

Development Services

# Planning Performance Framework

Annual Report 2017–18



**Clackmannanshire  
Council**

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Comhairle Siorrachd  
Chlach Mhanann



## Cover Image

The Sentinels – Kincraigs (People and Place)

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## Introduction

This is Clackmannanshire Council's seventh Annual Report on its Planning Performance Framework (PPF) for Development Services. Following the submission and publication of performance information for 2017–18, and as part of its culture of continuous improvement, the Council has noted and assessed the Scottish Government's feedback on Performance Markers and the outcome of the peer group review undertaken through benchmarking groups. We have considered the scope to change and improve practice and procedures, and incorporate these within our planning process. Particular focus has been given to the inclusion of evidence on the Performance Markers which were identified as priority areas for improvement, although we are reassured by the continued positive trend in the reduction of red ratings.

In 2016 the Planning Team (Development Management and Development Planning) incorporated Building Standards under the supervision of one team leader. The restructured Planning and Building Standards Team facilitated a more joined up approach to customer service for development proposals. The change has presented challenges for the Council in continuing to achieve the historically high standards of performance in Development Management and Building Standards but has also provided the opportunity to focus on service delivery efficiencies. The retirement and recruitment of the Planning and Building Standards Team Leader post during a six month period in 2017 has presented

further challenges in respect of achieving previously identified Service improvements.

The Service has been directly involved in preparatory work for the successful Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region Deal. This has presented both an opportunity to be involved in the identification and progression of City Deal projects and a challenge to manage the significant additional workload on existing staff.

These factors have had the consequence of the Council focussing on achievable service delivery improvements for this PPF with a return to more ambitious improvements in the future.

This Annual Report represents a summary of the services provided by the Council on planning related matters. Measurement of performance has traditionally focussed on speed of decision making on planning applications and time periods for up to date development plans. This latest Planning Performance Framework continues to broaden that profile, and presents an analysis of our performance in a wider context. It includes, for example, evidence of our procedures out with the regulatory process in evaluating added value in the determination of Planning applications.

[Case Study 1](#) illustrates the proactive steps taken to engage with customers in surveying residents of housing developments planned before and after the implementation of Designing Streets to

evaluate the success of a placemaking focussed approach in Clackmannanshire.

[Case Study 2](#) evaluates how the Service has made a difference in the quality of development approved and implemented in Clackmannanshire.

[Case Study 3](#) evaluates the impact of renewable energy within the Council area and how this important development type can be supported and mitigated in the evolution of the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP) and in achieving national renewable energy targets.

Some of the most noticeable achievements over the past year include:

- the implementation of one Planning Processing Agreement (PPA) in the reporting year and a further two in the period since May 2018;
- the inclusion of PPA guidance on the Council's website;
- the completion of the review and updating of the Council's Enforcement Charter;
- the inclusion of the Planning and Building Standards Enforcement Registers on the Council website; and
- the implementation of enhanced LDP project planning processes.

The Council continues to maintain its pace of application decision making, and is committed to providing free of charge and punctual feedback on general and pre-application enquiries, applications and other submissions, all in accordance with our Customer Charter. A continued focus on speed of decision making and the willingness to engage early on development proposals with applicants and other customers without financial charge for non-statutory functions are considered to be fundamental to the successful delivery of the Planning and Building Standards service of Clackmannanshire Council.

## Part 1 – Quality Narrative and Case Studies

### 1. Quality of Outcomes

#### a. High Quality Development on the Ground

The Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted in August 2015 and its Vision therefore reflects Scottish Government guidance and thinking. The Vision is supported by Development Plan Policies and Statutory Supplementary Guidance.

Since submission of the last PPF the Council's structure has been changed to incorporate Roads under the supervision of the Service Manager (Development). This Service Manager now has responsibility for the Planning, Building Standards, Property, Economic Development, and Roads functions of the Council.

The pre-application advice service that the Planning service delivers has always sought to achieve the Government's objectives in Designing Streets to ensure a seamless transition through the planning and road construction consent processes. Planning and Roads officers have always worked jointly on proposals that involve the provision of potentially adoptable roads and footpaths. This has previously been effectively a twin track process with the Road Construction Consent application process following on from planning approval. Roads Construction Consent applications are now regularly received, assessed, and determined at the same time as that of a related planning application.

This is a significant improvement since reporting on this process in the last PPF. Designing Streets objectives are now being achieved by simultaneous direct working between Planning and Roads officers. Developer confidence in the regulatory process has improved considerably and consent delays to development have been significantly reduced.

The recent development of 149 houses on the site of the former Alloa College benefitted from the Council's implementation of aligning consents. The site had been a stalled development site for a number of years since the opening of the replacement Forth Valley College on another site in 2011.

***Ediston Homes***, responded to a request for feedback on their experience by advising that —

*'It is very refreshing to work with a Council who you feel are there to help as opposed to hinder, to have planning and roads working together and more importantly generally aligned as opposed to us trying to facilitate that. Designing Streets for example is not always supported by roads and it is positive that*

*Clackmannanshire Council has embraced this concept removing a hurdle often faced elsewhere.*

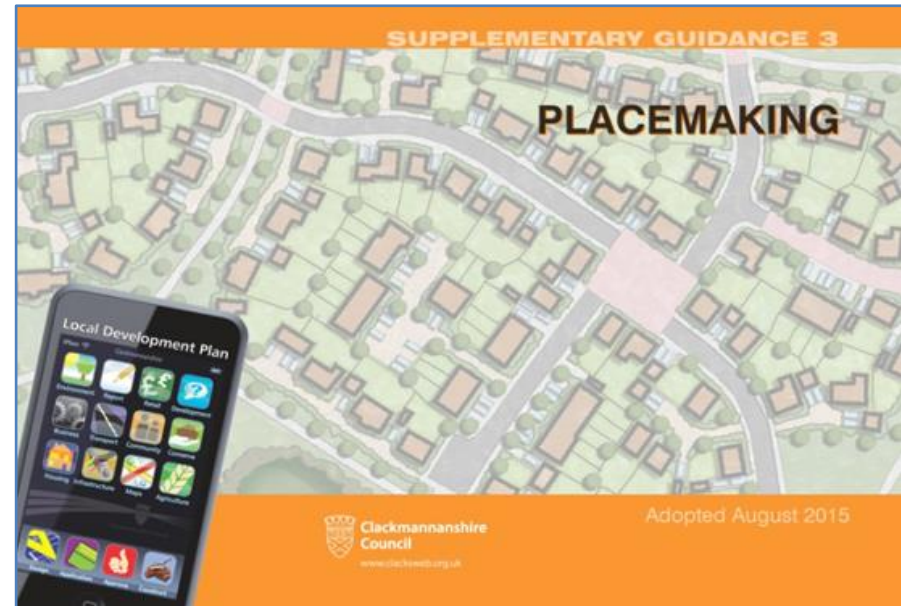
*The process to secure planning and other consents has been smooth and allowed us to get on site and start in accordance with our initial programme. The ongoing co-operation from the Council has been much appreciated. Overall, a highly positive experience to date’.*

The Council is therefore now achieving the principles of Aligning Consents published by Scottish Government.

For this PPF we have undertaken research of older and more recent residential developments ([Case Study 1](#)) in the context of the Council’s Placemaking Supplementary Guidance. This Guidance includes illustrative material, a Design Process Map and toolkit reinforcing this joint approach and signalling the Council's commitment to the delivery of successful places and drive towards high design thresholds. In doing so, however, we are mindful of the balance to be struck on the delivery of development, freeing up sites and taking a balanced approach to site constraints. We have considered opportunities for further enhancement of this guidance through case study.

Design improvements secured through the planning process continue to be recorded on the planning application management system, captured against a series of criteria which include: changes to comply with Development Plan policy on amenity, design and

road safety; securing of community benefit or developer contribution; and changes following pre-application advice. It is important that the regulatory process achieves added value in these aspects of service delivery.



For this PPF, the analysis of qualitative improvement data over the last year has been undertaken in [Case Study 2](#). This has allowed an evaluation of the proportion of planning applications where value has been added in:

- Design and Layout
- Amenity
- Built or Natural Environment
- Safety



This exercise will now be used to evaluate the effectiveness of planning application assessment and to inform the evolution of policies during preparation of the next LDP.

Development guidelines in the previous adopted Local Plan have been refined into a more consistent format in the LDP, where we have grouped the guidance under four categories:

- Development Requirements
- Creating Sustainable Communities
- Environmental Assets
- Developer Contributions

Combining this with map based and aerial photographic images presents a composite and concise package of guidance that should ultimately improve the quality of development on the ground.

Clackmannanshire has seven designated conservation areas which range from a small rural village to Victorian suburbs of a large town. They are of varied character and built heritage as a consequence of their different periods of development. It is therefore important that the Council has a good understanding of their specific qualities. The Council has undertaken appraisals of all conservation areas to identify their important characteristics and provide guidelines to

prevent harm and assist in the enhancement of the conservation area. The appraisals were completed and reported to Council in March 2018. The appraisal process included research of historic development and townscape analysis, and was subject to public consultation prior to approval. This appraisal work provides a framework for development management decisions and identifies opportunities and priorities for enhancement. Owners and occupiers of properties in conservation areas now have an up to date reference base to assist in developing proposals to alter their buildings and surroundings to retain and enhance the character and appearance of their localities.

In previous PPF responses the Service has examined pre-application and application assessment case studies. For this year the PPF submission has examined a post development quality survey ([Case Study 1](#)) that has been undertaken. This has resulted in the ongoing work of the Service being informed by recent research on all stages of the development process through the evaluation of stakeholder views and will be used to inform future working practices.



## b. Case Studies

### *Case Study 1 – Post Development Questionnaire Survey of Residents in New Housing Developments March 2018*

As part of the Service's commitment to continuous improvement in the quality of development on the ground, it is vital that, as a Planning Authority, we understand if new places that have been planned, built and occupied are meeting the needs of those that live and work there.

Since the Scottish Government introduced its key placemaking policy document, *Designing Streets* in 2010, Clackmannanshire Council has sought to implement a place-focussed approach to the layout and design of new residential areas. The policy is now enshrined, both in principle and detail, in the LDP and Supplementary Guidance. In practice, the Planning and Roads Service are very much aligned in implementing this approach, with planning permission and roads construction consent processes running together and consistent advice and decision making flowing through both processes. The Council's Roads Service has now adopted SCOTS Roads Design Guide as their manual for assessing design and construction of development roads, paths parking etc.

As a result of this approach, the character and appearance of residential developments has evolved, and continues to evolve, from those that were approved prior to 2010, based largely on rigid

planning and roads standards, with a focus on movement and segregation of vehicles and people.

Pre-Designing Streets developments were largely conceived around rigid planning and roads standards, whilst, our approach since then has been based on on the six qualities of Successful Places as set out in *Designing Streets*:

- Distinctive
- Safe & pleasant
- Easy to move around
- Welcoming
- Adaptable
- Resource efficient

As our approach to implement placemaking has progressed and evolved, we have determined that sufficient time has now passed to allow quantifiable evaluation of the impacts of this policy change in Clackmannanshire. We therefore sought to evaluate the impact of *Designing Streets* and our local policies and guidance flowing from it, on the people living in our housing developments to determine if residents were benefitting in terms of the quality of their living environment. We therefore decided that we should go out and speak to directly to people to find out if the policy approach was correct and we were getting it right.

We consider it important to determine if a move away from traditional suburban layout and design to a new place-led approach is genuinely creating better places for people to live in. We decided that the best way to approach this was to speak to the people who matter, i.e. those that live there. We surveyed residents in two separate, but comparable housing developments, one approved before and one after the launch of Designing Streets and our adoption of its principles in our plan policies and practice.

In order to help focus on the particular issues we wanted to know about, we turned to the Place Standard Tool to inform our survey. The elements of the tool that we chose to draw on were those focussed on the street itself, as we felt that it was this feature of housing developments that had evolved most significantly through our change in approach, and therefore allowed for a more measureable comparison of results which could inform what we do next. Five questions were composed, drawn directly from elements of the Place Standard Tool, and with the same scoring system applied.

We see this as an initial piece of survey work that we intend to build on for next year's PPF, where we intend to use the Place Standard Tool, to widen and deepen the scope of our survey of people on the place where they live. Put simply, we want to know where we are getting things right and wrong, in order that we can tailor the next generation of housing developments to the needs and aspirations of the people who will live in them, but not by

solely relying on applying policies and guidance, but by drawing on the knowledge acquired from first-hand experience of people living in Clackmannanshire.

### *Proposed Subject Developments:*

**Case Study 1A** – a development carried out pre-Designing Streets.

The development chosen for Case study 1A was Phase 9 of the Muirside Site in Tullibody (Glentye Drive and Kidlaw Crescent). A late 1990s Outline Planning Permission and masterplan and mid-2000s Matters Specified Condition application for houses in the final phase.

**Case Study 1B** – a development carried out post-Designing Streets.

The development chosen for Case Study 1B consisted of the Former Alloa Academy and adjoining Claremont Primary School Sites in Claremont, Alloa (Inch View, Brodie Avenue, Scholars Road, Buchan Park). The 2011 FULL application for the former academy site was the first development in Clackmannanshire informed by Designing Streets. A later 2015 FULL application for the Claremont Primary School Site continued the design ethos of the earlier academy site.

### Case Study 1A – Pre-Designing Streets: Phase 9 – Muirside



Figure 1 – Aerial Photograph of development site (© Getmapping 2015). Streetview Images of local roads within development (© Google 2015).

### Case Study 1B – Post-Designing Streets: Claremont



Figure 2– Aerial Photograph of development site (© Getmapping 2015). Images of new houses on Claremont, the existing road at the north of the development, and the new streetscape within the development.



Site Characteristics	Case Study 1A	Case Study 1B
Size/Density	6.3ha/140 houses (22 per ha)	5.9ha/120 houses (20 per ha)
Location	Final Phase of urban expansion on the north side of Tullibody. Approximately 1.2km from the centre of Tullibody.	Adjoining former school sites on the western edge of Alloa. Approximately 1.5km from Alloa town centre.
Site Characteristics	Greenfield site adjoining an earlier phase of private housing and woodland.	Brownfield site containing former schools and playing fields adjoining mid-20th Century private and council housing and golf course/public gardens.
Development Type	Detached and semi-detached private housing.	Detached private housing.

Table 1 –The characteristics of the sites where the survey was carried out

### Survey Method

Door to door surveys were undertaken in both developments, with results taken from 20 respondents of mixed age and gender in each area.

The questionnaire survey below consisted of five questions, where respondents were asked to rank their answers in a similar manner

to the Place Standard Tool. Any comments made by the respondent were also recorded and summarised below including the relevant category of question.

Element	Question	Response: 1–7
Moving Around	Can I easily walk and cycle around using good quality routes?	
Streets and Spaces	Do the houses, streets and public spaces in your development create an attractive place that is easy to get around?	
Street Safety	Are the streets in your development a safe place for children to play (eg cycle, ball games)?	
Identity	Does this development have a positive identity and do I feel like I belong to it?	
Social Contact	Are there spaces and opportunities to meet with neighbours?	
Comments		

Table 2 – The questionnaire used in the survey

## Results

The scoring results for each case study were aggregated and the mean used to reflect an overall score under each element. The comments have been categorised below under each of the five elements. They provide context to the scoring results we received and also help illustrate the differences between residents' experiences, living in the two developments chosen.

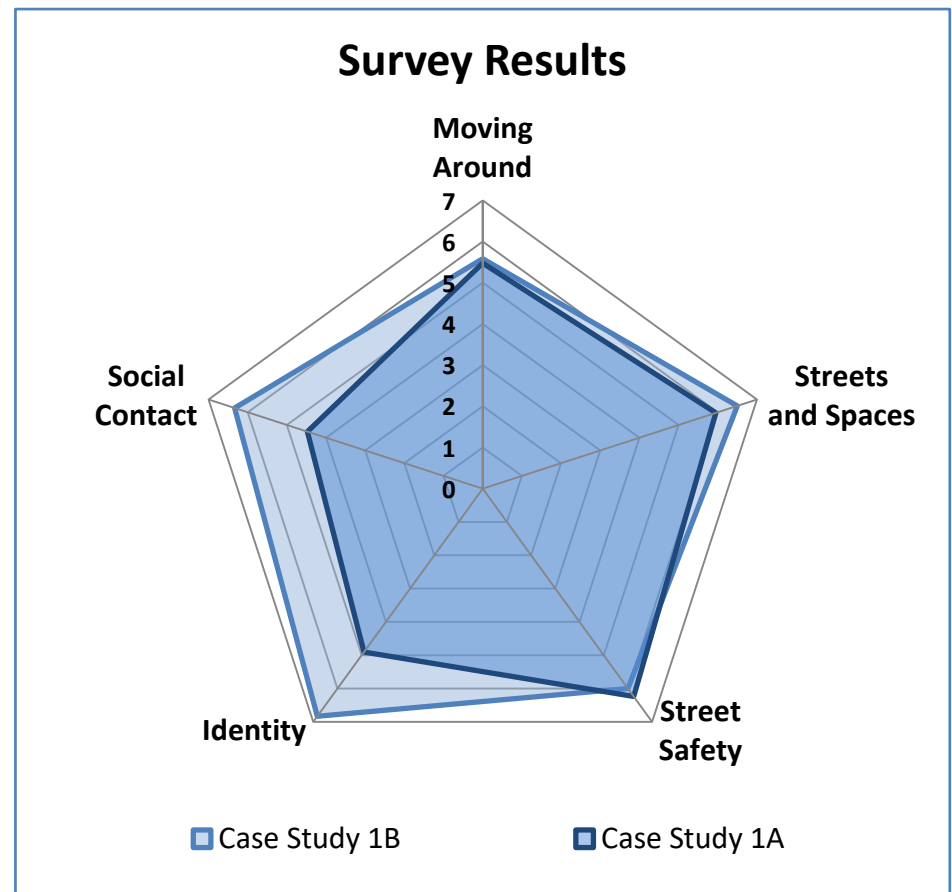


Figure 3 – Results of the case study surveys

Element	Comments received during the survey for Case Study 1A
Moving Around	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'I drive to Alloa to walk my dog'.</li> <li>• 'The only walks I can do from my house are along the main road or around Glenochil prison'.</li> <li>• 'I drive to the park in Alva to walk my dog'.</li> <li>• 'Our roads don't get gritted in winter as we are at end of cul-de-sac'.</li> <li>• 'People struggle to get in/out in winter because roads aren't gritted'.</li> </ul>
Streets and Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'There is only one way in and out for vehicles'.</li> <li>• 'An access onto Glenochil road at eastern end of site would help'.</li> <li>• 'It would be better if the road at end of site linked to Glenochil Road. This was the original plan but hasn't been done'.</li> <li>• 'No bus route in the development'.</li> <li>• 'My parents won't get the bus to visit us as its too far to walk from nearest bus stop to our house'.</li> <li>• 'My children can't easily get a bus to visit their friends in Menstrie'.</li> <li>• 'No access to a bus route'.</li> <li>• 'There are good signs for walkers'.</li> <li>• 'There is a nice open space in the development'.</li> <li>• 'The park is good'.</li> </ul>
Street Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Too many speed bumps on the road'.</li> <li>• 'Why so many speed bumps'.</li> <li>• 'The speed bumps are annoying'.</li> <li>• 'Get fed up with the speed bumps – 13 sets on the way in and out'.</li> <li>• 'The speed bumps are overkill, and the replacement ones are worse'.</li> <li>• 'Speed bumps keep the traffic slow'.</li> <li>• 'Being in a cul-de-sac is safe as no through traffic'.</li> <li>• 'The development is very safe'.</li> <li>• 'No streets are safe for kids to play'.</li> </ul>
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'The place has a positive identity'.</li> <li>• 'The area is safe'.</li> <li>• 'This is a pleasant environment to live'.</li> </ul>
Social Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'I only see my neighbours in their cars'.</li> <li>• 'People who live here are commuters'.</li> <li>• 'People tend to keep themselves to themselves'.</li> <li>• 'There is no central space to meet'.</li> <li>• 'There aren't many spaces to meet people'.</li> <li>• 'The development could do with a pub/restaurant, such as Brewers' Fayre, which people could go to'.</li> </ul>

Element	Comments received during the survey for Case Study 1B
Moving Around	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'More open'.</li> <li>• 'Roads are wider'.</li> <li>• 'Minimal Pavements but fewer cars'.</li> <li>• 'I cycle a lot because its safe'.</li> <li>• 'Good connections internally and externally'.</li> </ul>
Streets and Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Houses not crammed in'.</li> <li>• 'Good layout and orientation of houses'.</li> <li>• 'Legible spaces make it easier to get around'.</li> <li>• 'Open space in the right area – central to houses'.</li> </ul>
Street Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Wider roads used by people and cars'.</li> <li>• 'Winding roads slow down cars'.</li> <li>• 'Can't actually do 20mph so no need for 20's plenty signs'.</li> <li>• 'Drivers more aware of other users and are more cautious'.</li> <li>• 'I know that it is safe but would still like pavements on one side for children'.</li> </ul>
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Good connections relationship between houses and therefore people'.</li> <li>• 'People acknowledge each other'.</li> <li>• 'Layout encourages neighbours to look out for each other'.</li> <li>• 'More likely to think of others'.</li> <li>• 'More likely to get to know neighbour further away'.</li> <li>• 'Private Facebook page started by neighbours. Good 'banter' and community spirit on the page'.</li> </ul>
Social Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Communal spaces encourage social contact'.</li> <li>• 'Cups of tea or glass of wine shared with neighbours in communal spaces'.</li> <li>• 'Communal spaces are used safely by children makes it easier for parents to meet'.</li> <li>• 'Shared spaces encourage meeting neighbours and engaging in conversation'.</li> <li>• 'I know some of my neighbours but only see others in their cars'.</li> </ul>

### *Commentary*

The scope of the survey sought to focus on specific issues in respect of how residents felt about the quality and function of the street environment within the development they lived in for the reasons noted above. We wanted to find out if the differences in the street

environment between the two sites was reflected in how residents felt about and interacted with them.

The use of five elements lifted from the Place Standard allowed us to do this and also meant that in future survey work we could use



these questions again as part of a wider Place Standard assessment exercise, allowing for direct comparison and analysis.

### *Moving Around*

The score under this element was virtually identical for both case studies, however, analysis of the comments indicated a far more positive response for Case Study 1B. Some residents in Case Study 1A indicated that walking route options were limited. Whilst comments about lack of gritting in winter seem on the face of it to not be relevant to the survey, they do derive from the site's location at the end of a cul-de-sac rather than off a road that connects to the surrounding networks.

By contrast, good walking and cycling connections were mentioned by residents in Case Study 1B.

### *Streets and Spaces*

In this case, again, whilst there was only a single point difference in scoring between the two sites, with Case Study 1A scoring 5 and Case Study 1B scoring 6, the comments we received pointed to a more significant difference in experience.

Almost all the comments from Case Study 1A were negative, and focussed around the lack of connectivity of the main distributor road to the adjacent network and lack of any accessible bus route. Whilst this second point may not relate directly to this element, the fact that the main distributor road in the development is a cul-de-

sac is clearly an inhibiting factor to the provision of a convenient bus service.

Comments under this element in Case Study 1B were all positive around the development layout and street type.

### *Street Safety*

Street safety scored marginally higher in Case Study 1A, although both scored highly.

In examining comments, the high score for Case Study 1A appeared to derive largely from the number of speed cushions installed, the distributor road serving the site.



Figure 4 – Aerial view of Muirside Avenue (© Getmapping 2015)

Whilst it was clear that the speed cushions themselves were effective in slowing traffic, their existence is a direct consequence of the characteristic of the road of a design that it naturally encourages inappropriately high traffic speeds without the

intervention of vertical speed reduction measures. In other words, the road design ethos was entirely movement based, to an extent that what are normally considered as retro-fit measures, in the form of speed cushions, were an integral part of the design.

In Case Study 1B, whilst one respondent indicated a preference for pavements, the overall experience of the shared surface streets was positive, with respondents noting that road design itself regulated speed, and 20mph signs were therefore superfluous.

### *Identity*

This element produced the greater disparity in scoring between the two case studies; 7:5 in favour of Case Study 1B.

Whilst there were no negative comments about Identity in Case Study 1A, residents felt the area was a pleasant place to live and had a positive identity and there were no comments about any sense of belonging. Respondents in Case Study 1B were very keen to share their experiences of the strong community that had developed in the relatively short time the development has been in place. Several comments cited the development layout and design as being an important factor in this regard.

### *Social Contact*

The contrast in scoring for Identity was largely repeated under Social Contact. The comments in Case Study 1A hinted at residents largely travelling to and from their house by car, and not interacting with neighbours within the public spaces. Again, this contrasted

significantly with the experience reported by respondents in Case Study 1B, where clear evidence of neighbours meeting and interacting within the public spaces was reported.

### *Summary*

This has been a small and self-contained survey for the reasons outlined above, and carried out with a clear view to utilising the full Place Standard tool in further survey work next year.

The survey sought to gain some insight into whether applying a placemaking approach, as a step change from previously implemented residential layout and design, is indeed delivering on the 6 key qualities of successful places set out in Designing Places.

There are some conclusions that can be drawn, and in these, clear evidence that a place-based approach is benefitting residents of those developments that have incorporated these principles.

Whilst residents in both case studies appeared to find the place where they lived to be safe and pleasant, better connectivity and options to walk and cycle appeared to be better in Case Study 1B. The long cul-de-sac design of Case Study 1A, and vertical traffic calming on the distributor road were both sources of frustration for residents. Whilst the connected shared surface streets of Case Study 1B appeared to be enjoyed by residents and recognised as slow traffic environments where pedestrians were safe.

The most notable contrasts identified, both through survey results and comments were the much stronger sense of belonging and

greater social interaction that was taking place in Case Study 1B, as a direct result of the different street environment.

The results of this initial survey are encouraging in respect of our current policy approach and the positive impact that this appears to have on the ground. These results will be shared with colleagues in Roads in order that they are aware of the issues raised. We are encouraged to continue implementing Designing Streets and our own placemaking policies and guidance. A more detailed Place Standard based survey will be undertaken next year, building on this initial work. Results from both will help inform our next generation of placemaking, policy and practice.

*Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:*

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

*Key Markers:*

Note which key markers 1-15 this case study relates to

*Key Areas of Work:*

- Design
- Environment
- Greenspace
- Masterplanning
- Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Placemaking
- Place Standard
- Process Improvement
- Project Management
- Skills Sharing
- Transport

*Stakeholders Involved:*

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff

*Name of key officer*

Grant Baxter

## *Case Study 2 – Qualitative Improvement in Development Proposals Following Application of LDP Policy*

Previous PPF's have reported on the recording of qualitative improvements achieved in the assessment of planning applications. This process has historically been used to evaluate the performance of the Development Management function and quantify the application of LDP policies.

In anticipation of the progression towards a new LDP it has been considered important to undertake a more structured evaluation of qualitative improvements to inform the evolution, and likely streamlining of LDP policy, in the new LDP preparation process.

A case study has therefore been undertaken seeking to quantify the extent and subject of added value in planning application decisions for householder, residential and non-residential development types in the following key areas:

- Design and Layout
- Amenity
- Safety
- Built and Natural Environment

The undertaking of a case study on qualitative improvements in the Planning application process is considered to positively augment pre-application surveying undertaken in the last PPF and the post development surveying that has been undertaken in this PPF reporting period ([Case Study 1](#)). It is considered that the previous evaluation of pre-application experiences and recent evaluation of

qualitative improvements in the application assessment process and assessment of post development environments will provide an improved understanding of the work of the Development Management function over an extended period. This understanding is considered to be essential to inform the preparation of a new LDP particularly given the Planning Bill obligations in respect of plan lifespan and community engagement.

### *Survey method*

This case study collated numeric recordings of qualitative improvements held in the Uniform planning application database. Further assessment was undertaken in order to group these recorded improvements for respective development types into the case study key areas in order to identify the percentages of improvements achieved and to understand how these improvements had been achieved.

The achievement of qualitative improvements was assessed in respect of two key areas:

- the negotiation of improvements by submission of amended plans and information; and
- the requirement for improvements by means of planning conditions.

It was considered important to identify the means by which qualitative improvements were achieved in order to inform future

planning application assessment practises and allow for an evaluation of the most effective methods of achieving improvements in the context of statutory assessment periods.

### *Results*

The case study concluded that qualitative improvements in planning applications determined in the PPF reporting period were achieved in the following percentages:

Further assessment was also undertaken order to quantify whether Added Value was achieved during the application assessment period by the submission of amendments or after the assessment period and required by conditions.

**Householder Development** – Added Value was achieved by the submission of amended plans in 54% of applications and by conditions in 46% of applications.

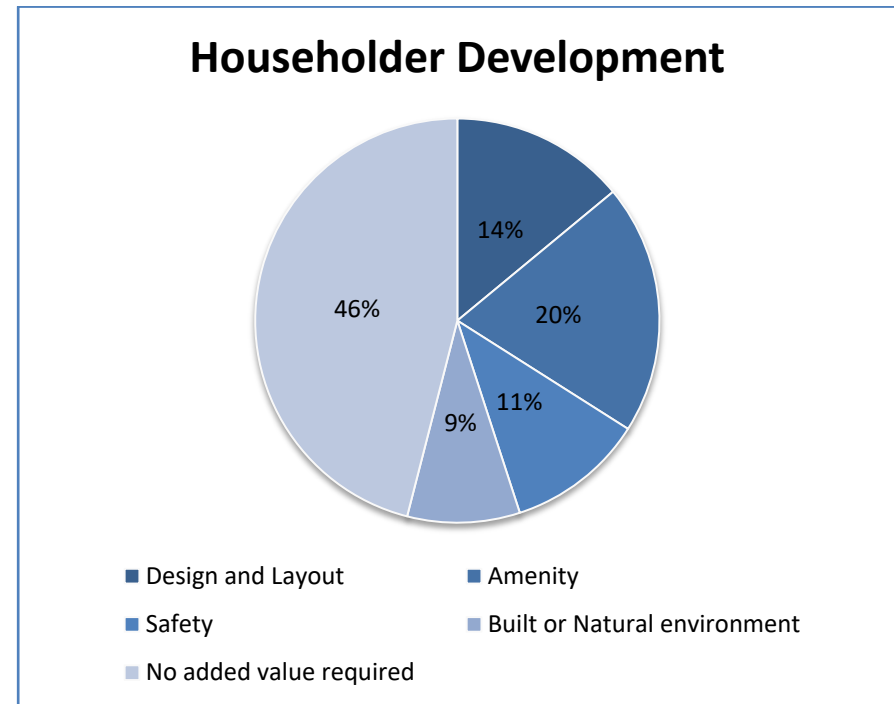


Figure 5 – Householder development results

**Residential Development** – Added Value was achieved by the submission of amended plans in 55% of applications and by conditions in 45% of applications.

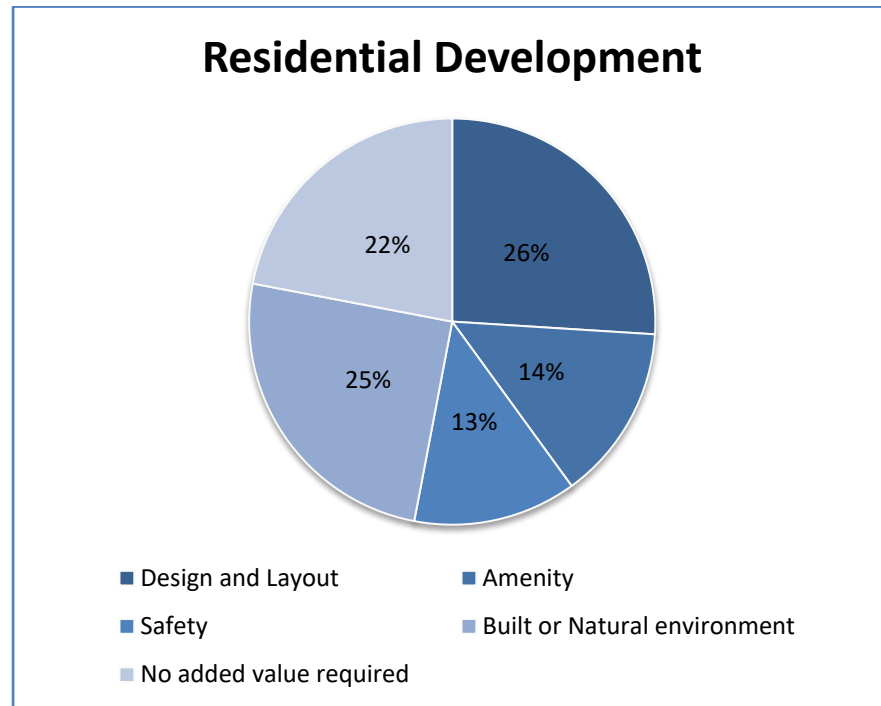


Figure 6– Residential development results

**Non-Residential Development** – Added Value was achieved by the submission of amended plans in 43% of applications and by conditions in 57% of applications.

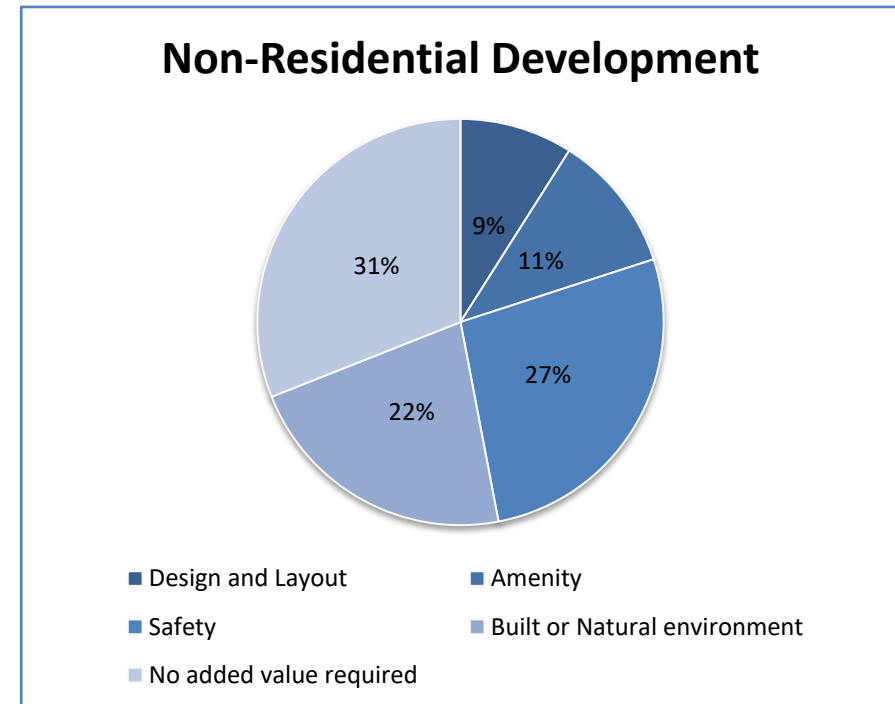


Figure 7 – Non-residential development results

### Summary

The findings of the survey are summarised below by development type with associated commentary.

**Design and layout** – the greatest percentage of added value in relation to residential development, followed by householder and then non-residential development is considered to be

proportionate given the characteristics of residential developments. Added value is more likely to be sought in relation to design and layout when considering residential developments particularly when developments of more than one house are being assessed.

**Amenity** – the greatest percentage of added value in relation to householder development, followed by residential and then non-residential is considered proportionate given the characteristics of householder developments. Added value is more likely to be sought in relation to householder developments given the proximity of development to adjacent housing and potential resultant impacts on amenity.

**Safety** – the greatest percentage of added value in relation to non-residential development is considered proportionate given the characteristics of non-residential development. For example assessment of the interaction between commercial traffic and other users, the mitigation of traffic impacts in mixed use areas and the need to reduce vehicular movements are more likely to result in the need to add value in respect of safety.

**Built or natural environment** – comparable percentages of added value noted in relation to residential development and non-residential developments are considered to be proportionate given similar considerations of development integration and landscape setting for both development types.

**No added value** - the greatest percentage of where no value was added in relation to householder developments is considered proportionate given the minor nature of developments and the established commitment to decision making targets for this development type. The higher percentage of no added value noted in the evaluation of non-residential development compared to residential development is considered proportionate given the greater percentages where added value is achieved in respect of design and layout, amenity and built or natural environment.

### *Conclusion*

The conclusions drawn from this case study are considered to be an important confirmation of consistency of application assessment applied to different development types. This provides further confidence in the Council's Development Management function for our customers.

Of similar importance is the finding that added value is achieved in the majority of planning applications by amendments rather than by the imposition of conditions. This conclusion is of particular importance given that the Council consistently achieves application assessment targets set by Scottish Government and is clearly doing so with the principle of added value being enshrined within the application assessment period. Furthermore it is confirmation of the Council's commitment of engaging with applicants and agents during the application assessment process.



The results of this case study will be used to inform the evolution of LDP policy in respect of the key areas examined and the Development Management function.

*Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:*

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

*Key Markers:*

Note which key markers 1-15 this case study relates to

*Key Areas of Work:*

- Design
- Environment
- Greenspace
- Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement

*Stakeholders Involved:*

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff

*Name of key officer*

Allan Finlayson

### Case Study 3 – Review of Renewable Energy Developments

The 2016–17 PPF highlighted the Service’s positive approach to addressing demand for renewable energy development and in particular how the Council’s policy framework contained in the adopted Clackmannanshire LDP and related Supplementary Guidance has been critical to effective decision making to ensure that the contribution that the development would make to the Government’s renewable energy generation targets can be achieved in an environmentally acceptable manner.

**Councillor Balsillie, Planning Committee Convenor —**

*“Clackmannanshire Council is fully committed to renewable energy and carbon reduction targets set by the Scottish Government. We aim to encourage, enable and expand the wide diversity of renewable energy projects that are available in our area whilst protecting and enhancing our natural and built environment. The case study reviews our experiences to date and will help shape the evolution of future LDP policies to ensure that the Council maximises the opportunities for renewable energy in our area whilst balancing potential impacts on our environment”.*

The wider policy context is set by the regulatory commitments to tackle climate change set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, subsequent Government policy and targets and the

underlying Vision for Clackmannanshire contained in the adopted LDP which envisages a sustainable Clackmannanshire in 2035 comprising “a community that has experienced a successful transition to a vibrant low-carbon economy..”.

The aim of this case study is to examine the effectiveness of existing LDP policies and guidance in relation to proposals to generate renewable energy on a commercial basis. It does not directly consider other low carbon and energy efficiency examples although the findings could inform future policy development for these aspects as well.

The relevant policy context comprises:

- The adopted Clackmannanshire LDP, adopted August 2015. The overarching Vision of the Plan was to promote sustainable development. Under the Section titled “Creating Sustainable Communities,” the Plan includes a number of Policies relating to renewable energy generation including a general policy relating to all renewable energy proposals and 5 policies relating to specific renewable energy technologies.
- Supplementary Guidance contained in SG2 – Onshore Wind Energy and SG 7 – Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Development. The Guidance Documents were prepared and agreed as part of the LDP adoption process and they

reflected the priorities of the Council to encourage sustainable development and tackle climate change.

- Scottish Government's National Planning Framework and Scottish Planning Policy (SPP).

The case study reflects projects identified in the last PPF since, they cover a variety of renewable technologies, raised various policy issues, and are of an appropriate scale and complexity. These comprise:

- The erection of three wind turbines to extend the existing Burnfoot Hill Windfarm in the Ochil Hills, north of Tillicoultry ([17/00026/FULL](#))
- The installation of a micro hydro electricity generator at Harviestoun Home Farm, Dollar ([13/00158/FULL](#))
- The installation of a 4.99MW solar array at Balhearty Farm, Coalsnaughton ([15/00188/FULL](#), [16/00013/FULL](#) and [17/00181/FULL](#))
- The installation of an energy storage system comprising of battery storage containers at Bankhead Farm, south of Twentyfive Acre Wood, Fishcross ([17/00120/FULL](#))

### *Burnfoot Hill Windfarm Extension*



This application sought permission to erect three turbines to extend an existing windfarm. The original windfarm comprised 13 turbines and was approved in 2008. The wind farm was extended to the north by two turbines which lay in Perth and Kinross Council's area and a further six turbines were approved to the west following an appeal to Scottish Ministers in 2014 after the decision by the Council's Planning Committee to refuse permission.

Notable factors associated with the application were:

- The proposed turbines would be larger than the existing turbines. The maximum ground to blade tip height would be 33 metres higher than the comparable measurement of the existing turbines.

- The original wind farm site design had discounted this area due to its proximity to a farm house occupied by the land owner. However, they have recently decided to vacate the house and a commitment has been made that it would not be used for residential purposes for the duration of the development thereby providing an opportunity for turbine development that did not previously exist.
- The development would have an operational life of 25 years after which it would be removed. The predicted annual output would be the equivalent of the electricity needs of up to 7,900 households (approximately 34% of all the households in Clackmannanshire).

The Ochil Hills form an important landscape feature and resource for Clackmannanshire and are designated as a Special Landscape Area in the LDP. A proposal for the siting of a wind farm within this environment demands a sensitive, comprehensive and competent analysis to successfully balance the potential renewable energy production benefits with safeguarding the important values of this area relating to landscape quality, visual amenity, recreation, agriculture, carbon rich soils and water management. While the previous applications had generated large numbers of representations, once built, the wind farm development appears to have been relatively well received and the design and mitigation measures employed have helped minimise the environmental impacts both during and post construction. However, the proposal for a further extension using a different turbine design raised issues

relating to the acceptability of the direct and cumulative landscape and visual impacts, and the impact on the recreational enjoyment of this part of the Ochil Hills range.

On reflection, the LDP policy and supplementary guidance provided a helpful and suitably rigorous framework within which the Service undertook its assessment and reached its recommendation. The following factors contributed to this conclusion:

- The scope and relevance of the guidance as set out in the various criteria contained in the relevant LDP Policies to the planning issues raised by the development.
- The guidance contained in the Supplementary Guidance on Onshore Wind Energy, This document also included a revised Spatial Framework for Wind Energy Development which had been prepared based on the latest Scottish Government methodology which post-dated the version in the LDP. The Supplementary Guidance provided useful advice on how to interpret and attach weight to this Framework as well as siting and design guidance based on the landscape sensitivity study.
- A landscape sensitivity study had been commissioned on the relative sensitivity of the Clackmannanshire landscape to accommodate wind energy development to help inform the preparation of the LDP and Supplementary Guidance. The analysis and findings of this study also provided an important and robust resource and tool for the Service

when undertaking its assessment of the landscape impacts of the development.

- The absence of any significant challenge or concerns expressed by third parties about the policy framework which informed the recommendation reached by the Service. The advice from key statutory consultees did not highlight any significant omissions.
- The willingness of the applicant to submit adequate information to address the requirements set out in policy and guidance.

The above factors contributed to the Service making a positive recommendation on the application which was approved by the Planning Committee. The development has not been implemented to date.

#### *Micro Hydro Electricity Generator at Harviestoun near Dollar*



The application was for a run of river hydro-electricity development comprising an 800 metre long underground pipe with associated small building to house the turbine. The site was located on the lower slopes of the south facing escarpment of the Ochil Hills which is designated as a Special Landscape Area. The escarpment creates a prominent and dramatic landscape and setting for Clackmannanshire.

Notable factors with the application were:

- The application pre-dated the adopted LDP and there was no policy guidance specific to hydro development in the Local Plan in force at that time.



- While the lower half of the development was screened by existing policy woodland, the upper half was in an elevated area of open hillside visible over a wide area.
- The intake lay immediately downstream of a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The watercourse was also used as a source for a private water supply.
- The predicted annual energy output would be the equivalent of the electricity needs of approximately 50 households.

The key issues identified at the time related to landscape and visual impacts, ecological impacts and environmental quality. The policy context at that time comprised the Clackmannanshire and Stirling Structure Plan and the Clackmannanshire Local Plan. The Structure Plan did include a policy relating to hydro development although this was fairly general in terms of its scope and guidance as well as policies relating to landscape, ecological and water interests. The information and the analysis at the time did not identify any unacceptable adverse impacts and permission was granted under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

The development has been implemented the sensitive landscape and visual amenity of the area has been satisfactorily safeguarded.

The preparation of the LDP pre dated the implementation of the development and the experience gained from the development will inform future policy preparation and the assessment of any further applications of this nature.

### *Installation of a Solar Array at Balhearty, Coalsnaughton*



This application sought permission to install over 18,000 ground mounted photo voltaic panels on approximately 12 ha of agricultural land located on Sheardale ridge which runs to the south of the River Devon valley.

Notable factors for the application were:

- The south boundary of the site abuts the B9140 road which is a well-used route. There are residential properties to the east and west of the site.
- When the application was submitted, the proposal was one of the largest arrays in Scotland.
- The original application sought permission for a 25 year period but this has subsequently been extended to up to 35

years by the operator. This reflects the longer lifespan now expected for the panels installed than was the case when the original application was submitted.

- The predicted annual output would be the equivalent of the electricity needs of up to 1,400 households.

The site was not subject to any landscape designation and had previously been opencast for the extraction of coal. However, this was the first proposal the Service had received for a solar array and it was of a significant scale. The key issues identified during the assessment process related to potential impacts on landscape and visual amenity, future agricultural capability of the land, ecological interests, nuisance from noise and glint/glare, flood risk, and the ability to restore the site once electricity generation ceases.

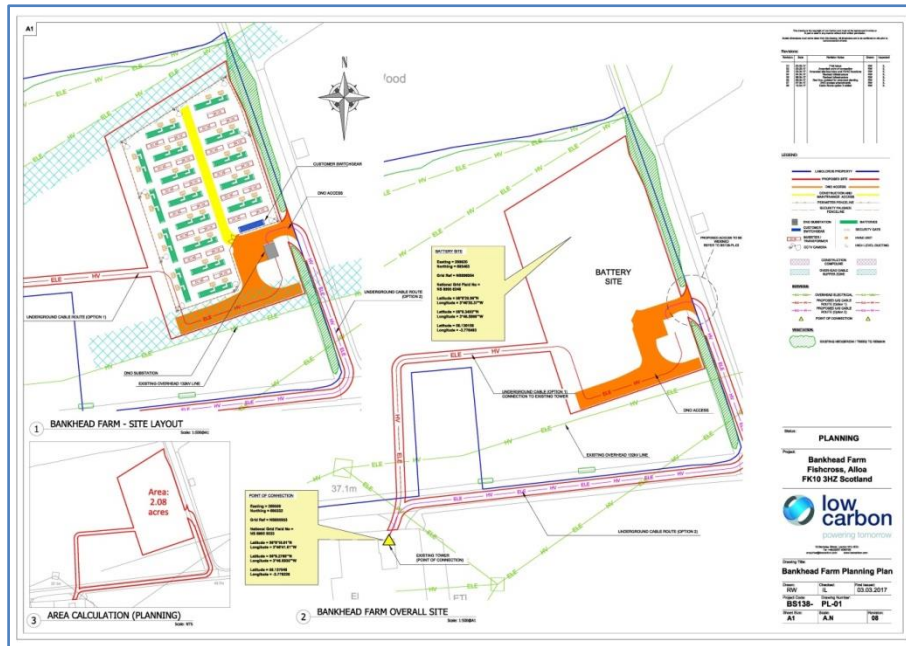
These issues were addressed by the scope of the relevant renewable energy policies in the LDP which helped ensure the potential impacts were assessed and adequate mitigation incorporated as part of the permission. There were no objections from statutory consultees or from third parties which also is an indicator that the application and supporting information was suitably robust. The application was approved under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

The array has been implemented and while some of the screen planting and biodiversity planting has still to establish, the development is considered to have been successfully integrated within the surrounding area without any adverse impacts on visual

amenity, landscape character and residential amenity. The LDP policy framework provided a suitably robust framework to undertake the assessment and reach a recommendation.



## Installation of Energy Storage System at Bankhead Farm, Fishcross



The application sought permission to install up to 17 large battery storage containers and 25 transformer units on an area of agricultural land bounded by the B9140 and Shavelhaugh Loan near Fishcross. The batteries would store up to 50MWh of electricity from renewable energy development within Clackmannanshire during periods when the energy being generated outstrips demand. This will then be released back into the national grid when generating capacity cannot meet demand.

Notable features of the application included:

- The site was selected due to its proximity to the existing sub-station at Fishcross which would allow electricity generated by the wind farm at Burnfoot Hill and solar array at Balhearty to be stored during periods of low demand and then released into the grid to meet periods of higher demand.
- The development is part of a scheme supported by National Grid to provide a balancing service to the UK grid to allow the storage of renewable energy during off peak periods which can then be supplied into the Grid to help meet peak demand. In turn, this process creates a more responsive and efficient system to utilise renewable energy and manage the grid and reduce the reliance on fossil fuel energy traditionally used as back up. This context justified its inclusion in the case study.
- The site is in a prominent location abutting two roads.
- The development would have an operational life of 30 years. The capacity of the storage is equivalent to meeting the electricity needs of around 135,000 households for an hour during peak periods.

The key issues identified during the assessment were landscape and visual impact, the need for a countryside location and compatibility with surrounding land uses. This represents a relatively new technology related to renewable energy generation and there was no specific policy guidance available or examples of exemplars elsewhere to inform the characteristics of the proposal.

The application was assessed against the relevant policies in the LDP relating to development in the countryside, landscape quality and environmental quality and was considered to be policy compliant. The potential benefits that the development could deliver to renewable energy generation and the locational requirement to be located close to the source and access to the grid were attributed weight as material considerations in the absence of any specific policy guidance.

The development has not been implemented but the Service recognised the contribution that this technology could have to maximise the contribution of renewable energy generation sources in Clackmannanshire, helping reduce reliance on less sustainable sources of energy generation and help create a more responsive and efficient national grid. The development is expected to inform future policy preparation in relation to renewable energy developments.

### *Summary*

While the number of renewable energy applications received in Clackmannanshire has not been large by comparison with some other areas, this is partly due to its relative small area, the pattern of settlements, the environmental constraints that exist and the topography of the area. The policy framework is considered to be fairly robust and has enabled Clackmannanshire Council to make a significant contribution proportionate to its size and potential towards the legislative and Government policy requirements to;

reduce greenhouse gas emissions; increase renewable energy generation; and act sustainably, while safeguarding its environmental interests.

The scale of the contribution from approved commercial generation developments is an approved installed capacity of 55.8MW equivalent to meet the electricity needs of 32,000 homes. The approved installed capacity therefore exceeds the needs of the 23,500 homes in the Clackmannanshire Council area.

Clackmannanshire Council has been selected and awarded funding by Scottish Government as one of twelve Local Authorities to pilot the development of a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency (LHEES) Strategy. The findings of this case study will be used to inform the Council's involvement in the formation of LHEES actions which seek to provide:

- Initial exploration of potential activities and assessing resource requirements for development of a full LHEES (seeking to test and trial approaches rather than develop a full strategy).
- Testing modelling tools to support local spatial analysis for identifying and prioritising heat and energy efficiency opportunities.
- Joint working across multiple local authorities to share skills and resources.

- Approaches to stakeholder engagement to gather information and develop a base of public support for a LHEES.
- Development of an LHEES for a specific area within the wider local authority boundaries.
- Developing methods for socio-economic assessment of LHEES, to understand their impacts on issues such as fuel poverty, local jobs supported; or as a means of prioritising programmes of work.

This case study evaluation and conclusions will inform the policy formulation and objectives of the next LDP and the Councils contribution to the Scottish Government LHEES strategy.

*Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:*

- Quality of outcomes
- Culture of continuous improvement

*Key Markers:*

Note which key markers 1-15 this case study relates to

*Key Areas of Work:*

- Design

- Environment
- Greenspace
- Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Economic Development
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement
- Project Management

*Stakeholders Involved:*

- General Public
- Hard to reach groups
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

*Name of key officer*

Keith Johnstone

## 2. Quality of Service and Engagement

### a. Open for Business

The adopted LDP represents the foundation upon which the service can build on investment on the ground, growth in the economy and an enhanced quality of service. The first two of its strategic objectives set a clear framework for positive change and aim to deliver sustainable economic growth. In that context, we have identified a specific section of the plan on Employment and Prosperity, aimed at addressing the economy, creating jobs, and supporting business. The plan has six key policies which capture the principles:

- Support for new business and industry on strategic sites.
- Support for the retention and promotion of businesses.
- The circumstances where business expansion outwith allocated sites can be considered favourably.
- The general presumption against non-employment generating uses on existing and allocated sites.
- Support for the principle of homeworking. We are particularly looking to encourage this within planned developments at Dollar, Muckhart and Forestmill.
- Encouragement for investment in green business.

More work is required to translate this policy framework into job creation outcomes and we will examine this as part of the monitoring report.

The Planning team continues to be structured with a customer focus. The three Development Management case officers deal with: residential development; commercial development; and householder developments. This model is embedded in our Service Structure. It works well, ensures that customers receive a consistent level of advice, and helps to develop good working arrangements with developers, and those less familiar with planning procedures. For example, the officer dealing with householder developments has the skills and experience necessary to communicate with applicants and third parties who are not familiar with planning procedures, and who may often be looking to be guided on matters such as permitted development and the application process.

The officer responsible for residential development can consistently apply their knowledge and experience, on Designing Streets, placemaking and other design guidance, to secure the outcomes described earlier. This officer helped prepare residential policy guidance for the LDP, and plays a leading role in facilitating the Developer Contributions Group and the Local Authority Urban Design Forum (LAUDF).

The officer responsible for non-residential development has developed strong business links and an understanding of the needs

of business and non-domestic developers to ensure that the Planning Service responds appropriately to these needs within the regulatory framework and in preparation of LDP policies and guidance. This is a great benefit to businesses within the Council area. This officer also plays a leading role in the operation of the Developer Contributions Group and is a regular attendee at national forums such as in relation to EIA developments and mineral working.

The work of all officers is overseen by the Planning and Building Standards Team Leader who is able to contribute to the progression of all applications in the absence of any officer. The Planning and Building Standards Team Leader also allocates applications outwith specialities on an occasional basis to ensure continued professional development.

A monitoring framework has been set up which will report annually each October on the performance of the LDP, including details on the frequency of the use of policies, examples of good practice flowing from Policy input, identification of any policy voids and other performance criteria related to the LDP.

The Planning Service has no dedicated enforcement or monitoring officer. Each planning officer provides a service to customers, from pre-application advice through to monitoring the implementation of development. The Council's Enforcement Charter was originally published in February 2011, reviewed in 2015 and has been

reviewed again in 2018. The most recent review included an examination of casework between 2017–18, with analysis of results by type of alleged breach, development sector and method of communication. The broad findings of the exercise appeared to indicate that the criteria set out in our Charter used to inform decision making remain fit for purpose and delivering proportionate outcomes with strong public confidence in the Service. Any alleged breach of planning control can be reported via the Council Website. This “Report It” facility is a convenient method of reporting an alleged breach, and enables officers to populate our enforcement management system. In fulfilling a commitment in the previous PPF the Enforcement Register is now published on the Council website, making it easier to view enforcement action taken and the properties or land that are affected. The completion of this action has had the added benefit of reducing the number of Freedom of Information requests that the Council receives seeking details of enforcement action and consequently the work that this generates.

We record permitted development enquiries for householder and non-householder developments on our application database. Each receives its own unique reference number, and a target response date. It therefore enables us to monitor workload and performance, and ensure that each enquiry gets a timeous response.

## b. Certainty

Almost all planning applications were decided in accordance with the balance of LDP policies, or in accordance with allocations and the Schedule of Sites within the LDP. The formatting and content of the Schedule of Sites in the LDP is divided into 4 sections as described previously. We have simplified the content, reduced prescribed standards, placed added emphasis on quality and focus on key issues to enable development. It is a simple format usually in checklist form and designed to make it easy to use and understand. Any interested party can confidently identify key issues for any site.

The 'Development Requirements' identified for each site in the LDP works well in highlighting to developers what information will be required to accompany applications for sites and also what developer contributions may be sought.

It is generally considered helpful that the requirement for technical information, for example Flood Risk Assessments, are flagged up at this stage and this enables developers or their consultants to engage with the Council to quickly and easily agree the scope of any such studies.

It has been previously acknowledged that where the Developer Contributions are listed for each site there can be some confusion and this will be considered through the LDP Review. Particular issues have included:

- Instances where a Developer Contribution had been identified, but was no longer required due to a change in Council strategy, for example funding for a new school, where in fact it was decided to extend existing schools.
- Contributions to projects which were no longer in existence by the time an application was submitted.
- Contributions to projects which had subsequently been funded through other means.
- Items included which should not technically have been defined as "Developer Contributions"

The ongoing LDP review will consider these issues to ensure an appropriate balance is struck between certainty and flexibility and to ensure development is sustainable.

Supplementary Guidance has been prepared to compliment the LDP and previous evaluation has identified that in the determination of a majority of planning applications Supplementary Guidance was referred to. This therefore shows the importance of Supplementary Guidance and how it can add value to the planning process. Proposals to remove the statutory nature of Supplementary Guidance in the Planning Bill will need to be considered and may influence the style, content and length of future LDPs.

All officers continue to use the planning application process map we have reported on previously to manage casework. This "standard" management tool has contributed to our sustained levels of performance on decision making. Officers are fully aware that good communication with agents and others builds confidence in the service, keeps applicants and agents informed, and represents a proactive approach to decision making. We plan to increase the use of techniques similar to process agreements, include information in our acknowledgement letters and use the e-newsletter to help convey this message.

Over 90% of planning applications are decided by the Council's Appointed Officers in accordance with its Scheme of Delegation for Local Developments. The Scheme of Delegation was originally approved by Scottish Ministers and was reviewed in 2014. The review concluded that the Scheme operated well, achieved the Government's original objectives for decision making on local development, and should continue to operate in its current form. A further review of the Scheme of Delegation will be undertaken in late 2018 or early 2019.

We continue to refer applications for major developments to Committee for decision, irrespective of the circumstances. We have had no requests for Local Review on planning application decisions in the reporting period, a further indicator of the success of this Scheme and also our drive to enable rather than regulate development. Our approval rate remains proportionately high, and

is evidence of the Planning Service meeting Scottish Government's call for delivering development.

Case conferences are convened with the Planning and Building Standards Team Leader and Development Service Manager (the Appointed Officers) to discuss on a weekly basis selected pre-application enquiries, key applications, and all those with representations against the development. This provides early direction on the outcome of applications and ensures that applicants and agents receive early and confident notification of progress and probable outcomes.

Reports of Handling identify specific policies, proposal allocations or supplementary guidance. This is an integral part of the LDP Monitoring process and provides reliable evidence on the true use of policy, progress on allocations and the value of guidance to ensure plans are fit for purpose. Reports include a list of all parties to have made representations for and against the proposal. They summarise the representation and provide a response on the relevance to the proposal and the planning merits. Third parties receive written notification of the Council's decision, including the decision, any conditions and reasons, a summary of the objections and an explanation of our response that has contributed to the decision. Experience indicates that this feedback is well received, helping to explain how the Council has dealt with the objection and reached its decision, particularly if the decision did not reflect the third parties' hopes or expectations.



### c. Communications, Engagement and Customer Service

Our online planning information system represents the main source of information on planning applications received and decided. It is maintained in accordance with “Publishing Planning Applications Online” the Scottish Government's data protection guidance to planning authorities. It provides 24/7 access to planning application files. Each file will include the application form, drawings, consultees responses, representations, report of handling, decision notice and approved plans.

The home page of the Council's website, [Clackmannanshire Council Online](#), includes Planning as one of eight top tasks subjects, providing quick and easy access to our suite of information. The page also has a dedicated Self Service Section, with links for “Apply for It” and “Report It”. The former takes the user to a group of applications, including one to the [edevelopment.scot](#) home page, and the latter provides access to icons that include an alleged breach of planning control. A review of the Planning Service pages on the Council's website is a committed service improvement action for the following year.

In addition to the online planning information service, we continue to offer alternative channels of communication. Customers can make direct telephone contact with planning officers. All incoming calls are answered by a planning officer or support staff. Where a planning officer is not available, the call will be returned later that day. A customer should never need to leave a recorded message

with the Council. Through management of workload, officers are able to incorporate this level of service within their work schedules without detriment to wider service delivery. We have more than anecdotal evidence demonstrating wide customer support for this level and quality of service.

We published an eNewsletter in July 2017 and February 2018 which was distributed to agents, developers, Community Councils and other interested parties. This will continue to be published twice a year, allowing us to communicate topical news and information about the Planning Service and any other relevant Planning matters both local and national.

The Council has a two stage corporate complaints service, and we are pleased to report that only one complaint was made in relation to the Planning Service during the reporting period and this was received from a resident of another Council area. The complaint related to the actions of a developer within the Clackmannanshire Council area who was also developing in proximity to the complainant's property in the other Council area. The complaint was resolved with no further action being required by the Council. The complainant has not chosen to progress the complaint further.

During the reporting period the ‘Call for Sites’ and ‘Call for Issues’ for the LDP Review was initiated. All of those on the LDP database were consulted which included all statutory agencies and everyone

involved in the last LDP, or who had expressed an interest since. It was also advertised on the Council's website and in the Development Services Bulletin.

The period for comments ran from September 2017 to January 2018 and Council officers attended the annual Community Council's conference, a meeting of the Clackmannanshire Youth Council and a specially convened 'Planning Overview' meeting for all Community Councils during this period.

A total of 36 parties made representations, including eight new proposed development sites.

The Council's website is regularly updated with information on the progress of the Plan as well as notification of any significant milestones in the Council's Development Services Bulletin. The Bulletin is published on a weekly basis, providing a note of planning applications and building warrants received and decided in the preceding seven days. It is also the opportunity to report on any other matters of interest, such as planning committee dates, appeal decisions or enforcement matters.

### 3. Governance

#### a. Efficient and Effective Decision-making

The adoption of the LDP in 2015 has ensured that decision making is up to date and contributes to more effective decision making. Following the adoption of the plan, the Council proceeded to update its Development Plan Scheme, which explains all the key stages of the review process, and sets a timetable with milestones for adopting a new plan by March 2020. This ensures that planning and investment is guided by up to date policies and site assessment.

The LDP Review timetable is set out annually in the Development Plan Scheme. It has been planned based on the indicative programming in Circular 6/2013. This has provided target dates for the completion of the different areas of work to ensure the review is complete within 5 years of adoption.

Progress is monitored through monthly meetings between the LDP officer and the Planning and Building Standards Team Leader. The LDP officer manages their own workload seeking guidance or support when required.

Within the reporting period, the LDP officer has progressed the first stages of the LDP Review. This included reviewing timescales, evaluating use of the current policies, recording progress on LDP sites and ensuring contacts were up to date. Input from others was minimal during this time however was requested and provided

when required. Input from other officers will increase in intensity as required over the plan preparation period.

Other staff required to input to the LDP Review are advised on its progress and, when more formal input is likely to be required. This will be requested and timetabled, usually in the form of a GANNT chart.

As much notice as possible is given when it is identified that input will be required from other resources, for example Development Management officers input to policy, or other Council departments inputs. However this needs to be flexible to fit around the priorities of the LDP officer, and other workload outwith the LDP that has to be undertaken.

One key area of investment for the Council is in Renewable Energy. The Service has taken a positive approach to addressing the demand for renewable energy development in response to the statutory requirement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to enable Clackmannanshire to contribute to achieving the Scottish Government's targets for renewable energy production. This reflects the clear vision for the area by 2035 set out in the LDP, which includes “a community that has experienced a successful transition to a vibrant low carbon economy..”.

The LDP contains a number of policies relating to renewable energy and specific renewable energy technologies as well as two areas of Supplementary Guidance on Onshore Wind Energy and Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Development. This policy framework, together with other policy guidance and experience has informed decision making on a number of renewable energy proposals including:

- an extension to Burnfoot Hill Windfarm at Rhodders;
- a single wind turbine at Gibsley Farm;
- a solar array at Balhearty Farm;
- a micro-hydro scheme at Harviestoun Home Farm; and
- a battery storage system at Balhearty Farm.

The previous PPF committed to updating on the above developments following their implementation, with evidence to demonstrate how our policies and guidance have been critical to decision making, ensuring that renewable energy developments can be delivered to meet government targets, and in a manner that is sensitive to their site and environment. [Case Study 3](#) in this PPF fulfils this commitment.

This and previous PPF reports have described our customer focussed case officer structure, our model for pre-application advice, case conference arrangements for key applications and the review of the Council's Scheme of Delegation for Local Developments.

Case officers undertake planning application site visits within seven days of receipt of all planning applications. A photographic record is held on the application file. Officers are expected to have collated all information on the expiry of publicity periods, identified relevant policy considerations and either agreed a likely decision or identified key issues within a four week period, in accordance with the application process map. Applicants or agents can expect first communication within that same time frame. The Planning Service will shortly implement the use of idox 'Enterprise' application monitoring software and this will further assist planning application assessment processes and performance timescales.

Over 90% of all planning applications for local developments are determined by Appointed Officers under the Scheme of Delegation. Applications for approval which have attracted no representations, and no objections from consultees, are signed off by one Appointed Officer. Any application with representations, consultee objections or that are recommended for refusal will be signed by two Appointed Officers. The Scheme remains an efficient model for decision making, with universal expressions of confidence arising from its contribution to efficiency and decision making.

The Service has a robust committee decision making structure in place which is fit for purpose and designed to avoid any delay in decision making, and structured to give added certainty. The key features of this structure include:

- The release of confidential draft agendas to the Council's Management Team and Councillors as an early warning system, with a draft officer recommendation on each item of business.
- Pre-Committee convenor briefings on items of business to identify any new information received and barriers to decision making.
- Arrangements for elected member site visits to be convened before the planned committee meeting. No applications are deferred for site visits. There has been no deferral of any decision during the reporting period.
- A scheme of oral representations which provides the opportunity for the applicant, objectors and community councils to address the committee; 66% of committee meetings have heard representations from applicants, or objectors. The scheme is publicised on our website, and we send details to all those submitting representations against a proposal before the committee meeting.
- Arrangements for decisions to be issued immediately after the committee meetings.

Planning Committee meetings are planned to be re-scheduled on a four week cycle. Meetings of the Local Review Body are diarised on the same day.

The Council has two legacy cases. Both applications relate to proposed housing developments and the negotiation of contributions to mitigate education capacity impacts. Neither application has been decided however decisions are anticipated to be made later in 2018. The Council recently accepted an invitation to participate in the brokerage service provided by Scottish Governments Chief Planner and has found this experience to be of assistance in targeting determination dates.

Two applications were granted within the reporting period subject to the conclusion of Section 75 Obligations. The processing of the Obligation for one of these applications took longer than the performance period. The applicant for this application took almost 4 months to respond to the Council's post decision contact in respect of Section 75 drafting arrangements. Following the response from the applicant, due to constraints on staff resourcing in the Council's Legal Services legal drafting also took longer than expected. The other Obligation was concluded within the performance period.

## **b. Effective Management Structures**

Change to the management structure and function of Development Services was implemented in 2016 when one team leader (Planning) assumed responsibility for the Development Plan and Development Quality teams. This merging of function has created a single planning service, reinforcing joint working, and consolidating other areas of shared engagement, such as the Planning and Property Group, the Developer Contributions Team and the production of Supplementary Guidance. In 2017 this team leader (Planning and Building Standards) assumed the additional responsibility for the management of the Building Standards Service. The previous incumbent of this post retired in May 2018 and was replaced in November 2018. During the period of this PPF the primary focus of the Planning and Building Standards team has therefore been on that of core statutory responsibilities and consequently a lesser focus has been directed to service improvement related work.

The responsibility for non-operational assets is within the remit of the Service Manager ensures that planning considerations are included in site disposal plans. This has represented a positive

move to embed planning within the Council's Asset Management function, facilitated in part through the Planning and Property Group meetings.

Monthly performance reports are submitted to the Development Services Management Team which provide details of applications received and decided, performance information on those decisions, and an up to date record of fee income set against targeted figures. The format of such reports, and the associated public reporting of performance, was a planned service improvement for 2015–16. However, with no public interface, it was not prioritised. We have now implemented a new performance management system (Pentana) which allows for greater scrutiny and reporting of performance indicators. Information from this platform is collated for wider reporting to the Council. The alignment of Service Business Plan commitments with Scottish Government performance reporting criteria is now possible and will be implemented. This will streamline and provide greater consistency in performance reporting.



### c. Financial Management and Local Governance

The budget setting process is undertaken on an annual basis to identify expected expenditure and income for the coming year. This will include the outsourcing of any key projects, income from planning applications and other sources, and is set against Action Plans and Key Performance Indicators in the Development & Environment Services Business Plan for the period.

The Service continues to ensure that flexible resource management arrangements are in place to broaden skills, knowledge and experience and to react to fluctuating demand on resources from the LDP and Development Quality casework. This flexibility within the staff resource has been reinforced with the refined joint team leadership arrangements. Financial prudence is central to these arrangements.

At a corporate level; the Council continues to respond to the financial challenges that it faces. The aim is to get maximum benefit from our available resources.

The key elements of the programme for the planning service are:

- To focus on clear priorities such as statutory duties set out in planning legislation, in favour of more discretionary tasks.
- Transform services to best meet user needs, and we have referred previously to the focus on improved website advice and information. The [edevdevelopment.scot](http://edevdevelopment.scot) programme and now implemented merger of the Planning and Building Standards sections are further examples.
- To be as efficient and effective as possible.
- Have an appropriate approach to charging for services and getting better value for money. We decided not to introduce charges for pre-application advice, nor to consider a charge for some premium standards of service, but this remains under review on an ongoing basis.
- A move away from paper copies of plans and guidance associated with the LDP towards easily accessible web based documents, while still meeting statutory requirements for having documents available in local libraries and community access points.

#### 4. Culture of Continuous Improvement

All staff within the planning service undertake a Performance Review and Development (PRD) programme on an annual basis,



Figure 8 – PRD Competences

with six-monthly reviews. This exercise focuses on behavioural competences such as commitment to quality, developing people and excellence in customer service. At a corporate level, the Council has developed training pathways for Service Managers and Team Leaders.

The Planning Service annual operational plan informs the PRD process. This is monitored on a regular basis. It aligns with the Service Improvements in Part 4, most of which have been completed.

Clackmannanshire Council has joined a benchmarking group to share good practice and stimulate improvements in service. The sharing of work on indicators and performance markers develops themes elsewhere in the Planning Performance Framework, and enables the exchange of views and good practice on Planning Performance Framework; Service Improvements; budgets; enforcement; and benchmarking indicators.

We continue to use the Local Government Knowledge Hub for evidence of good practice, and whilst not yet contributing to the content, have found the Government's exemplars for Inspirational Design, a useful resource. The attendance of the Planning and Building Standards Team Leader at both Heads of Planning (HoPS) and Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS) has provided an enhanced Service understanding of the relationship

between Planning and Building Standards in respect of engagement with Scottish Government and stakeholders. This attendance has resulted in greater consistency of approach in the Planning and Building Standards service to customers and improved networking opportunities with the Planning and Building Standards Services of other Councils.

Within the reporting year the Service has hosted an event with officers of a neighbouring Council to showcase Clackmannanshire's electronic plan approval process. The visiting Council had heard of Clackmannanshire's good practice and efficiencies of service delivery in this area of work and has now implemented similar arrangements incorporating a number of the elements that were showcased.

The visit from the neighbouring Council identified another area of their good practise in the use of Uniform planning application database usage. This resulted in a reciprocal visit being offered which will be arranged in the near future. This will be the first step in our committed service improvement to improve links with neighbouring Planning and Building Standards in areas of service delivery.

Feedback from these events has been very positive and it is intended that similar peer group working opportunities will be investigated and reported on in the next PPF.

## Part 2 – Supporting Evidence

Part 1 of this report was compiled, drawing on evidence from the following sources:

- 2016–17 Development and Environment Services Business Plan
- Clackmannanshire Local Development Plan
- Clackmannanshire Council Competency Framework
- Clackmannanshire Council Online – Planning & Building Standards
- Development Planning and Development Quality Service Improvement Plans
- Discussions with staff in the respective teams
- Supplementary Planning Guidelines
- Planning Enforcement Charter
- Clackmannanshire Housing Land Audit
- Conservation Area Character Appraisals (various)
- Scheme of Delegation for Local Developments
- Communication with applicants and agents
- The Knowledge Hub
- 2016–17 Performance Markers Report
- 2016–17 HoPS PPF Peer Review
- Pre PPF submission Peer Group meeting with Midlothian Council (April 2018)

## 1. Checklist for Part 2: Qualitative and Narrative Case Studies

Study Topic	Issue Covered
Design	✓
Conservation	
Regeneration	
Environment	✓
Greenspace	✓
Town Centres	
Masterplanning	✓
Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance	✓
Housing Supply	
Affordable Housing	
Economic Development	✓
Enforcement	
Development Management Processes	✓
Planning Applications	✓
Interdisciplinary Working	✓

Study Topic	Issue Covered
Collaborative Working	✓
Community Engagement	✓
Placemaking	✓
Charrettes	
Place Standard	✓
Performance Monitoring	✓
Process Improvement	✓
Project Management	✓
Skills Sharing	✓
Staff Training	
Online Systems	
Transport	✓
Active Travel	
Other (please note):	

Table 3 – Case study topic checklist

## Part 3 – Service Improvements in the coming year

The following improvements in service delivery are planned for 2018–19. They are drawn from the Development Planning and Development Quality operational plan for the period, which in turn develops the key themes of the Development and Environment business plan. A limited number of realistically achievable improvements are identified for the following year for the reasons provided in the PPF introduction.

- Implement team management re-organisation to ensure adequate resource allocation to support the Stirling and Clackmannanshire City Region deal through project identification and delivery through LDP, masterplanning and Development Management support.
- Exploit opportunities for Planning Service links with Stirling Council as City Deal partner and other neighbouring Authorities in anticipation of enhanced regional working.
- Further involve Development Management Officers in LDP preparation and development to assist limited policy officer resources, inform policy preparation and improve multi-disciplinary support.
- Undertake comprehensive review of Planning and Building Standards pages on the Council's website to ensure accuracy and improve user experience.
- Migrate Uniform database to idox cloud based environment to provide improved technical support and problem resolution for Planning Service provision.



## 1. Committed Improvements and Actions

Action	Completed
Develop planning application validation standards, as an abbreviated version of the model prepared on behalf of Heads of Planning Scotland, to improve the planning assessment of proposals and build confidence for customers.	Yes

A review of validation processes has established no current faults in the process and a directly accessible service for applicants and agents. Validation officers have been advised in the use of HoPS model.

Action	Completed
Develop a new householder permitted development enquiry service using a template and access to the general permitted development order.	Yes

A review of the permitted development service found that existing arrangements resulted in immediate officer availability and an accessible service to the public which guaranteed correct responses.

Action	Completed
Formulate protocol with internal services (Roads and Transportation, and Environmental Health) for consultation on planning applications and pre-application enquiries.	Ongoing

A formal protocol has not yet been established. However peer group working improvements have been made and stronger communication links established. Consultation responses will be monitored to establish if a formal protocol is required or if the informal improvements made to date are sufficient.

Action	Completed
Examination of the scope to move towards a self-service model for pre-application advice, a generic model based on the most common development proposals.	Yes

Research has been carried out on the methods used by other Councils. The resources necessary to implement such a model are considered unachievable in the near future and of questionable benefit given the accessibility of officers to respond promptly to enquiries.

Action	Completed
Improve information on town centres by completing a programme of health checks reviewing funding to inform planning policy and investment priorities.	Ongoing

Town Centre surveys completed as first stage of Health Check data gathering. Health checks have been carried out for four of the seven town centres scheduled for auditing. However, no reports have been prepared and three area audits remain to be undertaken. We are keen to continue however resources are currently tied up in other projects. We will examine simplification of work to aid delivery.

Action	Completed
Consolidate all development monitoring arrangements, including updates on LDP allocated sites, policy analysis, developer contributions, and infrastructure or other constraints.	Yes

We have reviewed reporting periods and have moved to align with financial recording periods.

Action	Completed
Make use of the Place Standard Tool in the LDP review.	Ongoing

Initiated with the [Case Study 1](#) exercise which will inform LDP review.

Action	Completed
Improve components of our enforcement service in preparation of a review of the Planning Enforcement Charter, including model conditions, an online Enforcement Register, and case monitoring.	Yes

Enforcement Charter updated and online Enforcement Register are now live. No further work is planned until the Planning Bill has enacted secondary legislation.

Action	Completed
Design and implement a 22 day householder planning application decision making service on selected applications.	Yes

An outline of process has been developed and forms a basis for decision making. However no implementation of a 22 day service is currently planned.

## Part 4 – National Headline Indicators

### Planning Performance Framework Annual Report 2017–18

Development Planning	2017–18	2016–17
Age of local/strategic development plan(s) (years and months) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years (60 months)</i>	Local Development Plan (2 years 8 months)	Local Development Plan (1 year 8 months)
Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? (Y/N)	Y	Y
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? (Y-earlier/Y-later/N)	N	N
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year? (Y/N)	Y	Y

Table 4 – Development Planning

Effective land supply and delivery of outputs	2017–18	2016–17
Established housing land supply <sup>1</sup>	5,339 units	5,453 units
5 year effective housing land supply <sup>1</sup>	1,231 units	1,329 units
5-year housing supply target	1,521 units	1,350 units
5-year effective housing land supply	4 years	5 years
Housing approvals	241 units	376 units
Housing completions over the last 5 years	596 units <sup>2</sup>	536 units <sup>3</sup>
Marketable employment land supply	68.81 ha <sup>4</sup>	68.81 ha <sup>4</sup>
Employment land take-up during reporting year	2.27 ha	11.64 ha <sup>3</sup>

Table 5 – Effective land supply

<sup>1</sup> From annual Housing Land Audit

<sup>2</sup> Not including 2018 Q1

<sup>3</sup> Not including 2017 Q1

<sup>4</sup> From 2016 Employment Land Audit

Development Management, Project Planning	2017–18	2016–17
Percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice	8%	22%
Number of major applications subject to processing agreement	0	0

Table 6 – Development Management, Project Planning

Decision-making	2017–18	2016–17
Validation	76%	—
Application approval rate	99.6%	98%
Delegation rate	97.8%	95%

Table 7 – Decision-making

Decision-making timescales	2017–18	2016–17
Major developments	10.3 weeks	—
Local developments (non-householder)	8.8 weeks	7.9 weeks
Householder developments	5.4 weeks	5.9 weeks

Table 8 – Decision-making timescales

Legacy Cases	2017–18	2016–17
Number cleared during reporting period	0	0
Number remaining	2	1

Table 9 – Legacy cases

Enforcement	2017–18	2016–17
Time since enforcement charter published/reviewed ( <i>months</i> )	39 months	27 months
<i>Requirement: review every 2 years</i>		

Table 10 – Enforcement Charter

Enforcement Activity	2017–18	2016–17
Complaints lodged	1	0
Cases taken up	62	42
Breaches identified	51	32
Cases resolved	41	33
Notices served*	2	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

Table 11 – Enforcement activity

### *Development Planning*

The figures illustrate the progress of the new plan and the requirement for review.

### *Effective Land Supply and Outputs*

The effective land supply has reduced slightly as LDP allocated sites have been developed.

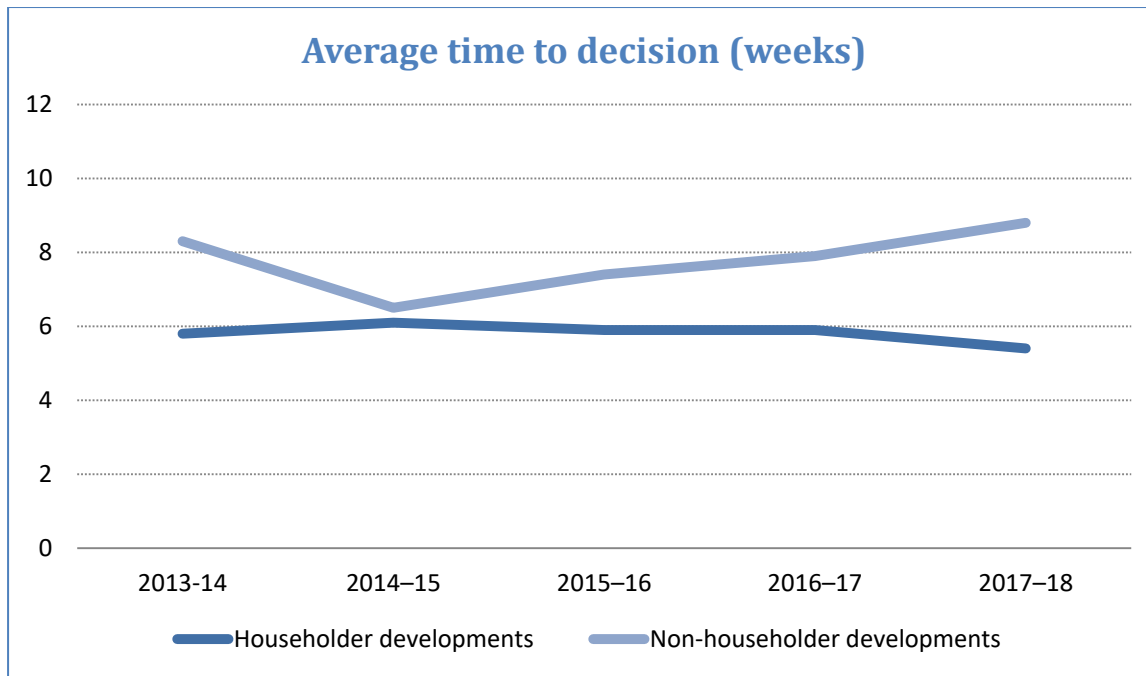
### *Development Management*

The percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice excludes those where we have advised on permitted development rights. These were included previously.

The performance figures for all development types remain consistently positive.

### *Enforcement*

The updated Enforcement Charter was approved by Council in June 2018.



**Figure 9 – Average time to make a decision for householder and non-householder developments over the last five years**



## Part 5 – Official Statistics

### 1. Decision-making: timescales (based on 'all applications' timescales)

Category	Total number of decisions 2017–18	Average timescale (weeks)	
		2017–18	2016–17
Major developments	1	10.3	—
Local developments (non-householder)	73	8.8	8.1
Local: less than 2 months	56	7.1	6.3
Local: more than 2 months	17	14.3	16.3
Householder developments	121	5.4	5.9
Local: less than 2 months	113	5.0	5.5
Local: more than 2 months	8	10	11.1
Major housing developments	0	—	—
Local housing developments	24	10.1	8.2
Local: less than 2 months	13	7.2	7.1
Local: more than 2 months	11	13.4	12.1
Major business and industry	0	—	—
Local business and industry	24	8.2	9.6
Local: less than 2 months	22	7.4	6.3
Local: more than 2 months	2	17.5	27.1
EIA developments	0	—	—
Other consents	34	6.2	7.6
Planning/legal agreements	0	—	—
Major: average time	0	—	—
Local: average time	0	—	70

Table 12 – Decision-making timescales

## 2. Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	2017–18		2016–17	
		No	%	No	%
Local reviews	0	0	0%	2	100%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	0	0	0%	0	0%

Table 13 – Local reviews and appeals

## 3. Context

### *Decision-making: timescales*

The performance figures for all development types remain consistently positive.

Over 90% of householder applications are decided in less than two months and our expected drop in the annual average time for applications has generally been realised.

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

The number of decisions in both categories is low. On one level that offers confidence in planning application decision making. Secondly, the low numbers largely prevent any meaningful analysis of statistical trends.

### *Enforcement activity*

Overall caseload has increased however the number of formal notices remains low. This reflects well on our Enforcement Charter which has now been updated. Enforcement activity is similarly aligned to the previous year when comparing the percentage of cases taken up with breaches identified, cases resolved and notices served.

## Part 6 – Workforce Information

Workforce information is a snapshot of planning staff in position on 31 March.

	Chief Executive	Director	Head of Service	Manager
Head of Planning Service	—	—	—	1

Table 14 – Head of Service

RTPI Qualified Staff Members	Headcount	FTE
Development Management	4	4
Development Planning	1	1
Enforcement	0	0
Specialists	0	0
Other (including staff not RTPI eligible)	2	1.5

Table 15 – RTPI Qualified Staff

Where members of staff have dual roles they are included only under the area which they spend more time working.

Staff age profile	Number
Under 30	0
30–39	0
40–49	5
50 and over	2

Table 16 – Staff age profiles

The staff age profile has reduced slightly following the retirement of a part time staff member and team leader and the recruitment of a new team leader. A further reduction in the staff age profile will be a consideration in any future recruitment process.

## Part 7 – Planning Committee Information

The number of meetings and site visits conducted during 2017-18.

Committee meetings and Site Visits <sup>5</sup>	Number per year
Full council meetings	11
Planning committees	6
Area committees (where relevant)	—
Committee site visits	4
Local Review Body <sup>6</sup>	0
Local Review Body site visits	0

Table 17 – Committee meetings and site visits

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<sup>5</sup> References to committees also include National Park Authority Boards. Number of site visits is those cases where visits were carried out by committees/boards.

<sup>6</sup> This relates to the number of meetings of the Local Review Body (LRB). The number of applications going to the LRB are reported elsewhere.