

Planning Performance Framework

2018 - 2019



Introduction

We are pleased to present East Dunbartonshire Council's 2018/19 Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report. Over the course of the year the Council has continued to provide a high quality planning service, build on the achievements recognised from our 2017/2018 PPF, and address areas for improvement. This is within the context of the continuing challenging financial climate which all local authorities across Scotland are facing.

The Development Applications team (Development Management) has continued to deal with a high number of applications in an environment where planning generates significant interest from the community. The case studies and qualitative narrative demonstrate a number of improvements that have been made over the last year both in terms of procedures and of relationships and agreements with other teams. On an individual level, a number of members of what was a relatively inexperienced team, have developed considerable experience of dealing with larger and more complex applications. The skill sets and confidence within the team have therefore improved considerably since the previous PPF submission.

The Development Planning Team has commenced the preparation of the East Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan 2 which is due for adoption in 2022. Early consultation events have been held across the local authority area. These have included some innovative measures to attempt to reach groups who would not typically engage with the planning process. New and improved connections have also been established with the local Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to ensure that they are fully involved in the development of the forthcoming LDP preparation.



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Part 1 – Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies

Quality of Outcomes

Affordable housing delivery – Our contribution towards the delivery of the Scottish Government target of 50,000 affordable homes by 2021 remains a key priority. We have been working closely with our Housing Service which aims to deliver a number of ambitious sites within this timeframe. As a number of these sites have significant planning constraints, extensive pre-application discussions have been carried out in the last year to ensure that the planning process is as efficient as possible given the tight funding windows for these projects. Monthly meetings are also held between the Housing Service and development management planners to ensure these applications progress as timeously as possible. We also continue to deliver significant numbers of affordable housing through market housing developments with the minimum of 25% of these units designated as affordable being met or exceeded on all sites of over nine units. This delivery is supported by the policy framework set out in the Local Development Plan, which was adopted in 2017 and provides an up-to-date framework for delivering affordable housing in Policy 6 Creating Inclusive and Sustainable Communities. This is further supported by Policy 20 Developer Contributions and Unsubsidised Affordable Housing Planning Guidance and Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance. Work on the annual Housing Land Audit allows monitoring of housing delivery in conjunction with the Housing Service.

Developer contributions – We continue to require appropriate levels of developer contributions to ensure a high quality of outcome from new developments. Where possible this is delivered through on-site enhancements, such as affordable housing, but in some cases, financial contributions for off-site improvements are required. Applications decided in 2018/2019 secured total contributions of £903,500 towards open space, education provision, road infrastructure and affordable housing. Our Supplementary Guidance on Developer Contributions sets out in considerable detail when these are required and how much is expected. The high level of detail given by this guidance note gives certainty to developers when exploring the viability of a proposal. As a result, this is factored in early and the contributions are rarely disputed at planning application stage. Case study 1 gives an example of how one such contribution has been used.

Householder applications – As a largely suburban area, the majority of our applications (approximately 85%) relate to householder developments. We continue to focus a considerable amount of resources on these types of applications in recognition of their importance for the stakeholders involved.

A site visit is carried out for each application and a detailed report of handling prepared. We have established a good relationship with the most frequent architects and agents involved and will always advise initially where issues require to be resolved (rather than automatically issue a refusal). As a result, the quality of householder developments remains high and it can be demonstrated to neighbours or other interested parties that all aspects have been fully considered. This is reflected by the relatively low level of complaints we receive.

“East Dunbartonshire Council Planning Service’s accessibility and advice was appreciated on a recent application and also reflected the similar assistance given by this department over the many years with my planning application submissions.” – PLS Designs

Town Centre Strategies – Bearsden, Bishopbriggs and Milngavie



Following the adoption of the Local Development Plan in 2017, work has continued to focus on delivering related Supplementary and Planning Guidance. One such area of work is producing Town Centre Strategies to ensure high quality outcomes through directing regeneration and planning applications. Strategies are now in place for Bearsden, Bishopbriggs and Milngavie town centres, with Kirkintilloch to follow during the life of the LDP2. These were published by East Dunbartonshire Council in November 2018. The purpose of the strategies is to support Policy 11 of the current Local Development Plan (LDP), Network of Centres, by setting out a long-term vision for each town centre, including specific actions which will be taken forward as well as objectives against which to consider proposals. These are currently in place as non-statutory planning guidance.

Bishopbriggs: A total of 18 separate actions have been identified for Bishopbriggs town centre. Each action is broadly categorised into one of four main themes: Public Realm; Transport; Sustainability; and Commercial Activity. These vary in terms of scale and target completion date. One of the more notable actions is supporting appropriate development at the former Bishopbriggs High School site adjacent to Morrison's supermarket. The development of this site will have significant implications on the future of the town centre and the Council is currently considering a planning application submitted by the landowner for this site, in the context of wider aspirations for the town centre.

Milngavie: The strategy for Milngavie contains 32 actions, categorised into: public realm; accessibility; tourism and green network; commercial activity. Many of the actions for Milngavie will be led by the Milngavie Business Improvement District, which was renewed for a further five years in April 2019. Early progress also includes ongoing work in relation to active travel links around the town centre, cycle infrastructure and West Highland Way improvements. Finally, the Council is still considering options for the development of a Community Hub.

Bearsden: A total of 19 actions have been identified for Bearsden, categorised into: land use; environmental quality; transport and accessibility; maintenance and commercial activity. Progress has been made on a number of key actions including the ongoing repurposing of Brookwood Villa and Library, monitoring of parking arrangements, real time bus information and the preparation of a retail capacity assessment to gain a better understanding of retail requirements.

Quality of Service and Engagement

In the past year the service has retained a high level of customer service and engagement through the following means:

Local Development Plan 2 Early Engagement – Work began on producing LDP2 in 2018. As a result extensive early engagement was undertaken ahead of publishing the Main Issues Report in Autumn 2019. The consultation period was from December 2018 to February 2019. More information is provided in case study 5.

Pre-application engagement - A daily duty service available for both planning and building standards which is accessed via one external phone number and in the same building. This ensures that customers receive advice in both areas on the same phone call or visit. This is a free service.

Free pre-application advice is available through meetings, site visits, email or in writing. This includes both permitted development advice and assessment of proposals against the Local Development Plan and other material considerations. For larger developments this will often involve numerous consultees and provides potential developers with proportionate and detailed advice.

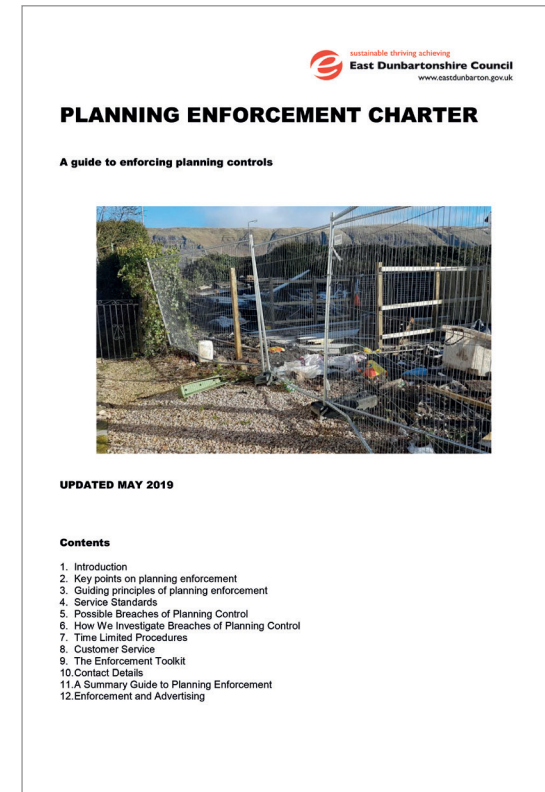
We routinely offer processing agreements for major and significant local developments and these are also promoted on our website. Despite this these are often not signed by applicants. We have carried out an exercise to attempt to promote processing agreements and identify the reluctance to conclude them. A questionnaire was sent to several housebuilders that are active in East Dunbartonshire but only one response was received which is disappointing.

Further discussion of this is provided in Part 3. While these are often not formally signed the process of drafting them is very useful for both the planning service and developers as it helps define the timescales for the application and also the level of supporting information expected.

Protocols and Charters - We have a range of documents available on our website including a planning applications toolkit, an enforcement charter, a guide to major developments and the HOPS guidance on validation of applications.

Community Council/residents groups engagement - Our officers regularly attend community council or other resident group meetings where there are particular topics for discussion which affect that community, for example as part of producing Local Development Plan 2 (see Case Study 5), a major planning application or other significant development.

Complaints - The Land Planning and Development Service received a total of nine complaints in the previous year which is a reduction from the 13 received in 2017/2018. None of these complaints proceeded to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. This remains a relatively low number of complaints for a service that processes around 900 planning applications and 1200 building warrants per annum.



Governance

Improved connections with HSCP for LDP2 - Significant work has been undertaken in engaging with the Health and Social Care Partnership in producing LDP2. Meetings have been held directly with the HSCP and through the Community Planning Partnership. These have allowed the Land Planning Policy Team to understand the issues affecting the HSCP in relation to land use planning, including the requirement for land for new healthcare facilities and the impact on healthcare of new development, in particular housing and older peoples' provision. Reflecting the strength of the relationship the Land Planning Policy Team, HSCP and Housing Service embarked on joint research in early 2019, following project planning during 2018. This joint research is investigating issues relating to older people and specialist housing in East Dunbartonshire in order to inform LDP2, the provision of housing by the Housing Service and provision of health care by the HSCP. This research will conclude in 2019/20.

Elected Member Engagement - We have made a concerted effort to engage with elected members who sit on the Planning Board and Local Review Body and the measures taken are described in Case Study 6 below. Elected Member Engagement has also been pivotal in the early stages of producing Local Development Plan 2, details are provided in Case Study 5.

Developer Contribution Monitoring - This was an area where gaps were identified in the development management team's processes and Case Study 2 explains the steps taken in the last year to address this.

Culture of Continuous Improvement

Benchmarking Group - The West of Scotland Planning Benchmarking Group is a good example of Councils working collaboratively in a cost effective way. The group (West Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire and Inverclyde Councils) continues to meet every 3-4 months with high attendance levels. It met three times between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019 to share good practice and benchmark on specific planning issues.

The meetings are minuted and chaired by the host council. Topics discussed this year included the Planning Bill, PPF Feedback/PPF 7, and specific DM issues on storage of shipping containers, Reg 28 DM Regs, Defective Decision Notice, Protocols for Member site visits and Section 42 Variation extension to landfill site.

In addition there was discussion on publishing sensitive material on eDevelopment, forestry developments, overturned recommendations, Business Support, Elected Member briefings, Data Protection Act, WDC Place & Design Panel, Legal involvement in Committee Reports, EIA screening, Hazardous substances consent, FOI for copies of planning consents, consultation with HES on delisting Listed Buildings, Purchase Notice served by a landowner on a local planning authority, LRB procedure, developer contributions, paperless committees, scanning and indexing, and pre-application charging.

The email group continues to be used by all levels to exchange information and to get views on specific planning issues.

In addition this year a well-attended training day was held by the Benchmarking Partners for Planners from each Authority at Greenock in September on the regeneration of the waterfront. The Partners received a presentation on the Design and Place Panel at West Dunbartonshire Council. Following on from the presentation the Planning – Development Applications Team Leader also attended the Design and Place Panel at West Dunbartonshire Council to see a 'live' panel meeting to get a better understanding of process and benefits achieved.

Local Development Plan Forums - The Land Planning Policy Team Leader attends two LDP forums – the Clydeplan area LDP Forum and HOPS LDP Sub Committee. These forums meeting six monthly and three monthly respectively and provide a valuable opportunity to share best practise and discuss emerging policy areas and consultations at different geographies.

Staff training – Staff within the Planning Service attended training events and forums including: the EIA Conference 2018, Working with the Key Agencies, Partners in Planning Launch, Historic Environment Scotland new guidance, Planning Performance and Statistics Working Group, West Dunbartonshire Council Place and Design Panel, SEPA District Heating Session, Scottish Planning Enforcement Forum, Central Scotland Green Network Forum.

In addition to attending training the Development Management team provided training to the Business Gateway Advisors who cover the East Dunbartonshire area. A Powerpoint presentation was given to raise the profile of planning and ensure that should they be approached by potential new businesses they know to direct clients to ourselves where planning permission may be required. The advisors were also provided with useful weblinks in order to direct clients to information sources too.



Case Study 1 - Lenzie Station/Town Centre Improvements



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

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers:

15 – Developer Contributions and **12** – Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

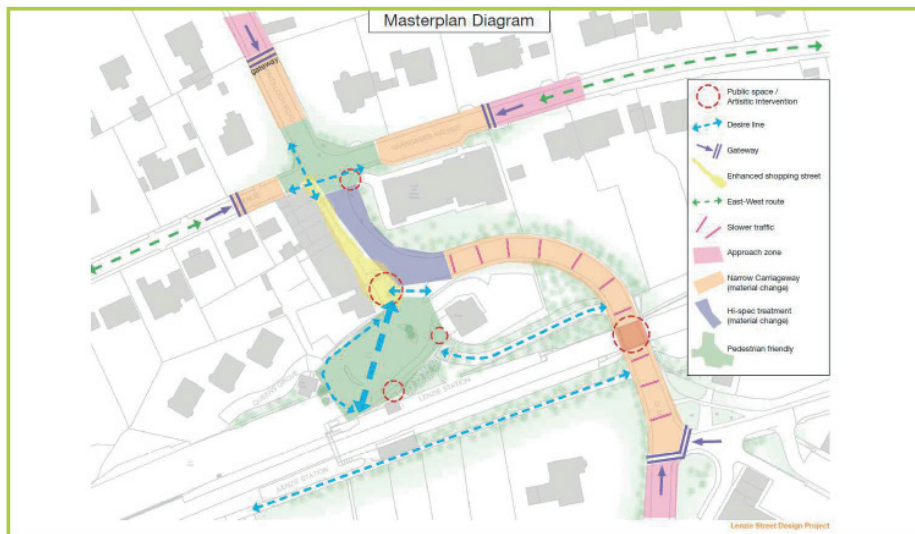
Key Areas of Work:

- Town Centres
- Masterplanning
- Enforcement
- Planning Applications
- Community Engagement
- Placemaking
- Active Travel

Stakeholders Involved:

- General Public
- Authority Planning Staff

A substantial developer contribution of £500,000 was received from a nearby development of approximately 600 houses which was to be used to improve access to and parking in and around the Lenzie Station area. The objectives of the project were very much focused on enhancing the sustainable transport opportunities around the station whilst also creating a more attractive public realm. As the developer contributions were approaching the deadline for expenditure set out in the Section 75 agreement an efficient design and consultation period was required with a site start set for Winter 2018.



A preferred design needed to be reached which aimed to enhance the vicinity as a destination for sustainable transport users by slowing traffic, improving road crossings, enhancing the road layout for cyclists, widening pavements and introducing a range of public realm improvements. This design then had to be consulted upon, approved by committee and implemented on site. The project required support and assistance from external bodies with Sustrans and Abellio/ Scotrail both closely involved.

A series of consultation events were held in 2016 which were attended by approximately 200 people and identified a number of key considerations for the final design. These events included a walkabout with 10 people with physical and sensory impairments to identify their needs, a drop-in information session, a design workshop and online engagement. The results of this exercise identified that this project was of significant local and political interest and also highlighted some of the key issues in the area that the works should address. The project progressed to approval and started on site in Winter 2018 with an expected completion date of July 2019. The project is a good example of the positive benefits that new development can deliver to a community. The involvement of the public and elected members in the design and implementation should raise awareness of the value of new developments and the positive effects they can have to the wider area if managed correctly. Communities within small towns such as Lenzie can often be concerned about the impact of new developments on the wider area. A highly visible improvement such as this, which is known to

be directly funded in part by a developer contribution, can highlight the benefits development can deliver for all users of the transport network.

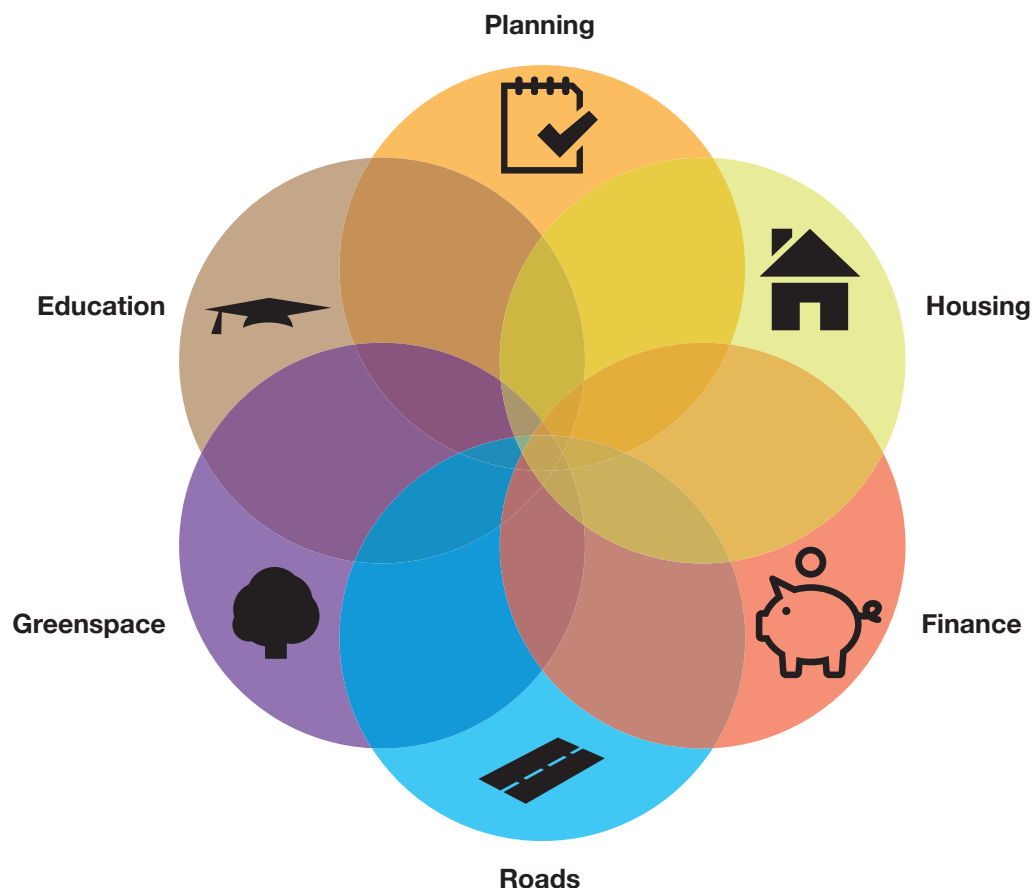
One of the lessons learned from this process related to the management of developer contribution funds as the money was committed relatively late in the period available for its use. Had there been unforeseen delays, the money may not have been committed timeously and would have been returned to the developer. There is therefore a connection with Case Study 2 which identifies measures implemented to address these issues.



“The Roads and Environment Service were grateful for the expertise and support provided by the Planning Service when delivering the improvements at Lenzie Cross. This was especially important when advice was needed on developer contribution expenditure. The Planning Service’s monitoring system ensured that the project programme matched the developer contribution requirements from feasibility stage right through to construction.” – Alistair Kyle, Team Leader – Traffic and Transport.



Case Study 2 - Developer Contributions Working Group



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

- Governance

Key Markers:

4 - Legal agreements, **6** - Continuous improvements and **12** - Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit.

Key Areas of Work:

- Process improvement
- Development Management processes

Stakeholders Involved:

- Authority Planning staff
- Authority other staff (specifically Housing, Greenspace, Roads and Transport, Major Assets, Education and Town Centres and Regeneration)

In 2018 a developer contributions working group was established to provide better monitoring of these funds. The inception of this was the subject of a case study in EDC's previous PPF submission. This case study identifies further procedural improvements that have arisen from this work.

The initial meetings of the working group identified a number of internal procedures that were either not in place or not functioning well. These included:

- A lack of a formal procedure for recording and monitoring of contributions by planners.
- Poor understanding of the obligations and timescales involved with spending these funds amongst the recipients.
- Little communication with the Council's finance team on outstanding and anticipated contributions.
- Poor monitoring of the triggers which result in contributions being due.

A number of measures have been put in place to remedy the above issues. An internal procedure note has been prepared and adopted which identifies the key steps that planners and recipients of developer contributions should take from conclusion of the legal agreement to commitment to projects. This

now formalises the use of the relevant uniform module, which was previously underused. This also includes a standard template for notifying recipients of the funds to ensure they are fully aware of the final date for funds to be committed and any other limitations imposed by the legal agreement on their use.

A 'seven day letter' template has also been created with the assistance of the Council's Legal Services, which is now issued to developers who are in breach of legal agreements. This has been used twice in 2018/2019 and in both cases has quickly resolved long-standing issues with unpaid and overdue developer contributions.

A new relationship with Finance has been established which involves the department providing Planning and recipients with quarterly reports on all developer contributions which have been received but not yet committed. The onus is then on the recipients of the funds to update this with progress on the relevant projects which the funding has been assigned to. The intention is to encourage recipients to take more ownership of the process and to ensure these funds are allocated to projects as early as possible.

The changes introduced are relatively simple and procedural, but they are already beginning to show benefits, including earlier receipt of contributions (through better monitoring) and earlier allocation to projects (through earlier awareness of recipients). In future, as this process becomes established, it will provide a more robust audit trail for these contributions and will help to address issues arising from late allocation and commitment to projects. The 'seven day letter' should also avoid long-standing breaches of legal agreements.

Case Study 3 -

Unsubsidised Affordable Housing Planning Guidance



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

- Quality of outcomes

Key Markers:

- 11** - Production of regular and proportionate policy advice, for example through supplementary guidance, on information required to support applications
- 15** - Developer contributions: clear expectations set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan) and in pre-application discussions

Key Areas of Work:

- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Affordable Housing

Stakeholders Involved:

- Local Developers

East Dunbartonshire Council's PPF 2017-18 sets out the work undertaken by the Council to produce Planning Guidance on Unsubsidised Affordable Housing. During examination of the Local Development Plan, the Reporter increased the affordable housing target on the basis that the development industry showed an interest in providing unsubsidised and intermediate forms of affordable housing. This resulted in the Housing Land Supply Target being increased by the equivalent of 24 units per year, however, there were no modifications made to the affordable housing policy to enable the higher affordable target to be achieved. As a pro-active measure to enable additional unsubsidised affordable housing to be delivered, whilst also ensuring no adverse impact upon the delivery of new housing funded through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme, the Land Planning Policy team prepared planning guidance encouraging the delivery of an additional 15% affordable housing through unsubsidised means on sites of more than 25 units. Consultation was carried out in order to produce the guidance, which was amended and formally adopted by the Council on 10 August 2017.

The guidance has since been implemented and there has been an increase in the affordable housing provision on larger sites, although not always strictly as described by the guidance. Developers have tended to focus on one category of unsubsidised affordable housing – one-bedroom flats – and this appears to be the most deliverable definition. None have so far proposed self-build or any of the other definitions described in this document. A number of developers with sites on the urban/rural fringe have argued that multi-storey blocks of one-bedroom flats are not appropriate in these locations for urban design reasons. On some sites this point has been agreed and an uplift in the amount of subsidised affordable housing beyond the usual 25% has been accepted as an alternative.

In summary the implementation of the guidance can generally be considered to be a success as it has resulted in either the provision of unsubsidised affordable housing (and the associated greater mix of house types that this provides) or an increase in the provision of subsidised affordable housing beyond the normal standard. It has therefore proven to be a useful tool in delivering affordable housing.



Unsubsidised Affordable Housing 2017
Planning Guidance

Case Study 4 - PPF Benchmarking Visits



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

- Culture of continuous improvement

Key Markers:

- 13 - Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities
- 6 - Continuous improvements

Key Areas of Work:

- Skills sharing
- Process improvement

Stakeholders Involved:

- Authority Planning Staff

East Dunbartonshire Council was paired with Edinburgh City Council for the peer review aspect of the 2017/2018 PPF. Both councils fully embraced the opportunity to share experiences and organised a full-day itinerary for each other's visit.

For our trip to Edinburgh City Council, the Development Applications Team Leader and Land Planning & Development Executive Officer were welcomed and met various team members across the service. In the morning they discussed team structures and ways of working with discussion points being rights and equalities, team development days, decline in processing agreements, Council commitment to reinvestment of planning fees in the service, discretionary charging and planning committee hearing processes. In the afternoon, we were guided around the city and visited a range of sites at various stages of development, including the Royal High School, St James shopping centre redevelopment and St Andrews Square.

For Edinburgh's reciprocal visit, a bus tour was organised which took in some of the ongoing and proposed projects, and development within East Dunbartonshire including:

- An example of a new residential area which fully applied the guidance outlined in Designing Streets, and discussion of the successes and challenges of this approach
- A public park where a major restructuring is proposed to convert it to a multi-functional area of green infrastructure, including a cycle route, daylighting of a culvert, food growing and SUDS areas
- The site of a proposed LNR and discussion of the work that has taken place, both on the ground and at policy level, to achieve this.

There was also a discussion on procedures generally and some good examples of best practice shared by both authorities. Despite the differences in the size and nature of the two authorities, both found it a beneficial exercise and there was a surprising number of shared experiences discussed.

The exercise has also inspired a tour of the authority with internal planning staff to allow an opportunity to reflect on and learn from decisions that were made and have now been implemented on-site. This will take place in 2019/2020.



Case Study 5 -

Local Development Plan 2 Early Engagement (Pre-MIR)



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

- Quality of service and engagement
- Governance

Key Markers:

- 10** - Cross-sector stakeholders, including industry, agencies and Scottish Government, engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation
- 9** - Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation

Key Areas of Work:

- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Community Engagement
- Place Standard

Stakeholders Involved:

- General public
- Hard to reach groups
- Local developers
- Key agencies
- Authority Planning staff
- Authority other staff

The East Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan 2017-2022 was adopted on 23 February 2017 and work began in 2018 to produce Local Development Plan 2, required for adoption in 2022. Significant project planning took place in September and October 2018, resulting in a committee report being approved and therefore the commencement of LDP2 being approved - Place, Neighbourhood and Corporate Assets Committee Report PNCA/162/18/AL November 2018 – Local Development Plan 2 – Work Programme 2018-2022.

The first stage in producing LDP2 commenced in December 2018 and comprised two elements – early engagement and evidence gathering. The early engagement took place over 10 weeks between 3 December 2018 and 11 February 2019. In order to publicise the consultation and increase participation, the following activities took place:

- Media releases – sent to local papers and published by the Milngavie & Bearsden Herald and Kirkintilloch Herald
- Social media – 34 posts with a combined potential Facebook reach of 66,500 and Twitter reach of 291,000, and 148 interactions (comments, likes, shares, etc)
- Promotion on the Council's website – 530 click-throughs to the page from social media and 1,619 views
- Leaflets and posters – distributed throughout East Dunbartonshire and at events
- Direct emailing to key partners and community groups
- LDP newsletter – sent to over 600 individuals and organisations
- Information provided to Elected Members for distribution.

A range of methods were used to engage with communities and stakeholders during the Early Engagement. This included:

- Community drop-in sessions – these sessions were organised in seven high-footfall locations across East Dunbartonshire and officers held discussions with approximately 275 people, as well as distributing additional leaflets
- Community workshops – five workshops were advertised for advance registration, with four going ahead (no registrations were received in Bishopbriggs). In total 231 people attended, however, the majority (215) attended in Milngavie.
- Community council and community group meeting – 13 representatives from a range of community councils and community groups attended this meeting to hear about the early engagement and ways to promote it within their communities
- Questionnaire – completed by 312 people
- Place Standard – completed by 51 people
- Call for Sites – 67 forms received
- Meeting with key stakeholders – officers met with or contacted 15 key agencies to understand their views on the LDP, and explain the early engagement and ways to feedback to the Council
- Elected Member session – a session was held with opportunities for Councillors to promote the early engagement highlighted

- Community Planning Partners - a presentation was given to the Community Planning Executive Group on 8 November 2018. Meetings were also held with the following partners: East Dunbartonshire Council departments, the Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Scottish Enterprise, SPT, VisitScotland and sportscotland.
- Developers workshop – approximately 35 representatives from housebuilding and other development companies attended this meeting to hear about the early engagement and expectations for the Call for Sites
- Schools – a planning conference was held with 30 pupils from Turnbull High School (Bishopbriggs), St Ninian's High School (Kirkintilloch) and Douglas Academy (Milngavie).

This significant engagement activity is playing a key part in informing the selection of Main Issues for the Main Issues Report and understanding changes needed from the current LDP moving forward to LDP2, and planning for the next 10 years to 2032. The involvement of Elected Members through the November 2019 Committee Report, a cross-party LDP Working Party in advance of committee, the Elected Members session and a meeting held with the Council's Joint Leaders to discuss policy issues arising from the consultation, have been highly beneficial in engaging Elected Members early in the preparation of LDP2. The engagement has demonstrated that communities are interested in the places in which they live and want to see continuing improvement. Work with Community Planning Partners has also demonstrated the benefits of close alignment with the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan, and adopted and emerging Locality Plans. Overall, the frontloading of the LDP2 process through this early engagement is expected to be beneficial as the Land Planning Policy Team moves through the next stages of the process towards adoption in 2022. The MIR is scheduled for publication in autumn 2019.

Case Study 6 - Elected Member Engagement



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

- Quality of outcomes

Key Markers:

- 12** - Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit
- 6** - Continuous improvements

Key Areas of Work:

- Development of Management Processes
- Process Improvement

Stakeholders Involved:

- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning staff

Over the past year, the Development Management team have made a sustained effort to better engage Elected Members in the planning process in a positive way and establish a more collaborative working relationship. Results from both the Planning Board and the Local Review Body showed a high degree of officer recommendations being overturned and this was indicative of a general lack of awareness of the planning process, particularly the importance of the plan-led system.

A number of measures have been put in place to improve this, including:

- The introduction of 'drop-in sessions' when Proposal of Application Notices or planning applications are received that are likely to generate significant public interest. The intention of these is to engage Councillors at the earliest stage of the process in an informal way to ensure they feel that they have been adequately involved. A number of Elected Members had expressed frustration that the first opportunity they had to become involved in a planning application was at the Planning Board, at which point it was too late to influence the layout and nature of the proposal, and they often felt forced into moving to a refusal. The intention of these drop-in sessions is

therefore to explain the proposed strategy for handling the application in terms of consultations, key considerations and any changes likely to be requested, and to give members the chance to make their own suggestions on how the application should be handled. Councillors can also share local knowledge with the team that may not be apparent through the more formal application process. This programme commenced in February 2019 so it is too early to consider its success, however, it is hoped that the result will be fewer instances of the Planning Board deciding an application contrary to officer recommendation.

- An information session was organised for Elected Members on a proposed new Scottish Water infrastructure project. As this involved a new underground pipeline, the vast majority of the works were permitted development and would not therefore be a decision for the Planning Authority. However, the Planning Service recognised that it was likely to generate a degree of public interest and therefore arranged for Scottish Water to present to Councillors to ensure they were fully informed of the development and had realistic expectations on the degree of involvement for the Planning Service. The session was a success and similar sessions will be arranged where other significant projects or issues arise.
- Results from the Local Review Body (LRB) showed a high degree of delegated decisions being overturned. To address this, a single planning officer was allocated the task of Planning Advisor to ensure consistent advice was given and to establish a relationship with the Elected Members who sit on the LRB. Additional training was also provided to these members by the Planning Advisor and the Development Applications Team Leader. Colleagues from Legal Services were also involved in governance training. In the last year there has been a notable increase in LRB decisions following officer recommendations.

In the short term the above measures have made a notable difference to the knowledge and understanding of planning amongst Elected Members. The nature of questions asked at the Planning Board and LRB have become significantly more focused on planning issues. In the longer term it is hoped that there will be a more collaborative approach to planning decisions across the Planning Authority, which will support the plan-led system through more consistent decision-making and less time spent on unnecessary appeals.

“Early-stage drop-in sessions give us a chance to see large-scale detailed plans, to ask questions and to hear questions being asked by other members in a relatively informal setting. This leads to a better understanding of the proposal and the related issues, and enables councillors to make the most of the subsequent site visit and Planning Board meetings.”

– Councillor Rosie O’Neil, Planning Board Convener

Part 2 – Supporting Evidence

Part 2 – Supporting Evidence

In preparing this report the following sources were used:

- Planning Board reports
- Place, Neighbourhood and Corporate Assets Committee Report PNCA/162/18/AL November 2018 – Local Development Plan 2 – Work Programme 2018-2022
- Lenzie Street Design Project
- East Dunbartonshire Council Local Development Plan 2017
- Local Development Plan 2 early engagement and evidence-gathering process
- Supplementary Guidance and Planning Guidance
- Town Centre Strategies
- Planning Enforcement Charter 2019
- Processing agreements and major applications guidance

Case Study Topics			
Issue covered by case study		✓	
Design	✓	Interdisciplinary Working	✓
Conservation		Collaborative Working	✓
Regeneration		Community Engagement	✓
Environment		Placemaking	✓
Greenspace		Charrettes	
Town Centres	✓	Place Standard	✓
Masterplanning		Performance Monitoring	✓
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	✓	Process Improvement	✓
Housing Supply		Project Management	
Affordable Housing		Skills Sharing	
Economic Development		Staff Training	
Enforcement		Online Systems	
Development Management Processes	✓	Transport	✓
Planning Applications	✓	Active Travel	✓

Part 3 – Service Improvements

Service Improvements 2018/2019

In the coming year we will:

- Improve major application performance. Ten Proposal of Application Notices were received in 2018/19 so the coming year is likely to see an increase in the number of major applications received. This therefore represents an opportunity to refine procedures to improve performance in this area.
- Establish standard letter templates and procedures for enforcement activities, particularly in relation to unauthorised works to protected trees, listed buildings and advertisements. As unauthorised works in these three areas can be a criminal offence and potentially involve a referral to the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal, enforcement activities have been identified as area where more training and formal procedures are required. This will involve input from colleagues in Legal Services.
- Improve processes with Legal Services colleagues to reduce S75 timescales. This is connected to the aim of improving major application timescales, but also affects local applications which require a legal agreement. The conclusion of such agreements is a significant factor in the time taken to conclude these applications and is an area where improvements can be made. We will explore the drafting of necessary legal agreements earlier in the planning application process.
- Work closely with Elected Members to publish the Main Issues Report in autumn 2019, in accordance with the Development Plan Scheme.
- Deliver targeted consultation with communities and landowners/developers through the Main Issues Report consultation process to ensure the Proposed Plan has a strong communities/place and delivery focus.
- Assess the implications of the Planning Bill for the Planning Service, and initiate work to adapt the role of the service and the focus of planning policy to support changes proposed in the new legislation.
- Prepare a business case for consideration by Elected Members on the potential for charging for pre-application advice and non-material variations, and implement the decision. Charging for non-statutory services of this kind is a Council-wide agenda and the Planning Service has been asked to explore possibilities. This process does offer the opportunity to ensure that pre-application becomes a more structured service, with a consistent and high quality output.

Service Improvements 2017/2018

Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2017/2018:

Committed Improvements and Actions	Complete?
Undertake initial consultation for the LDP2 and Call for Sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation was carried out between December 2018 and February 2019 (See Case Study 5) 	Yes
Produce supplementary and planning guidance to accompany the LDP The following was completed in 2018/19: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre Strategies (see Part 1 Quality of Outcomes) • Air Quality Planning Guidance - The Draft Air Quality Planning Guidance was approved at the May 2018 PNCA Committee and public consultation took place in May and June 2018. Final Guidance was produced for the October 2018 PNCA Committee and subsequently published. • Natural Environment Planning Guidance was updated with revised Local Landscape Areas and additional Local Nature Conservation Sites, designated in the Green Infrastructure and Green Network Supplementary Guidance. 	Yes
Continue to improve the monitoring and management of developer contributions through development of actions to be agreed by the Developer Contributions Working Group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New procedure note finalised and enacted • Use of uniform module implemented • Relationship with Council's Finance Service established • New procedures implemented throughout all stages of the developer contributions process. 	Yes
Work with developers to better understand reluctance to sign Processing Agreements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An email survey was carried out in January 2019 of the main housebuilders and planning agents active in East Dunbartonshire. Only one response was received however this did raise some interesting points and highlighted some barriers to signing processing agreements. We have implemented actions to resolve these issues as far as is within our ability. 	Yes

Part 4 – National Headline Indicators (NHI)

A: NHI Key Outcomes – Development Planning

Development Planning	2018-19	2017-18
Local and Strategic Development Planning:		
Age of local/strategic development plan(s) at end of reporting period	LDP – 2 years 1 month	LDP – 1 year 1 month
Requirement: less than 5 years	SDP – 2 years	SDP – 1 year
Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their fifth anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	Yes	Yes
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	No	No
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Yes	Yes
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs ¹		
Established housing land supply	2,420 units	2,738 units
5-year effective housing land supply programming	1,787 units	2,298 units
5-year effective land supply total capacity	1,913 units	2,298 units
5-year housing supply target ²	933 units	933 units
5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place)	10.3 years	12.3 years
Housing approvals ³	333 units	275 units
Housing completions over the last five years	1,590 units	1,751 units
Marketable employment land supply	33.66 ha (base date 31 Mar)	36.56 ha (base date 31 Mar)
Employment land take-up during reporting year	1.5 ha	0.95 ha

¹These figures are based on the Draft 2019 Housing Land Audit.

²The calculation for the Housing Supply Target is based on the 2017 Strategic Development Plan and utilises a methodology that is consistent with the other Clydeplan authorities.

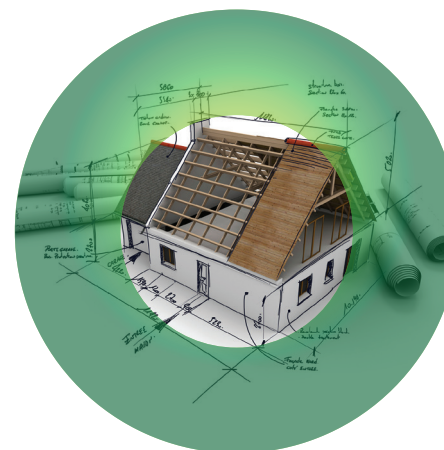
³This figure includes all applications which were fully granted during the reporting year (for example only after a legal agreement is concluded) and does not include any applications to extend existing consents.

B: NHI Key Outcomes – Development Management

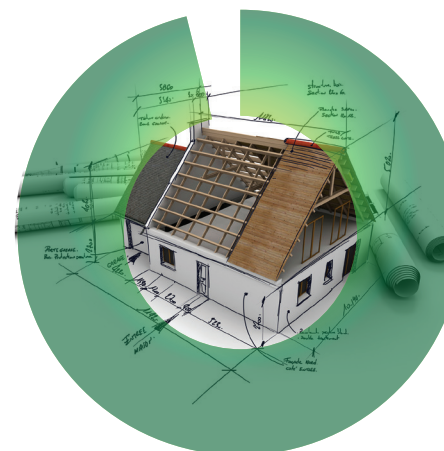
Development Management:	2018-19	2017-18
Project Planning		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	5% (39)	14% (119)
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	0%	0%
Decision Making		
Application approval rate	94%	96.1%
Delegation rate	97.7%	96.9%
Validation	46%	59%
Decision-making Timescales		
Major Developments	58.4weeks	39.3 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	18.5weeks	15 weeks
Householder developments	7.7weeks	8 weeks
Legacy Cases		
Number cleared during reporting period	3	12
Number remaining	14	6

Decision-making Timescales

Improving householder developments



2017-18
8 weeks



2018-19
7.7 weeks

C: NHI Key Outcomes – Enforcement Activity

	2018-19	2017-18
Time since enforcement charter published/reviewed Requirement: review every two years	27 months	15 months
Complaints lodged and investigated	138	101
Breaches identified – no further action taken	40	45
Cases closed	106	141
Notices served	2	3
Direct action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

D: NHI Key Outcomes - Commentary

Within the Development Applications team we continue to promote the use of Processing Agreements and encourage early engagement with developers. We will facilitate multi-disciplinary meetings prior to application submission and often more than one meeting is required given application complexity and stakeholder input. We have continued to draft Processing Agreements and amend these as and when applications are submitted but remain challenged by getting final Processing Agreements signed by applicants. We had identified this in our PPF 2017-18 as an action and further commentary is provided in Part 3 in this respect. Planners continue to push for Processing Agreements to be submitted with applications. Whilst Processing Agreements are offered, drafted and continue to be modified as applications evolve we continue to be challenged to get them signed. We have received two major applications during the reporting period that have a Processing Agreement but as yet these applications remain undecided.

An increase in timescales is evident across major and local applications for housing. During 2017-18, major applications were determined in 39.3 weeks, this has increased by 19.1 to 58.4 weeks in 2018-19. Likewise, increases are also evident in the determination of local housing applications which have

increased from 30.0 weeks in 2017-18 to 57.7 weeks in 2018-19. Whilst the majors only represent two applications in total they had been subject to lengthy post-committee Section 75 negotiations. These negotiations have resulted in the Planning Service securing a total of £741,448 in financial contributions and the delivery of 42 on-site affordable dwellings across the two sites in terms of developer contributions. Since these applications were presented to our Planning Board a further three and 10 month negotiation period was incurred relating to the respective Section 75 Agreements however these negotiations did secure significant wider gains.

The increase in local housing applications is disappointing given that these represent 30 of our cases. Further interrogation of these figures indicates that this has been skewed by the determination of a legacy case of 396 weeks. Without that case being included in calculations our overall figure would be around 25 weeks for local housing applications which is less than 2017-18. In addition it is also worth noting that, although relatively small in scale these types of applications also necessitate the need for Section 75 Agreements to secure a range of developer contributions and are subject to further delays in that respect. As a team and working with developers and legal services we will look at ways of streamlining the legal agreement drafting.

In 2018-19 we have reduced the time taken to determine householder applications from 7.8 weeks to 7.4 weeks, with 91.3% being done within two months. These types of applications make up 85% of our overall workload and for many homeowners this is their only contact with the Planning Authority so this is a success for the team. Likewise, we have reduced the time taken to determine other consents such as listed building consents and adverts from 8.7 weeks in 2017-18 to 6.6 weeks in this reporting period, a reduction of 2.1 weeks (a 25% reduction in overall time taken) as we continue to 'fast track' such applications where possible and support local businesses.

Enforcement

The enforcement team's activity has remained constant over the reporting period. There was a vacancy in quarters 3 and 4 which has now been filled. There was an increase in cases lodged and investigated with an increase of over 30% since 2017-18. On the flipside the number of cases closed decreased over this reporting period with greater emphasis being given within this small team to managing new cases. The temporary reduction in resource within this part of the team was in part managed by the allocation of more simple cases to planners during this period which has provided them with more exposure to enforcement issues for a temporary period only.

Part 5 – Scottish Government Official Statistics

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

Timescales	2018-19	2018-19	2017-18
Overall			
Major developments		58.4 weeks	39.3 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)		weeks	weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	65.6%	7.6	7.6
• Local: more than 2 months	34.4%	39.2	34.5
Householder developments		weeks	weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	91.3%	7.4	7.8
• Local: more than 2 months	8.7%	11.2	11.1
Housing Developments			
Major		weeks	weeks
		58.4	39.3
Local housing developments		weeks	weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	63.3%	8.2	8.1
• Local: more than 2 months	36.7%	57.7	30.0
Business and Industry			
Major		weeks	weeks
		N/A	NA
Local business and industry developments		weeks	weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	50%	6.9	7.3
• Local: more than 2 months	50%	18.3	11.4
EIA Developments		weeks	0
Other Consents			
• As listed in the guidance (right)		6.6 weeks	8.7 weeks
Planning/legal agreements			
• Major: average time		58.4weeks	39.6 weeks
• Local: average time		86.7weeks	36.9 week

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Total number of decisions		Original decision upheld			
		2018-19		2017-2018	
		No.	%	No.	%
Type	No.				
Local reviews	4	3	75	5	45.5%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	3	3	67%	6	67%

C: Context

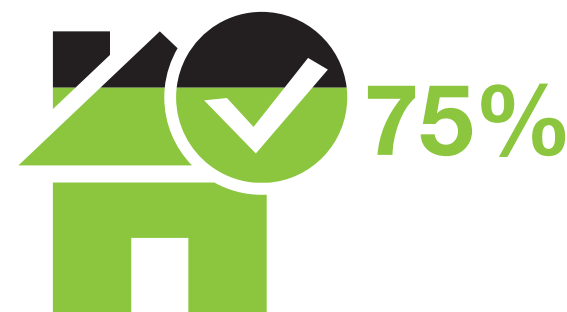
The team has continued to be subject to staff vacancies in the latter part of the reporting period with two planner vacancies arising from the end of quarter 3 seeing a temporary reduction of 20% in resource. Temporary secondments have also seen a reduction in more experienced team members taking on other roles that do not involve managing a case load. In addition a temporary vacancy has arisen in our validation team at the beginning of quarter 4 which has seen an increase in days to validate and register planning applications. In addition, our enforcement team also had a vacancy through quarter 3 and 4 which resulted in some investigations being dealt with by the planners.

Notwithstanding these ongoing issues, there have been some success stories in terms of performance at householder and other consents. This represent more than 90% of our workload and for many is their only contact with the Planning Authority so to be able to deliver these applications faster is a key achievement for the team. We continue to look across the team for inspiration and better practice to improve how we deliver our services. As a team we have a broad range of experience and have enabled less experienced members of team to take on major applications which they have done confidently.

Appeals

During the reporting period there have only been three appeals submitted to the DPEA following decisions made by the Planning Authority. The number of appeals being upheld remained at 67% the same as 2017-18. Two of the appeals resulted from decisions made by the Planning Board, contrary to officer recommendations, with one of those being dismissed by the DPEA. Whilst this was a householder application the key issues related to design and Conservation Area location and demonstrates Councillor confidence to

Local Reviews - Original Decision Upheld 2017 - 2018



Local Reviews - Original Decision Upheld 2018 - 2019

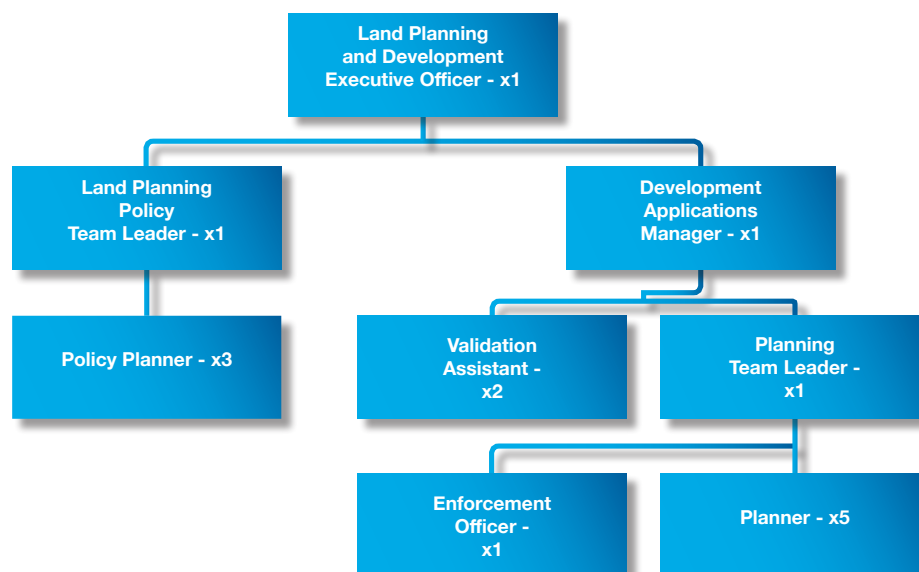
challenge officer recommendations and more subjective issues such as design. There has also been a greater percentage of reviews decided whereby the original decision has been upheld, increasing from 45.5% in 2017-18 to 75% to 2018-19, almost a 30% improvement. This ongoing improvement may be down to one officer taking on the role of advisor to the LRB, providing a more consistent approach and advice. Further training was provided to the LRB members during the reporting period whereby the Team Leader, planner and representatives from Legal Services provided 'refresher' training on the role of the LRB and factors for determination.

Part 6 – Workforce Information

Part 6: Workforce Information

	Tier 1 Chief Executive	Tier 2 Director	Tier 3 Head of Service	Tier 4 Manager
Head of Planning Service	1	1	1 (Most senior planner)	1

Staff Age Profile	Headcount
Under 30	1
30-39	9
40-49	3
50 and over	3



Staff Structure

Executive Officer – Land Planning and Development

Strategic management of all planning and related functions.

Development Applications Manager

Management of both development management planning, enforcement and building standards functions.

Team Leader – Development Applications

Supervision of development management functions including reviewing and approving all reports of handling, preparation of committee papers etc. Also responsible for management of enforcement function.

Development Applications Planner

Involved in all aspects of development management working including planning applications, appeals, listed building consents, advertisement consents etc.

Land Planning Policy Team Leader

Supervision of the LDP preparation process.

Policy Planner

Involved in preparation of Local Development Plans and associated guidance.

Enforcement Officer

All aspects of planning enforcement including serving notices, direct action and Procurator Fiscal referrals.

Validation Assistant

Involved in all aspects of registering new planning applications and enquiries including scanning paper plans, neighbour notification and creating digital records.

Part 7 – Planning Committee Information

Committees & Site Visits	Number per year
Full council meetings	10
Planning committees	8
Area committees	n/a
Committee site visits	8
Local Review Body	4
LRB site visits	3

Planning Performance Framework 2018 - 2019



Other formats

This document can be provided in large print, Braille or on CD and can be translated into other community languages. Please contact the Council's Communications Team at:

East Dunbartonshire Council, 12 Strathkelvin Place, Southbank,
Kirkintilloch, G66 1TJ Tel: 0300 123 4510

本文件可按要求翻譯成中文，如有此需要，請電 0300 123 4510。

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ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 0300 123 4510 ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Gabhaidh an sgriobhainn seo cur gu Gàidhlig ma tha sin a dhìth oirbh. Cuiribh fòn gu 0300 123 4510

अनुरोध करने पर यह दस्तावेज हिन्दी में भाषांतरित किया जा सकता है। कृपया 0300 123 4510 पर फोन कीजिए।

