affordable Housing policy being put into practice, particularly on joint public/private sites with 'tenure-blind' design
- Wind Farm developments, at a closer range than they would typically get
- Modern Business Park developments
- Locations for significant City Deal proposals
- Progress at Ravenscraig, a National Development
- Central Scotland Green Network Trust (based in Shotts), involved in delivering another National Development

(Continued on next page)

CASE STUDY 05

ELECTED MEMBERS TRAINING (continued)

Name of Key Officer:

By innovating the way we deliver elected members training, our more regular and tailored approach has allowed us to maximise our reach and to ensure as many members as possible receive the training that will equip them in their role on the Planning Sub-Committee.

This approach is helping us to achieve our aim of delivering a broad range of concise and focussed training sessions that will support informed decision making and lead to high quality design on the ground.

By improving the members' knowledge and understanding of specific and detailed aspects of development, we have found that more elected members are engaging in discussion than before. This, coupled with the fact that there is now a greater awareness of the issues affecting particular, and perhaps unfamiliar parts of North Lanarkshire, means that the decision making of the Planning Sub-Committee has been better informed.

We are confident our approach has been well received and is having a positive impact, as this quote from Councillor feedback sheet following training session demonstrates:

"Illustrated the range and diversity of developments in the authority and visual impact - more effective than Committee discussions."

Name of Key Officer:

Lorna Bowden

Our decision making framework includes a [scheme of delegation](#). This framework was reviewed during 2017 as part of the restructure process and has been modified to allow us to streamline our decision making process and timescales. Last year 93% of applications were decided under this scheme.

Applicants may seek a review of the decision made under the Scheme of Delegation to the [Local Review Body](#). We provide an independent representative who provides professional planning input to this process.

Working in partnership with the Housing service, we meet various statutory duties by producing the Local Housing Strategies, delivering affordable housing and cooperating with the Housing Need and Demand Assessment.

We will continue to work together to contribute to the delivery of housing, provide schools and to regenerate and develop vacant and derelict land in the area.

In addition to working in partnership with Housing, the Planning and Place team collaborate with Education, Economic Development and Community Regeneration colleagues, amongst others. This helps to address our priorities and ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to service delivery.

CASE STUDY 05 highlights the council's ambitious NL Homes Delivery Plan and demonstrates how the synergy created by our multi-disciplinary delivery team helps facilitate and support the delivery of the new house build programme.



CASE STUDY 06

NEW BUILD DELIVERY

Location and Dates:

Authority wide from 2009 to present

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement
- Culture of continuous improvement

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

3, 12

Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):

- Design
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Town Centres
- Housing Supply
- Affordable Housing
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Placemaking
- Process Improvement
- Project Management
- Skills Sharing

Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

The NL Homes delivery programme is an ambitious programme with the goal of increasing the supply of quality, affordable homes in our local communities. A key aim of the plan is to promote and support delivery of new private housing, while bringing vacant homes back into use, regenerating key town centre areas, and identify new opportunities to transform vacant commercial properties back into use for residential accommodation.

As part of the plan, the council has pledged to deliver 5,000 affordable new homes by 2035.

These new homes will mostly be delivered through the council's commitment to build 2,150 new council houses by 2027 (of which 523 are already completed) and the re-provisioning of 2,300 council houses to provide high quality new build housing that meets the needs of our communities. The purchase of 550 private sector properties will also contribute to the 5,000 homes pledged.

The scale of new build council house construction has led to the creation a multi-disciplinary New Build Delivery Group. The planning service, working as part of this working group with transportation, design services and housing colleagues, has a key role in the delivery of the NL Homes plan.

The key task of the group is to ensure the outcomes of the programme comply with the regulatory and policy framework while simultaneously delivering tangible, high quality development on the ground.

Goals:

The New Build Delivery Group seamlessly works together providing pre-application advice to ensure any development or design issues are identified and addressed well in advance of the submission of the planning application.

The group has guided both site selection for new build developments and the production of the design and development briefs for each site by providing clear and consistent professional advice to the council NL Homes delivery team. They have also participated in, and helped steer, the evaluation of the Design and Build Contract tender submissions and the design process of each site with the appointed contractor/design team.

This detailed and co-ordinated pre-application engagement has significantly and effectively contributed to reducing the planning application process time scales. This new approach ensures that submitted applications are robust and supporting information is comprehensive enough to allow the determination of the application within a more responsive timeframe.

This detailed pre-application input and the subsequent efficient handling of the planning application will enable the timeframe for the delivery of the ambitious NL Homes plan to remain firmly on track and within agreed deadlines.

Outcomes:

This case study clearly demonstrates the benefits of joined up corporate working at a time of limited staff resources.

The close working relationship fostered within the multi-disciplinary group has resulted in improved outcomes to both the speed of delivery and quality of developments in the new build housing programme

Input from the planning service at an early stage ensured a robust and sustainable site selection process. This resulted in internal and stakeholder confidence that the sites selected were capable of delivering the quality housing units required.

Standardised format design briefs have been prepared in consultation with key stakeholders such as Education and Play services. This has ensured a clear, concise and consistent approach to ensuring all corporate requirements will be achieved for each development. Providing this detailed advice at the design stage allows for any issues to be identified and addressed in advance of the submission of the planning application.

As a direct result of this process, the planning application is accompanied by the full suite of information required to assess the merits of the development from day one, allowing the applications to be considered well within the prescribed time periods.

Our involvement and participation in the New Build Delivery Group since its inception has allowed us to develop a clearer understanding of the needs of the NL Homes delivery team. Over time a mutually beneficial way of working has developed to ensure that our staff resources are used efficiently and effectively.

The scale of this project means that through the New Build Delivery Group we will continue in our key role providing post application advice when changes are required to the developments, contributing to the delivery of the NL Homes delivery programme, and giving continuity and consistency of professional guidance to the NL Homes delivery team.

Name of Key Officer:

Craig McIntyre

We participate in several partnership and peer groups passing on and sharing good practice, including:

- Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) Development Planning Group Executive group
- HoPS Development Management group
- HoPS Development Plan group
- Antonine Wall World Heritage Site Steering Group
- eDevelopment and ePlanning project boards
- Glasgow Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership
- Climate Ready Clyde
- Housing and Planning liaison group
- North Lanarkshire Council Community Empowerment Working Group
- Glasgow and Clyde Valley Development Planning Forum
- National Development Planning Forum
- Glasgow City Region Land Use and Sustainability Portfolio
- Clydeplan Strategy Group
- NLC New Build Delivery Group
- North Lanarkshire Access Panel

Participation in these groups adds value to our service and to our communities. Through peer review, benchmarking and sharing best practice we ensure each group is a forum for sharing ideas, comparing outcomes and discussing future direction.

Examples of positive outcomes of partnership working can be noted through the Green network partnership [7 lochs wetland project](#) and the pilot project on walking routes in conjunction with the health board.

Through the Antonine Wall Motherwell Heritage Site steering group we are contributing to the development of a multi-council submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The project will raise the profile and strengthen the visitor appeal of the Wall by developing new audiences, specifically families and young people, increase awareness of and access to the Wall, while stimulating businesses, organisations and groups to generate new business activity in and around the Wall.

Our work with the NL New Build Delivery team has enhanced our service delivery and improved outcomes, as referenced in Case Study 5.

Our work with the NL Access Panel has been invaluable in helping to design accessible streetscapes for all our town centres.

Another area of key partnership working is the delivery of North Lanarkshire's outcomes in the [Glasgow City Region City Deal](#), along with transportation colleagues. This arrangement will create economic growth by improving transport and regenerating or developing sites over the next 20 years.

The [£2.4 million medtech facility](#) based in Eurocentral is the first completed project in North Lanarkshire to use Glasgow City Region City Deal funding. Over the next five years the facility aims to support up to 50 new medtech businesses and 150 jobs, develop links between the commercial and academic communities and showcase Scotland to inward investment opportunities in this growing field.



YOU SAID...

A greater understanding was needed of the planning process and related issues

WE DID...

Provide a broad range of concise and focussed training sessions for elected members



CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Continuous improvement is embedded in our culture and is critical in ensuring our success as we seek to deliver a high quality service. Thanks to the hard work of our skilled and committed workforce we meet this challenge and we continue to strive to collaborate with partners and stakeholders to help to ensure improved outcomes for our customers.

Our staff development policies add value by ensuring we have the skills to meet our goals. Regular training and cascade sessions ensure staff have the right skill base and are up to date with all new processes and policy.

Recognising that the services are now configured better to deliver the councils priorities, mandatory training took place for all staff during 2017-18 to drive a corporate approach to risk management and project management. This consistency will allow us to deliver the councils priorities in a coordinated and efficient way.

To enable more informed decision making, Elected Members training has been provided regularly around our service delivery and on topics such as enforcement.

We are proud to be the first local authority in Scotland to achieve [Disability Confident Leader](#) status, demonstrating that we lead the way for people with disabilities.



Staff consultation, development and the self-evaluation of our service delivery is key to continuous improvement. The council has introduced an [ASPIRE](#) programme, underpinning everything we do. It provides the guiding principles in terms of the way we work and the way we deliver our services, inviting all staff to collaborate, share knowledge and information,

ask questions and generate ideas and ultimately contribute to finding solutions for our evolving service delivery.

Staff involvement is key when developing and promoting our service. Staff workshops allow everybody to contribute to process review, ensuring staff feel valued and engaged and ensuring a collaborative approach to the review of our services. During the preparation of our Planning Performance Framework staff were invited to participate by highlighting potential case studies. This ensured staff were involved in determining how we would focus this year to promote our service.

Our improvement measures, set out in last year's Planning Performance Framework report, are progressing well and the benefits are now being realised. For example, we have introduced a new scheme of delegation and we have reviewed and updated committee protocols for planning application hearings and tightening up of timescales for submission of representations. These changes have led to more certainty and to more efficient committee processes.

Following on from these service improvements, we are now focusing on systems upgrade work and staff training, to ensure compliance with new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which will allow us to continue the implementation of some of our improvement actions.

Looking ahead, our service improvement actions for the coming year are planned to help us continue to deliver our targets and objectives. These actions are recorded and monitored through our Planning Performance Framework with regular updates to progress being reported regularly internally.

While we listen to feedback from stakeholders and strive to continually improve our performance and service delivery, key to customer satisfaction is setting for our customers an expectation of what we can deliver. Each layer of feedback, from both formal and informal sources helps us get to know our main customer groups and gives an insight as to their needs and preferences. This knowledge helps us prioritise improvement activity and communicate to our customers the accurate and detailed information they need to make our service easily accessible and to understand the steps taken in the planning process.

Our commitment to continuous improvement and customer care has driven and shaped our service over the years, ensuring that we are efficient, effective, accessible and meet the needs and expectations of our customers.

Our transition to online applications during 2009, our online local plan and our web site improvements have changed the shape of our service delivery. They make our service more accessible and ensure that we can keep up with customer needs, despite the backdrop of reduced resources. Our approach to digitising our services has been successful with the number of planning applications received online increasing from approximately 30% following the introduction of ePlanning, to more than 90% during 2017-18.

Process review and the development of casework systems, including the use of 'traffic light' reports to manage workload, are now integral to our performance. Looking to enhance these systems in the coming year we will carry out a review of our development management processes with a view to introducing an electronic performance management tool to further assist workloads.

Streamlining what we do has already cut out inefficiencies and improved consistency, improving the processing of planning applications. As a result, reviewing committee related processes, our protocol around Legal agreements and the introduction of processing agreements being offered to all major development applicants have contributed to more service efficiency.

Looking to continue to build on these successes, further appraisal of our processes and practices in partnership with the Business Solutions team will allow us to continue to develop and improve our processes.

It is testament to our staff and the success in our approach to keeping our processes lean that despite continued budget cuts leading to a 40% reduction in staffing levels in the past six years, we can continue to maintain performance that exceeds the national average.

Moving to a single planning team under one manager, we anticipate a more agile approach to our service delivery. Continuous caseload management and review of workflow has enabled us to anticipate peaks in demand and realign our teams to cope with the change.

We continue to review the demand on our service and work to identify need and build in solutions to ensure we continue to deliver a high quality planning service.



PART 2 SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The style of our Planning Performance Framework has evolved over the years and has been influenced by peer review.

The report was compiled drawing on evidence from the following sources. Click on the links below to take you to the document or website described:

- [North Lanarkshire Council Business Plan](#)
- [North Lanarkshire 'Our Ambition' committee report](#)
- [Glasgow City Region City Deal](#)
- [A8/M8 corridor access improvements](#)
- [Gartcosh/Glenboig community growth area information](#)
- [Pan-Lanarkshire orbital transport corridor information](#)
- [North Lanarkshire Local Plan](#)
- [Masterplanning](#)
- [Ravenscraig information](#)
- [Community Growth Areas](#)

- [£190 million roads programme information](#)
- [Town Centre Framework and Action Plans](#)
- [Coatbridge CARS](#)
- [Customer Service Strategy](#)
- [Supplementary Planning Guidance](#)
- [Supporting Documents for Planning Applications](#)
- [Customer Charter](#)
- ['Listening to You' complaints procedure](#)
- [7 Lochs Wetland Project Information](#)
- [£2.4 Million Medtech Facility Information](#)
- [Protocol for Planning Application Hearings](#)
- [Scheme of delegation](#)
- [Local Review Body](#)
- [Disability Confident Leader](#)
- [North Lanarkshire Access Panel](#)



Photograph by Brian Cairns

The following table highlights the topics covered by our case studies:

CASE STUDY TOPICS	ISSUE COVERED IN PPF7	CASE STUDY TOPICS	ISSUE COVERED IN PPF7
Design	✓	Interdisciplinary Working	✓
Conservation	✓	Collaborative Working	✓
Regeneration	✓	Community Engagement	
Environment	✓	Placemaking	
Greenspace	✓	Charrettes	
Town Centres	✓	Place Standard	
Masterplanning		Performance Monitoring	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	✓	Process Improvement	✓
Housing Supply	✓	Project Management	
Affordable Housing	✓	Skills Sharing	✓
Economic Development	✓	Staff Training	✓
Enforcement		Online Systems	
Development Management Processes	✓	Transport	✓
Planning Applications	✓	Active Travel	✓
Other: please note			

PART 3 SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Service Improvements 2018-19

In the coming year we will:

- Review our development management structure to ensure our workforce have a broad range of skills and to contribute to succession planning in the service
- Establish a working group to review our processes around legal agreements and section 75s
- Review and update our online customer information
- Hold an agents forum with a focus on introduction to new planning Bill
- Hold community engagement event relating to the planning process
- Establish a working group to monitor and progress PPF action plan throughout the year
- Update our engagement strategy for our broad range of stakeholders
- Review and revise our Supplementary Planning Guidance



Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2017-18:

COMMITTED IMPROVEMENTS AND ACTIONS	COMPLETE?
Review scheme of delegation	Yes. New scheme of delegation approved.
Review protocols for committee	Yes. Hearings and handling of representations protocol updated and introduction restrictions on neighbour notification to statutory timescales
Review internal processes for stopping up orders and Section 75s	Initial discussion has taken place with Legal, however progress ongoing due to restructure of teams and rationalisation of planning management.
Review development management processes	Progress rescheduled to allow upgrade work required to systems to ensure GDPR compliance.
Introduce performance management tool	Performance management tool in test stage. Rollout rescheduled to allow upgrade work required to systems to ensure GDPR compliance.
Provide Greenspace - Scottish Natural Heritage training	Training provider identified, training rescheduled due to restructure of teams and rationalisation of planning management.
Survey staff around Supplementary Planning Guidance to ensure new guidance is developed to meet need and to focus on what matters	Yes. Outcome to be used to inform review of SPGs.
Quarterly staff briefings on progress of PPF actions	Yes. Staff are updated quarterly on progress via email.
Provide regular training sessions for Elected Members	Yes. Regular sessions held on various planning topics.
Review how various parts of the service are delivered to benefit from being included in Enterprise and Housing Resources	Yes, New service arrangements have created synergies that contribute to delivery of council priorities.
Monitor and review the implementation of new enforcement charter	Yes. New charter published and includes new service standards.
Review customer survey methodology and questionnaire	Yes, surveys are now issued electronically with electronic decisions.
Review of our processes in appeals and enforcement	Yes, process has been reviewed. Implementation delayed due to upgrade work required to systems to ensure GDPR compliance.
Plan and implement use of planning conditions monitoring module	Yes, in part. Standardised conditions being reviewed. Delayed due to implementation of restructure.
introduce supplementary planning guidance on developers' contributions;	Yes, in part. Draft policy for education contributions prepared and have identified pressurised catchments in the interim. Progress around other contributions (in the main transportation) is being made through community growth areas.

PART 4 NATIONAL HEADLINE INDICATORS (NHI)

A: NHI Key outcomes - Development Planning:

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING	2017-18	2016-17
LOCAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING:		
Age of local/strategic development plan(s) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i>	66 months old	53 months old
Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	SDP - Yes LDP - No	Yes
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	Yes - later	Yes - later
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Engagement - Yes Submissions - No	Yes



Photograph by Brian Cairns

EFFECTIVE LAND SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF OUTPUTS ¹	2017-18	2016-17
Established housing land supply	22,212 units	18,238 units
5 - year effective housing land supply programming	8,100 units*	6,615 units*
5 - year effective land supply total capacity	13,759 units	12,339 units
5 - year housing supply target	5,295 units	5,295 units
5 - year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place)	7.6 years	6.2 years
Housing approvals	1,770 units	2,758 units
Housing completions over the last 5 years	4,673 units	4,236 units
Marketable employment land supply	322.99 ha	307.92 ha
Employment land take-up during reporting year	3.97 ha	5.36 ha

B: NHI Key outcomes - Development Management:

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING	2017-18	2016-17
PROJECT PLANNING		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	10.78%	33.78 %
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	55% (11)	22.7% (5)
DECISION MAKING		
Application approval rate	96.7%	97%
Delegation rate	93.1%	91%
Validation	46.1%	40%
DECISION-MAKING TIMESCALES		
Major Developments	14.9 weeks	29 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	6.9 weeks	8.1 weeks
Householder developments	6.3 weeks	7.2 weeks
LEGACY CASES		
Number cleared during reporting period	10	18
Number remaining	29	22



NHI Key outcomes - Commentary

COMMENTARY

Short contextual statement*

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Development planning: During 2017-18 the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Development Plan was subject to legal challenge. With a significant number of objections and representations to the Local Development Plan Proposed Plan being directly related to the subject of the challenge, specifically to the housing land supply, the council decided to move forward with a Modified Proposed Plan.

Modifying the Proposed Plan offers more control and benefits to the plan making process. Changes could be made to site designations or area boundaries to reflect decisions on planning applications since publication of the Proposed Plan, and policies could be updated to reflect changes in legislation and guidance.

The [North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan](#) Scheme has been updated to incorporate this additional process. In accordance with this the Modified Plan will be prepared and finalised, along with any required updated supporting documents with a view to carrying out a public consultation from September 2018 and thereafter preparing for an Examination in 2019.

Effective Land Supply and delivery of outputs: The housing land audit helps to address any housing supply issues through the plan making process in order to ensure that there is an adequate land supply available for house building. The land supply varies year-to-year as a result of the status of sites changing, being built on, or new sites being added.

Employment land take up is dependent on a number of factors. While there has been a decrease in the take up of employment land reported, we anticipate our next audit will capture an increase in the overall supply and a substantial increase in the uptake due to the large scale Lidl distribution centre development highlighted in case study 4.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Project Planning: We offer anyone seeking pre-application advice on major development the opportunity to meet with us to discuss their proposal. This option ensures a high quality and targeted approach to adding value to development in the area. To make this new way of working user-friendly we encourage the use of our [pre-application enquiry form](#) ahead of the meeting.

Our new policy of directing those dealing with Local Development to our website for information has streamlined the process. The resulting drop in the number of applications that are subject to pre-application advice allows officers to devote more time to offering a dynamic and modern service that meets our customer's needs.

Our more direct and proactive approach to processing agreements led to us reporting that 55% of major applications being subject to processing agreements.

Decision Making: Our decision making figures continue to build on last year's successes. We report a small increase in our delegation rate. We can attribute this rise to our revised scheme of delegation. We have continued to monitor validation figures and can confirm, as anticipated, the new guidance around validation of planning applications has made a positive impact with an increase in the number of applications validated upon first receipt increasing.

Decision-making timescales: Our decision making timescales have significantly improved as we introduce further measures showing we are dedicated to delivering quality developments for the people of North Lanarkshire and those looking to invest in the area. Our new scheme of delegation, standardised approach to pre-application advice and regular process review, and new customer contact arrangements continue to be effective in enabling us to deliver our service efficiently.

We have further improved our major development decision making timescales. During 2016-17 our workload had significantly heightened with three extremely large and complex major development applications being made. While we have now approved these applications, we recognise that investment and growth in the area will place future demands on our service.

Legacy Cases: Our direct approach to monitoring legacy cases has ensured we maintain a momentum and make every effort to progress stalled cases. Quarterly progress meetings allow us to manage these cases effectively.

C: Enforcement activity:

	2017-18	2016-17
Time since enforcement charter published/ reviewed Requirement: review every 2 years	1 months	13 months
Complaints lodged and investigated	229	280
Breaches identified - no further action taken	57	-
Cases closed	104	139
Notices served	4	13
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	2	0
Prosecutions	0	0

NHI Key outcomes - Commentary

COMMENTARY
Short contextual statement*

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

Enforcement: Our [enforcement charter](#) was approved in February 2018. With the number of enforcement complaints lodged and breaches identified having reduced in comparison to the previous year, meaning we have closed a considerable percentage of cases.

We take a focused and pragmatic approach to enforcement that prioritises negotiating solutions and working to resolve issues before there is a need for formal action. Despite increased pressures with staffing levels being reduced to one over a nine month period, we continue to demonstrate a fair and reasonable approach to enforcement. The flexibility and commitment of our team has led to further action being taken in only one instance, where we passed a report to the Procurator Fiscal.



Photograph by Brian Cairns



PART 5 SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL STATISTICS

A: Decision-making timescales (based on 'all applications' timescales)

TIMESCALES	2017-18	2017-18	2016-17
OVERALL			
Major developments		14.9 weeks	29 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)		6.9 weeks 5.9 weeks 11.7 week	8.1 weeks 6.7 weeks 12.6 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	(82.7%) (17.3%)		
Householder developments		6.3 weeks 5.8 weeks 10.0 weeks	7.2 weeks 6.7 weeks 12.6 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	(88.2%) (11.8%)		
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT			
Major		12.7 weeks	43 weeks
Local housing developments		9.5 weeks 6.3 weeks 14.1 weeks	9.1 weeks 7.1 weeks 12.5 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	(59%) (41%)		



BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY			
Major		0 weeks	30.8 weeks
Local business and industry developments	(83.1%) (16.9%)	6.9 weeks 5.7 weeks 12.8 weeks	9.1 weeks 6.7 weeks 13.9 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 			
EIA Developments		0 weeks	0 weeks
Other Consents		4.4 weeks	4.9 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As listed in the guidance (right) 			
Planning/legal agreements		N/A	78.8 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major: average time Local: average time 		11.1 weeks	18 weeks

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER OF DECISIONS. No.	ORIGINAL DECISION UPHELD			
		2017-18		2016-17	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	8	5	62.5%	4	40%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	8	6	75%	9	69.2%

CONTEXT

Our decision making timescales have significantly improved across the board confirming the ongoing success of our standardised approach to pre-application advice and regular process review. This approach, coupled with new customer contact arrangements continues to be effective in enabling us to deliver our service efficiently.

The biggest improvement is demonstrated by our major development decision making timescales. During 2016-17 our workload had significantly heightened, with three extremely large and complex major development applications being made. While we have now approved these applications, we recognise that investment and growth in the area will place future demands on our service.

There was a significant reduction in the time taken to conclude legal agreements related to local developments. This reflects the success of the protocol between Planning and Legal has had in reducing delays in the process and by ensuring all relevant information was submitted at an early stage.

The number of appeals to Scottish Ministers has remained steady, however there has been an increase in the number of local reviews held. As highlighted in our last report, this is in line with our expectations following the introduction of the revised scheme of delegation.



PART 6 WORKFORCE INFORMATION

We have a skilled and committed workforce. The dedication and commitment of our team, coupled with the experience and knowledge individuals bring is crucial to enabling us to deliver our key priorities and to contribute to the delivery of the council priority outcome 'Improve Economic Opportunities and Outcomes'.

Moving to one team under a single manager in the coming year, our staff structure will be reviewed during 2018-19 to ensure we continue to have, and to further develop, a flexible and agile staff base. Taking into account the age profile of our team, to ensure we are prepared for the future we will introduce new entry level posts during 2018-19. These posts will open up career opportunities for both graduates and suitably qualified school leavers in the planning profession.

This will contribute to effective succession planning and help to future proof our service to support North Lanarkshire Council's growth ambition.

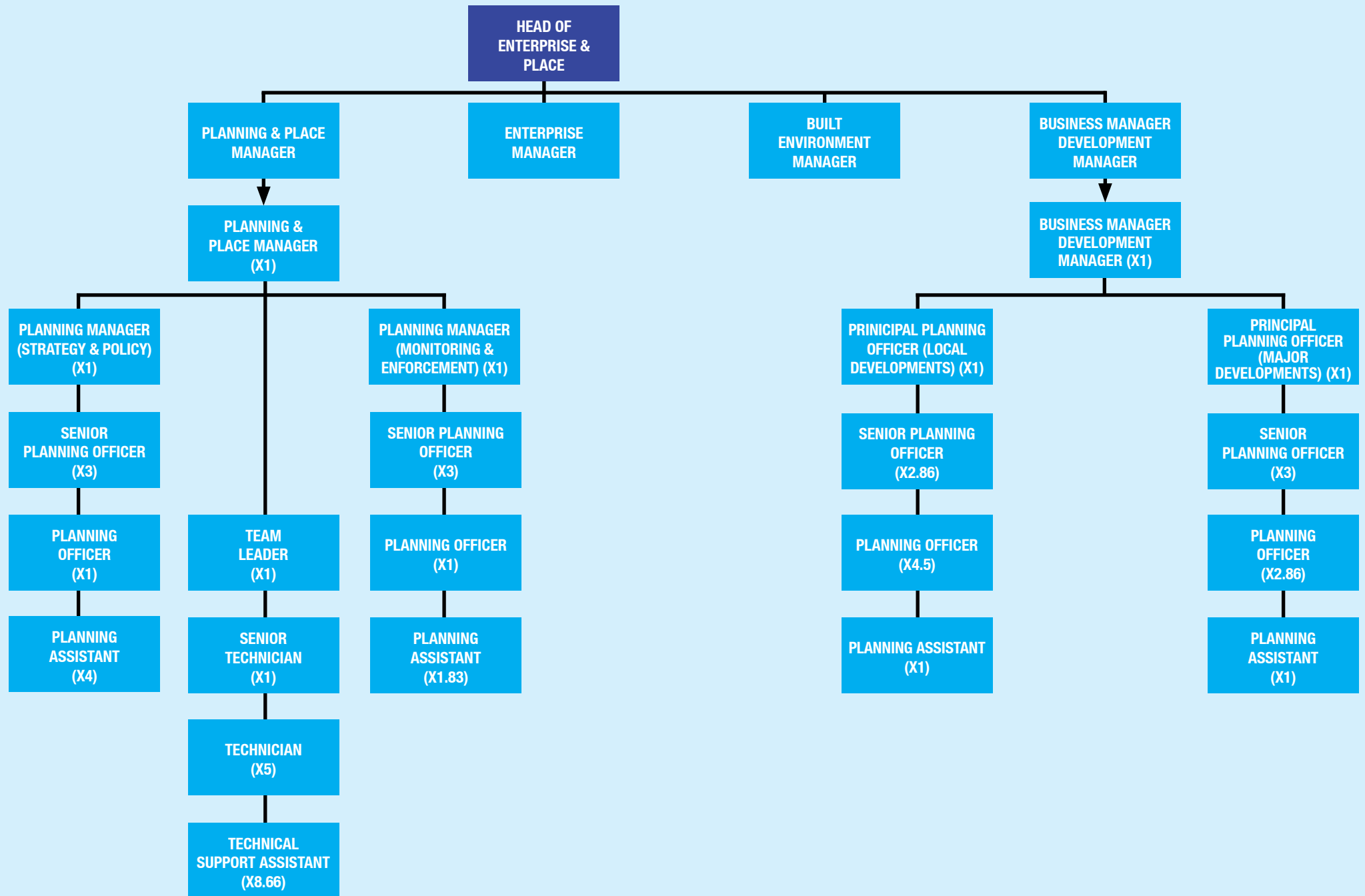
Our skilled and specialised technical support team are integral to our service delivery and continue to ensure we deliver high quality customer service efficiently and effectively for the people and communities in North Lanarkshire.

	TIER 1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE	TIER 2 DIRECTOR	TIER 3 HEAD OF SERVICE	TIER 4 MANAGER
Head of Planning Service			1	2

RTPI QUALIFIED STAFF	HEADCOUNT	FTE
Development Management	17.22	
Development Planning	9	
Monitoring and Enforcement	5.74	
Specialists		
Technical support	6.5	

RTPI QUALIFIED STAFF	HEADCOUNT
Under 30	2
30 - 39	8
40 - 49	9
50 and over	19





PART 7

PLANNING COMMITTEE INFORMATION

COMMITTEE & SITE VISITS	NUMBER PER YEAR
Full council meetings	1
Planning committees	12
Area committees	0
Committee site visits	0
Local Review Body	5
LRB site visits	0



