



Fife Council

Planning Performance Framework

2020/21



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1. Foreword



by Cllr Altany Craik

Convener- Economy, Tourism, Transportation & Strategic Planning Committee.

I am pleased to introduce the 2020/21 Planning Performance Framework, the 10th in a series of annual reports which celebrate what Fife Planning Authority has achieved over this extraordinary year across a number of national performance indicators whilst recognising the challenges the pandemic continues to present.

The 2020/21 period has been a year like no other for the Council; a sudden move to complete remote working, whilst adapting, and supporting our communities. Planning Services assisted in resourcing frontline critical work with some staff delivering food to vulnerable households, supporting our communities. The impact of the pandemic is real and lasting. The environment within which we work is not going to be the same as it was.

Planning Services demonstrated agility, in quickly moving at pace to remote working keeping the planning system in Fife moving. The case study 'Covid-19 Response' demonstrates this agility, the importance of staff wellbeing, implementing improvements, and doing their best.

Our Planning Services play an essential role in Fife's economic recovery. Planning application numbers have increased resulting in additional pressure on service delivery with an impact on performance. Given the circumstances and increased workloads, with the same level of staffing, an impact on the Service response times through determining applications and responding to customers was inevitable. A lot has been achieved and PPF10 celebrates a range of positive outcomes through which staff across the Service have played their role, working collaboratively, to support the economy and enhance Fife's places.

A review of the Local Development Plan will commence in 2022. The Scottish Government continue to work on National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and in implementing the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 through Regulations. The delay in NPF4 and Development Plan Regulations has held up the commencement of our Development Plan review, however we will be ready to move forward once these are published.

The strategic growth areas are important to Fife's economy, particularly where development sites are progressing through the planning process, gaining consent. The Service continues to work on the implementation of strategic transport infrastructure in Dunfermline to facilitate growth and is seeking financial assistance through Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Deal with the Scottish Government.

A challenging year for Fife's Planning Authority, the Council, and our communities but one throughout which our staff within Planning Services have shown their commitment to making Fife a better place.

2. Introduction

Planning Authorities across Scotland annually submit a Planning Performance Framework to Scottish Ministers. This, our 10th version, sets out our performance and through case studies demonstrates the quality of service which we deliver.

The 2020/21 performance reporting year coincided with the first 12 months of the Covid-19 pandemic. Performance relative to the national indicators was not the highest priority particularly during the first few months. The Service priorities focused on ensuring the end to end planning application process operated digitally, supporting where possible frontline essential services, getting staff equipped and set up remotely, establishing remote and virtual planning committees, and above all the health and wellbeing of the staff.

Challenges have also brought about opportunities for identifying improvements. Our site visits ceased for a period which allowed a testing of whether physical site visits are required in all instances. The service continues to only undertake site visits where absolutely necessary and it is expected this will continue. The use of digital information, complemented with photographs and videos where required submitted by an applicant all assist. Our annual staff 'away day' continued, with a focus on celebrating great examples of outcomes achieved on the ground with drone footage, as well as an opportunity to share and learn in small virtual groups. Our regular CPD events got back up and running during the summer allowing for a wider and larger audience from across Council services.

Some challenges remain. With an increase in planning applications and no call centre, our normal customer service has been impacted. The service continues to implement improvements to help keep customers informed, but we do recognise that during this year we have taken longer to make decisions and respond to customer enquiries.

Overall, the Service has performed well during an extraordinary year. Our work has covered progressing environmental planning projects, policy work, providing a service to developers aligned with road construction, assessing and determining a larger volume of applications than usual, promoting Fife's rich built and natural heritage, preparing a business case for Dunfermline strategic transport infrastructure investment, managing a higher volume of applications to be validated, amongst other work areas.

Resource pressures are evident. It is more important than ever that the Scottish Government re-start the review of planning fees, to ensure that planning services are properly resourced. Planning has an essential role in Fife's economic recovery but needs to be properly resourced to deliver the 49 new duties arising from the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, and a green recovery.

3. Driving Improved Performance

Self-Assessment of Progress Since PPF9

The following table provides a summary analysis of how we consider Fife Council is performing and the progress we are making in relation to the performance markers identified by the Scottish Government. The coloured RAG rating highlights our self-assessment of our performance within the PPF10 period with the RAG status for PPF9 as published in the Scottish Government's feedback report shown as text to allow a comparison to be made.

No	Performance Marker	RAG Rating	Source/Evidence
1.	Decision-making: continuous reduction of average timescales for all development categories [Q1 - Q4]	(Amber in PPF 9)	<p>During the PPF 10 reporting period the delivery of the planning service across all its functions has been significantly impacted by the wider repercussions of the COVID 19 pandemic. Despite the reduction in performance in terms of weeks taken to determine applications we are proud that the Planning Service in Fife continued to deliver the decision making process. We have reported in past PPFs how we have invested in new technology and shifts to online processing. The investment in these areas significantly assisted in meeting the challenges presented by the pandemic. It is noted that there was a small increase in the timescale for determining our householder applications from 7.3 weeks to 8.2 weeks. This however in the context of the overall impact and challenges presented by COVID we do not consider this to be significant and for that reason we have marked ourselves Amber.</p> <p>Fife Council determined a total of 16 major applications in the PPF 10 reporting period. We are pleased to advise that our processing time for major developments has reduced significantly from the PPF9 reporting period; falling from 64.9 weeks to 59.7 weeks.</p> <p>Evidence: Case Studies 1 and 2, Scottish Government performance figures</p>
2.	Processing agreements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and availability publicised on website 	(Green in PPF 9)	<p>All applications continue to be project managed. As reported in PPF 9 we offer Processing Agreements to all applications not just for Major applications.</p> <p>In the PPF 10 reporting period we are pleased to advise that 50% of applications processed in Fife have been subject to processing agreements.</p> <p>Information about processing agreements and forms are published on our website.</p> <p>Evidence: National Headline Indicators, Fife Council website, Case studies 1 and 2</p>

No	Performance Marker	RAG Rating	Source/Evidence
3.	<p>Early collaboration with applicants and consultees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications; and clear and proportionate requests for supporting information Liaise with home builders and encourage early collaboration and proportionate assessment. 	(Green in PPF 9)	<p>Formal pre application processes and online advice is provided. The take up of pre app advice in the PPF10 reporting period was 8% (121) of applications.</p> <p>Guidance and information on our pre application process is published on our website.</p> <p>We have updated our Supplementary Guidance during the PPF 9 reporting period relating to Planning and Noise, these documents together with the information already published and referenced in PPF9 adds to the availability of information setting out clear and proportionate advice for developers in Fife.</p> <p>We have used twitter and the Planning pages of the council website to ensure customers are kept informed and up to date with the availability of services to our customers throughout the pandemic.</p> <p>Clear and proportionate guidance to prospective applicants is provided to assist applicants in submitting comprehensive information at the point of submission. This includes a Validation Checklist, SUDS Guidance and HoPS Guidance.</p> <p>Evidence: National Headline Indicators, Fife Council website, Twitter. Case Studies 1 and 2</p>
4.	<p>Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting period)</p>	(Amber in PPF 9)	<p>Joint working continues with Legal Services to improve the processing time taken to conclude legal agreements. The planning service continues to engage with legal services early in the process and all S75s are managed through the process to conclusion while also keeping applicants and developers fully updated and informed of the process.</p> <p>The number of complex cases has impacted on the performance of the major applications NHI category noted above, however all timescales are discussed with applicants to ensure they are aware and informed of the legal decision-making process.</p> <p>Evidence: National Headline Indicators- Planning/Legal Agreements</p>
5.	<p>Enforcement charter updated / republished within last 2 years</p>	(Green in PPF 9)	<p>Enforcement Charter Updated March 2020</p> <p>Our Enforcement Charter has been revised and is up to date. It had been hoped to update the Charter to coincide with the outcome of the Planning Bill however the timescales did not accommodate this. We decided to update and refresh our Charter within the 2 year period to ensure it was updated to reflect business priorities.</p> <p>Evidence: National Headline Indicators and Fife Council Website</p>
6.	<p>Continuous improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; and progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report 	(Green in PPF 9)	<p>We have marked ourselves as Green in this category for PPF10 largely due to the extent of improvements and adaptations which we have put in place to maintain the service during the COVID 19 pandemic. We are pleased to report that the decision-making timescales for major applications has reduced from 64.9 weeks to 39.7 weeks in the PPF10 reporting period. Local applications have increased marginally by 0.2 weeks. Householder applications processing time has increased however this is also against a background of a significant increase in volume of applications being submitted in this category in Q3 and Q4 of 2020/21.</p> <p>We have also reduced by 39 the number of legacy cases since PPF 9.</p> <p>In the context of the impact of the pandemic, the implementation of new working arrangements and adaptations to our business, as well as the significant increase in application volume of householder applications we consider this is excellent performance and have marked ourselves Green for this category.</p> <p>Evidence: Delivery of Service Improvement Objectives 2019-2020; National Headline Indicators table and Case Studies referenced in PPF10.</p>

No	Performance Marker	RAG Rating	Source/Evidence
7.	Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption	(Green in PPF 9)	Fife Council adopted ' Fifes Local Development Plan (FIFEplan) (LDP) on 21st September 2017. Evidence: National Headline Indicators and Fife Council Website.
8.	Development plan scheme – next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on course for adoption within 5 years of current plan(s) adoption; and project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale 	(Green in PPF 9)	Edition 2 of FIFEplan Action programme published 2019 and scoping work now underway to commence LDP review from Q4 2021. FIFEplan 2 will not be fully replaced within the required timescales. However this is to ensure that it will align with NPF4 Evidence: Development Plan Scheme
9.	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year	N/A	This stage pre-dates the reporting period for PPF10 Nevertheless elected members are engaged and kept informed throughout the LDP process through Members' briefings and workshops, Fife Council website, twitter and the Development Plan Update (E-Bulletin). Evidence: Members' briefings and workshops, Fife Council website, Twitter, and Development Plan Update (E-Bulletin).
10.	Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year *including industry, agencies and Scottish Government	N/A	An engagement strategy will be developed for the FIFEplan LDP review. Key Agency Group stakeholder engagement has started ahead of the review. Stakeholder engagement will be reported further in PPF11.
11.	Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on information required to support applications.	(Green in PPF 9)	As reported in case study 3 relating how we have responded to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic we have continually informed our website and worked with customers to keep them informed as to how our processes have changed and adapted.
12.	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact arrangements; joint pre-application advice)	(Green in PPF 9)	Expanding and embedding corporate working across a number of Services particularly Education, Property, Economic Development and Housing and we report on examples in the Case Studies in this PPF. As noted above we offer Pre application advice on all applications and we proactively include consultation responses and advice from internal Council Services wherever possible. In addition, our extensive CPD programme has also assisted in improving knowledge and understanding between services and teams within the Council. We have maintained our CPD programme throughout the pandemic period shifting to an online format. Evidence: Case study 2, new Noise Guidance.

No	Performance Marker	RAG Rating	Source/Evidence
13.	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	(Green in PPF9)	<p>We actively participate in in-house and external facilitated training through our Continuous Professional Development (CPD), programme; Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS), Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, (SOLACE), National Association of Planning Enforcement (NAPE), FTBSF (Fife Traditional Building Skills Forum), Community Planning and work with other Planning Authorities and Key Agencies.</p> <p>We proactively feed into and influence responses to emerging policy and planning issues through HoPS and other national bodies.</p> <p>Evidence Case Study: 5 Inverkeithing CARS work</p>
14.	Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	(Amber in PPF9)	<p>This marker is an indicative “snap shot” in time and “stalled sites” have increased by 1 over the number reported in PPF9 from 13 to 14 on hand in PPF10. This however is only reflective of the raw numbers and we have cleared 39 legacy cases in PPF10 period compared to 21 reported in PPF9. We consider that this for our own marker is a Green. Legacy cases continue to be proactively managed and progressed in collaboration with applicants. Given the large number of legacy cases we have progressed in the PPF10 period we have marked ourselves a Green for this marker as the on hand number has only increased by 1.</p> <p>Evidence : National Headline Indicators</p>
15.	Developer contributions: clear and proportionate expectations set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); and in pre-application discussions	(Green in PPF9)	<p>Fife Development Plan Scheme 2018 (10th edition) Continue offering and promotion of Pre application advice. Policy expectations set out in Supplementary Guidance in Making Fife's Places.</p> <p>Evidence: Case Studies: Case Study 1 and 2; Noise and Development Guidance, promotion of processing agreements for local and major applications in particular</p>

4. Qualitative Narrative & Case Studies

The following case studies provide examples of how our processes enable us to deliver an efficient and effective planning system for the people and communities of Fife. They illustrate how we actively listen to our customers and shape improvements around their feedback. We continue to innovate and develop the Planning Service in Fife to meet the challenges: both economic and technological and provide a forward-thinking flexible and responsive service to achieve sustainable economic growth. The case studies illustrate the ways in which Fife planning influences development on the ground and highlight examples of cases where the planning process and planning staff have influenced outcomes and achieved improved quality of development. We continue to review and critically assess how and what we do in terms of processes and services we deliver and use LEAN as a business improvement tool. We have continued to develop and refresh our range of guidance to build on the policy framework set out in FIFEplan.

We particularly focus one of the case studies on our response to the implications arising from the COVID 19 pandemic. As we move forward, we will reflect on and learn lessons from the changes and new processes we have put in place to determine what we can embed as permanent new ways of working.

Our proactive approach to how we deliver our services and critically assess and review our business processes provides us with the ability to face the challenges presented by continuing financial pressures while ensuring we meet the needs of our customers.

The case studies below highlight a snap shot of the broad range of activities and initiatives which we have delivered within the PPF10 reporting period.

Quality of Outcomes

The following case studies demonstrate the added value delivered by planning on the ground.

Case Study 1:

Former Police Station, 100 North Street, St Andrews

This case study (2013 to current) involved a Local level development opportunity following the relocation of all police duties from North Street to more appropriate facilities within the town. The site is located within the historic town centre and Conservation Area of St Andrews, close to Listed Buildings and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The original 3-storey terraced building (circa 1930's), based on a town/burgh architectural style, finished externally using traditional materials on a prominent street also included extensive land to the rear (accommodating a rear extension, ancillary structures and outbuildings and operational car parking). Surrounding land uses include University/academic as well as residential. The majority of architectural styles surrounding the site were traditional with some more modern interventions of 2-4 storeys (attic) in scale.

Following the auctioning of the site, the successful developer submitted a pre-application enquiry for a residential flatted proposal based over two blocks (street side and one to the rear garden/parking area) and included the demolition of the existing building. The scale, massing, storey heights and basic architectural structure was generally supported as it reflected the typical streetscene. Following previous refusals and appeal dismissals (for both the planning and Conservation Area Consent) on the grounds of overdevelopment; substandard off-street parking provision; concerns regarding impacts on amenity/privacy; lack of a detailed approved replacement scheme extensive discussions and meetings with Historic Environment Scotland (demolition within a Conservation Area); the Council's Built Heritage and Archaeologists as well as the developer were reconvened to address the original developer no longer being involved (to avoid a legacy/stalled site resulting) and a replacement developer being found. Following multiple discussions and meetings and modelling assessments a scheme was submitted which resulted in a proposal which addressed previous concerns. Further to that it was also considered acceptable as it retained some of the key architectural features and external finishing materials of the original building (e.g. baronial style natural stone feature and ornate stone detailing around stairwell windows, entrance doors and some window margins) being incorporated into the replacement proposal. Some of these features would also be replicated in some of the external features of the new flatted block to the rear to provide architectural continuity between blocks. Concerns regarding the loss of the building and a lack of justification were also resolved and a sound Development Appraisal provided demonstrating all alternative use options had been explored but were either problematic to execute on site due to the construction type or were financially unfeasible. The justification of this traditional non-listed building was eventually accepted especially given features of the existing building would now be incorporated into the scheme and other architectural enhancements had been proposed by the developer's architect to enhance the visual appearance of the replacement building. In order to assist committee Members (some of which were newly elected) with all the changes made and the key issues applied to address earlier concerns, refusals and dismissals a Members Briefing Session was conducted. The proposal was approved and following some minor applications for small amendments and requests for Non-material Variations the development is complete, and the first residents will move in in July 2021.

Overall, the development sets high standards of design and use of external finishing materials, embodies strong urban design principles reflecting those set out in the original vision for the development of the site. This site from its inception to delivery shows how Fife Council Planning has worked proactively with the Council's Built Heritage, Archaeologists and Historic Environment Scotland teams and the developer to facilitate the provision of a suitable compatible land use whilst also delivering a high quality urban realm incorporating the urban design principles which were critical to the quality of the scheme and reflected the high quality streetscene of along one of the town's most historic streets.

Case Officer – Chris Smith (Lead Officer; Chartered Planner)



Before



During



Proposed



After

“Designing buildings is often about finding acceptable compromises between conflicting demands, and this was particularly so with the redevelopment of the former Police Station in St Andrews.

The site was located within the conservation area & whilst the original building was not listed, Historic Scotland view was that the street elevation had townscape value. Our challenge was to balance the accommodation brief and Client expectations within the planning policy framework. On this project we were greatly assisted in this task by the collaborative working relationship with the Planning Service of Fife Council. This relationship helped shape the final form of the scheme and assisted with the passage of the proposals through what was a complex & protracted planning process.

The finished building is testament to the constructive working partnership between the Client, Architect and Planner.

Ian Muir, Director, Muir Walker Pride Chartered Architects & Interior Designers

”

Summary

Case Study Title:

Former Police Station North Street, St Andrews

Location and Dates:

Town centre and within historic core, St Andrews 2020/21

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

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Summary (continued)

Key Markers :

- 1 Decision making
- 2 Project management
- 3 Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
- 6 Continuous improvements
- 9 Elected Members engaged early
- 11 Production of regular and proportionate policy advice
- 12 Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit
- 14 Stalled Sites/Legacy Cases

Key Areas of Work :

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design • Conservation • Built Heritage • Change of Use • Environment • Greenspace • Biodiversity enhancements • Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance • Development Management Processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Applications • Interdisciplinary Working • Collaborative Working • Placemaking • Amenity Protection • Project Management • Transport • Active Travel |
|--|--|

Stakeholders Involved :

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Public • Local Developers • Key Agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Committee • Authority Planning Staff • Authority Other Staff |
|--|---|

Overview:

Development of a non-listed former police station located within a town centre protected under Conservation Area status to form 17 new flatted units in 2 blocks including the demolition of the former station building and the formation of appropriate outdoor amenity space. Both blocks are now complete and soon to be occupied. The site is located close to Listed Buildings, buildings of note within the historic core and close to a Scheduled Ancient Monument and within an area of archaeological interest. Important to note that previous proposals of a similar nature were refused but rather than become a stalled/legacy site a new developer engaged with the Council to overcome previous concerns. A Member briefing was also conducted to highlight changes applied since earlier committee refusal and appeal dismissals so Members (including new ones) were up to speed on development progress prior to final committee meeting.

Goals:

To develop a high-quality residential development in 2 blocks that respects the scale/massing/architectural and historic quality of the North Street streetscene within the historic core of an important university town. Whilst not listed the building plays a key part of part of one of the towns oldest and most important streets and the original building included important architectural features of note and reuse. The former police station building was no longer required given the local office had relocated to more appropriate fir for purpose facility elsewhere in town. The reuse of the existing building would not have met current Building Standards nor were other alternate land uses considered appropriate beyond further university accommodation/teaching facilities or residential to mirror existing land uses along North Street. The development embodies high standards of design and architectural quality to respect the architectural heritage and history in the vicinity of the site. Extensive discussions were held with the developer as well as Historic Environment Scotland and the Councils own Built Heritage officers in order to reach an exemplary architectural outcome.

Outcomes:

The project illustrates how a successful discussions and negotiations can be achieved to protect and enhance further the built heritage locally especially when the site in question related to a non-listed building of average architectural quality and merit within a Conservation Area to one of improved quality, whilst protecting local amenity and providing needed accommodation within the town centre. Also important to note that earlier local concerns raised also by committee Members when previous refusals resulted were addressed by new developer and new Members briefed on key changes and progress made on development to address concerns. Overall this assisted in a smooth progress through committee process and fewer local concerns being raised.

Name of key officer:

Chris Smith (Lead Officer - Chartered Planner – Development Management)

Quality of Outcomes

The following case studies demonstrate the added value delivered by planning on the ground.

Case Study 2: Velux Factory Glenrothes

The developer took the opportunity to submit a pre application submission almost a year before submitting the application. This process enabled a number of issues relating to the site to be highlighted and discussions to take place at an early stage. The applicant had highlighted that in order to secure investment in the facility further discussions were needed with their company board to secure funds to deliver the project and investment to Glenrothes. The Velux company had recently announced a restructuring of their business which meant that the manufacturing facility would close at the Glenrothes site; it was therefore key to ensure that new investment was secured at the site to provide new job opportunities and to secure the jobs of existing administrative staff already based there.

The Pre application process involved discussion with various colleagues internal to the planning service and other services across the council. Issues such as the significance of the existing building, though not listed were highlighted and initial comments made relating to trees and natural heritage as well as flood and drainage issues. Consideration of how parking issues would be addressed within the overall site arising from the disposal of the redundant manufacturing buildings and the focus on a smaller administrative facility were also able to take place prior to the application being formally submitted.

The formal pre application response highlighted the relevant policies which needed to be addressed additional information to be submitted with the application and also the general acceptability of the proposal. All these being key issues which the company could then take to their board to secure support for the future investment at the site.

In May 2017 the formal planning application was submitted and a dedicated case officer in the Priority Application team took the case forward. The same officer had provided the pre application advice, so we were able to provide a continuity of service for the applicant. The applicant also had the comfort that the case officer was aware of the timelines and issues relating to securing the business investment at the site. Further issues arose requiring additional details to be resolved particularly relating to bats and further technical drainage information had to be worked up. However, the overall design details of the building had been resolved and the case officer drew together the relevant technical specialists to provide advice to the applicant to enable the application to progress. Following receipt of the final technical elements relating to ecology and drainage the application was approved in October 2017. The building and site works completed in April 2020.

Before



New Velux Offices Glenrothes Planning application 17/01600/FULL

“ At the very early stages of this project, it was important to ascertain the views of Fife Council Planning Department. We submitted a pre-application enquiry to Fife Council in January 2017 and received a response in March 2017. The response from Fife Council Planning was very helpful and allowed us to shape the content of the eventual detailed design application and assisted us with our decision-making process. We submitted the detailed planning application in May 2017 and approval was granted in October 2017. The planning department throughout the application process engaged with us on a regular basis and responded in a timely manner when required. ”

Iain Mitchell, Sinclair Watt Architects



Proposed SW view



After SW view

Summary

Case Study Title:

New Velux factory/office building. Delivering new investment and working with Priority Business customers.

Location and Dates:

Industrial area Glenrothes.

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

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers :

- 1 Decision making
- 2 Project management
- 3 Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
- 6 Continuous improvements
- 11 Production of regular and proportionate policy advice
- 12 Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

Key Areas of Work :

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design • Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Applications |
|---|---|

Stakeholders Involved :

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Public • Local Developers • Key Agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Committee • Authority Planning Staff • Authority Other Staff |
|--|---|

Overview :

Development of a new commercial factory illustrating how we engage with and manage priority applications and key business investment in Fife to deliver outcomes of the Development Plan and the Local Outcome Improvement Plan for Fife.

Goals :

To develop a high-quality contemporary energy efficient industrial/commercial building and delivering exemplary architectural design.

Outcomes :

The project illustrates how through successful engagement with key business sectors the Planning Service can deliver a responsive service to secure investment and also deliver high quality architecture and energy efficient buildings.

Name of key officer :

Nic Lopez (Development Management)

After



Governance

Case Study 3: Covid-19 Response

This case study shows that we have continued to flex and respond to the changing exceptional circumstances occasioned by Covid19.

Firstly, we have built on the good early work from the last reporting period and continued to change and adapt our response at pace. We have focused resources on the areas where the potential support for economic recovery is greatest. We have taken care to ensure that our communities have access to information about developments which were authorised through the Coronavirus Acts by ensuring that our records are updated and open to scrutiny. We have communicated the changes to agents and developers, making them aware of the benefits they can derive from these legislative provisions. We have continuously reviewed the impact of the changes on our staff and our customers and adapted these to resolve issues and to establish whether those changes should be reverted in the longer term, post-Covid.

Secondly, we have placed the wellbeing of our staff at the centre of our operation and accepted that this may have a short-term impact on performance in some areas. This has been communicated to our customers.

Finally, we have continued to feed into the national picture by working closely with the Scottish Government and Heads of Planning Scotland and the RTPi to help identify and develop the required changes to the planning system.

Links to Markers 6, 12 & 13.

Our rapid initial response to Covid-19 in the 2019/2020 provided us with a good platform for continuing our response to the changing situation in terms of Covid restrictions, whilst allowing us to promote further improvements to support and maintain the quality of the planning service throughout 2020/2021.

Wellbeing

Throughout the period we have continued the use of team media channels to support team working and wellbeing and virtual team meetings continue to be more frequent than with in person meetings. In January / February 2021, each team worked on a 'Just Ask Listen Talk' team pledge which identified supports and actions to promote and support wellbeing whilst working remotely. These pledges varied from team to team, but common themes were regular virtual tea breaks / walks, our daily quiz, wellbeing featured in team meeting agendas and our staff newsletter. In December we held our first Virtual Service Away Day, providing a platform for staff across the Service to connect and discuss issues and potential improvements and complete our annual staff survey.

When restrictions allowed for some limited use of office accommodation, we adopted clear criteria for managers to assess the need for staff to access the office. This included staff wellbeing in addition to providing access to information and systems or to address short term connectivity issues.

Monitoring the Impact on Application Submissions

We continued monitoring the level of new submissions and this enabled us to quickly re-direct staff resources to the areas experiencing the greatest pressure when application numbers started to increase in August 2020. Whilst it had been anticipated that post Covid economic recovery would be a slow process with low levels of application submissions, the 8 months to April 2021 has shown a significant increase in applications for large residential, tourism and infrastructure projects as well as householder development.

Construction Sites Re-Start

As construction sites re-started, we directed more resource towards post planning decision activities, such as concluding obligations and condition compliance. This was in recognition of the importance of getting development happening on the ground to support economic recovery and particularly the creation and retention of jobs.

Legislative Changes

The principle planning legislative changes introduced in response to Covid provided for the extension of working hours for construction sites and permitted development rights to allow businesses to adapt to accommodate social distancing as well as extensions to the life of unimplemented permissions. In relation to the business alterations and extended construction hours, whilst we recognised the need for these changes we also recognised the potential impact these changes could have on local communities. We introduced a new process for recording and agreeing these changes, providing certainty for businesses and developers, whilst also encouraging them to address the potential impacts on neighbouring properties. The process and templates ensured a speedy response to 60 requests whilst enabling us to make the information available to local communities as part of our weekly list of applications and on our planning public access system.

In terms of the extension to the life of permissions, we recognised that this would have negligible impact in economic recovery terms unless applicants were aware of the extensions and that there was little reason to expect them to be aware of the legislative changes. In addition, we considered it important for the planning public access system to make the information available to local communities. We produced updated decision notices to for every affected permission, displayed these on the public access system and notified individual applicants or agents. This was a significant piece of work as there were two extensions, affecting just under 1500 applications.

External Communication

Our office phone lines were not available as a means of contact during the initial Covid lockdown period, and this significantly increased email traffic. We have reviewed this as restrictions have changed and maintained the position of relying on other forms of communication whilst staff continue to work from home. We recognised this was creating difficulties for some customers and in January we initiated the 2021 Communication Project. This project is ongoing and seeks to improve the information available to allow customers to self-serve from our website, and to improve our processes to enhance the speed and quality of our responses. We will report further on this Project and its outcomes in PPF11.

Technical Support

We continued to support staff to improve their connectivity to office-based systems, wherever possible taking advantage of corporate system and network improvements and new corporate equipment availability.

Site Visits

As Covid restrictions were relaxed and then retightened we continued to review our policy and staff guidance on carrying out site visits to ensure compliance with the current Scottish Government Guidance. As we re-introduced carrying out limited site visits, we recognised the need to ensure officers had returned safely from sites and introduced a monitored media channel dedicated to ensuring staff could check in and out. We plan to continue with the risk assessment of the need for site visits on a case-by-case basis as a permanent improvement to our way of working.

Wider Engagement in Covid-19 Response Changes

The Head of Service and Service Managers have continued to engage with Scottish Government and HoPS, assisting with the consideration of the need for legislative change and guidance, whilst also engaging with other planning authorities to share best practice.

Summary

Case Study Title:

Covid-19 Response

Location and Dates:

Across Fife, April 2020 – March 2021

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

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

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

- 6 Continuous improvements
- 12 Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit
- 13 Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities

Key Areas of Work

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design • Conservation • Regeneration • Environment • Greenspace • Town Centres • Masterplanning • Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance • Housing Supply • Affordable Housing • Economic Development • Enforcement • Development Management Processes • Planning Applications • Interdisciplinary Working | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) |
|---|--|

Stakeholders Involved

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Public • Hard to reach groups • Local Developers • Key Agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Committee • Authority Planning Staff • Authority Other Staff • Other (please note) |
|--|--|

Overview:

This case study provides evidence as to how we proactively managed the implications arising from the COVID pandemic to provide a continuity of service to our customers, deliver corporate objectives and support the wellbeing and health of colleagues. We also positively sought to use the experience to consider new ways of working to develop longer term service improvements.

Goals:

From the outset the Planning Service recognised that whilst the immediate priority of the Covid-19 response was to minimise the spread of infection, planning would have a significant role to play in economic recovery. We therefore recognised the importance of keeping the planning service running and in focusing on areas which would support development happening on the ground during the recovery phase.

Summary (continued)

Outcomes:

The Planning Service was well placed to respond to the challenge of working through Covid-19 restrictions with a high level of capability for digital working, established practices in terms of change and risk management and significant levels of empowerment and trust. The Service has responded well to the rapidly changing landscape with only minor impacts on the level of customer service being provided.

This work will continue through the next reporting period and beyond as we adapt and develop processes to support economic recovery. We will also continue to review the impact and effectiveness of the changes we have made in response to Covid-19 and assess whether these will be adopted as permanent changes.

Name of key officer

Mary Stewart, Service Manager

Quality of Service Engagement

Case Study 4:

Inverkeithing Conservation Work- Project Engagement through the pandemic

We reported on the Inverkeithing Conservation Area Renewal Scheme (CARS) project in PPF9 however we are highlighting in this case study how we have continued to deliver projects and engage with communities during the Pandemic. It is a key built heritage project and despite the issues and challenges presented by COVID 19 it was essential to maintain the momentum to deliver the results on the ground and the success of the project.

Key events and feedback from participants which were facilitated through the CARS programme during the pandemic period, were delivered through on line sessions and workshops; this enabled wider outreach across the country and further afield. We were able to continue to deliver the objectives of the CARS program in different ways using new technology:

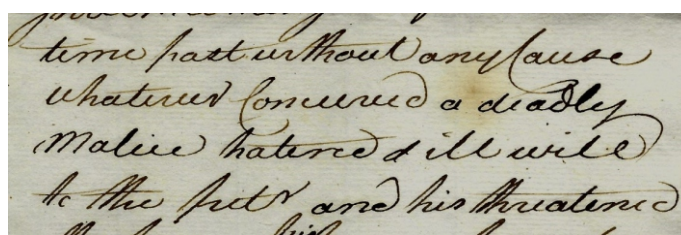
Date:	Marker:
23 June 2020	Conservation
Event:	
Zoom talk/presentation. Maintaining your garden walls, a talk for householders, on Zoom, delivered by Rosamund Artis, Director, Scottish Lime Centre Trust. Promoted widely, with invitation to email problem wall pictures, in advance. Attracted audiences from across central Scotland, as well as good local representation. Very positive feedback, audience keen to trial the techniques, appreciative of high quality information.	
Stakeholder:	
Local community	
Evidence :	
56 booked, 36 attended	
Outcome:	
"Liked chance for an expert response to their individual problem" I enjoyed that participants were invited to show their own pictures for some expert consultation!" "I found this video really useful and was a good intro to the correct ways to repair these kinds of walls "Hi - from Dumbarton. Excellent info and will definitely sign up to SLCT course. I found the info and encouragement on DIY work and lime mortar very useful. House Wall pointing tips and tricks would be another good course. Thanks - great online event.	



Conservation – audience “problem” photographs submitted for expert advice in Zoom talk June 2020

Date:	Marker:
3 March 2021	Regeneration
Event:	
Zoom talk/presentation on Inverkeithing Heritage Regeneration and the Burgh Survey project, to Inverkeithing Local History Society. Promoted on Twitter and Facebook, starting series of online talks. Reaching audiences new to virtual delivery, first in a series of three, with audiences building each time. One audience member's first ever Zoom event.	
Stakeholders:	
Inverkeithing and Dalgety Bay community, local residents,	
Evidence :	
18 attendees to 1st in series and 19 to 2nd. Tweets (multiple per talk) promoting talks, reaching c1000 timelines. Total tweets reach c8000	
Outcome:	
"I thoroughly loved your talk tonight - it was so interesting. Well, done!" Local resident by email.	

Date:	Marker:
Autumn/ winter 2020/2021	Collaborative working
Event:	
Local arts collective commissioned to work with community-based artists, to record and represent personal responses to heritage in Inverkeithing. Their works were exhibited, and from them, a motif derived for use in carved elements of the public realm uplift.	
Stakeholders:	
Arts Collective – 3 adults Community artists - 7 from teen to octogenarian FC public Realm commissioning team FHBT TDO	
Evidence :	
Process: see picture below Output: Heritage motif Blog on participating in the project, artist testimonials etc: Snapshots & Sketches – I love this town! (inverkeithingarts.org)	
Outcome:	
Artwork photobook as legacy, exhibition visitors in Inverkeithing, virtual to website exhibition and on social media. Heritage motif design ready for use by craftsperson, in public realm uplift.	



Regeneration – project talk, in collaboration with Local History Society, first in series of 3. Extract from a transcribed document in ILHS archives

Date:	Marker:
September 2020 - present	Placemaking
Event:	
<p>Inverkeithing Heritage Regeneration - a 10-episode podcast series, enhancing local and wider knowledge and understanding of the area's history, stories and significance.</p> <p>Creating other engaging digital offerings for locked down Doors Open days 2020, a commissioned model of the Town House to print, colour, cut, fold and stick for children and families. And digital jigsaws: fostering close observation of key heritage buildings, a new appreciation of local historic detail, and curiosity about locality, place and history</p>	
Stakeholders:	
Local community, people with specialist knowledge, Scottish diaspora	
Evidence :	
<p>887 listeners @ 18 May 2021</p> <p>14 countries, across Europe, Asia, Africa, N and S Americas.</p>	
Outcome:	
Enduring, accessible, interesting resource for heritage context, local histories, intangible heritage. Listeners in 14 countries. 13% of listeners in US across 11 states, and in 2 Canadian provinces and 1 territory. Listeners in South America, Asia, and Africa.	

Date:	Marker:
Feb 2020 - present	Community engagement
Event:	
<p>Nurturing historical research skills, knowledge development and revealing new information, about buildings, place, historical figures. Teaching and using surveying skills to survey a key A listed building. 36 weekly research drop-in sessions 60 – 90 minutes, 3 days of surveying, plus write up and additional research, hundreds of volunteer hours, significant outputs, informing building adaptation, as well as soft outcomes: reduced isolation, greater skills, knowledge</p>	
Stakeholders:	
<p>Fife Council</p> <p>FHBT</p>	<p>Inverkeithing Local history Society</p> <p>Local community</p>
Evidence :	
Logged community meetings, a level 1 standing building survey, building report, forthcoming Burgh Survey publication.	
Outcome:	
<p>Standing building survey, new building timeline, new C19th research materials consulted - prison inspection records.</p> <p>New research on: plague; land ownership and farms; witches; medieval Inverkeithing and pilgrimage; maps and C19th industries; C16th, C17th Inverkeithing women's wills; slavery and Inverkeithing.</p>	

Community engagement – Zoom meeting



Summary

Case Study Title:

Inverkeithing Heritage Regeneration: Activity Plan Delivery

Location and Dates:

Inverkeithing, Fife, 2020-2021

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

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

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

- 2 Project management
- 6 Continuous improvements
- 12 Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit
- 13 Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities

Key Areas of Work

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation • Regeneration • Built Heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative Working • Placemaking • Community engagement |
|--|--|

Stakeholders Involved

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fife Historic Buildings Trust as CARS delivery partner • General Public • Local Developers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Agencies • Authority Planning Staff • Authority Other Staff |
|--|---|

Overview:

Fife council's 5-year, CARS/TH Inverkeithing Heritage Regeneration project, and in particular the associated Activity Plan delivery, has since April 2020 to March 2021, made a significant local impact:

- raising the profile of building and area **conservation**, through talks, virtual training, varied engagement opportunities and active consultation events;
- promoted the **regeneration** goals of the project, and for the town, through talks and lectures, and through social media
- **Collaborative working** Inverkeithing Arts Association, heritage motif development facilitating an artistic study of local heritage features, including a parallel in situ and online exhibition, rewarding for participants, stakeholders, community
- **Placemaking** launching an intro plus 10-episode podcast series, enhancing local and wider knowledge and understanding of the area's history, stories and significance; and creating other engaging digital offerings for locked down Doors Open days 2020, including a commissioned model of the Town House to print, colour cut, fold and stick, and digital jigsaws of landmark buildings of features.
- offering opportunities for **community engagement** and knowledge development about the local area through a creative, community Burgh Survey including a standing building survey, and extended opportunities to learn research skills, undertake original independent research, and discover new facts and information about Inverkeithing. (a description of the activities which have taken place during the case study period, is set out in Part 2, below)

Goals:

The project aims to improve the rich yet neglected heritage of Inverkeithing, including by delivering a multi-faceted community- based activity programme for all ages, disseminating knowledge of Inverkeithing's rich heritage, stimulating interest in place, and appreciation of the strong heritage, and imparting new skills to aid built heritage conservation for future generations. The project has also continued to operate events and activities throughout the pandemic and this case study highlights how we have managed to continue this project as an example of adapting new ways of engaging the community during the challenges of the pandemic.

Summary (continued)

Outcomes:

Heritage is:

better interpreted,

- people learn about heritage and have an enjoyable experience,
- people develop skills and more people are involved with heritage activities

Heritage is:

better managed,

- Focus on the commitment in Fife Local Plan, (FIFEplan) to safeguard Fife's heritage and natural environment: a material consideration in development proposals for the area.
- Greater awareness amongst building owners of how to maintain their property

Name of key officer:

Fiona Fisher, Built Heritage Officer, Policy & Place



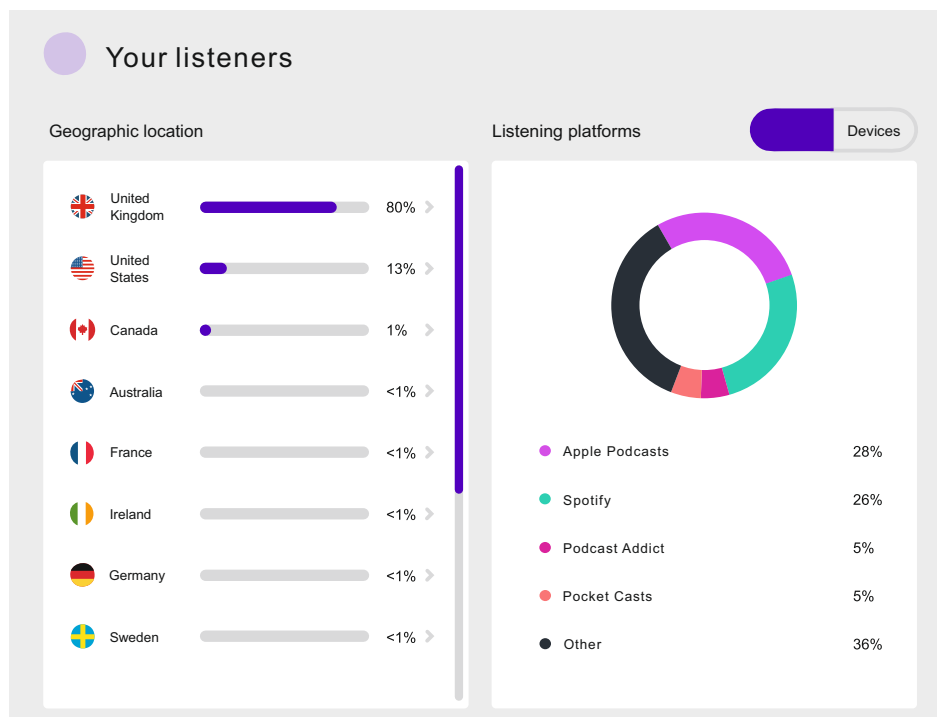
Collaborative working: one of the artist written and artistic response to buildings/building craft skills, tangible local heritage, and the simplified version of the agreed heritage motif.

There are many fine historic buildings in Inverkeithing. Some of these are named after the original owners such as Rosebury House and The Friary. In other parts of the country, houses are recognised as being the work of famous architects - Adam brothers - or as a reward for battles fought and won - Blenheim Palace - but as I studied the buildings and the methods used to build them I realised that those gems of construction are actually memorials to the multitudes of men and women who shaped and cut the stone and timber. Who worked long hours in often appalling conditions and so often to the detriment of their health. Who are forgotten and nameless. So when I see a tool mark or a particularly subtle piece of skill, I like to touch it and connect across the ages and thereby for a fleeting moment acknowledge and appreciate their skill and craftsmanship and even of their existence.

Sandy Stephen, Snapshots and Sketches - Inverkeithing



Placemaking: screenshot of (some of) listener locations to Inverkeithing podcast: episode listen totals 886 at 17 May 2021



Culture of Continuous Improvement

Case Study 5:

Working With and Learning From our Customers

Following on from our customer recommendations made in PPF 9 we have undertaken the following:

- We have identified issues relating to our lines of communication with our customers during COVID which led to the creation of a Communications 2021 project to improve our customer engagement. At present due to the restrictions, we do not have access to our office phonelines, so we have had to look at other ways to communicate with our customers.
- We have improved the management of our central email inbox by using auto-sorting with subject titles so that they are automatically moved into different folders so can be dealt with more quickly and efficiently by the most appropriate staff for customers.
- We advised our customers to submit planning applications and additional information online via the ePlanning.scot portal so that they can be processed in a timely manner while we are working from home due to COVID restrictions. This enables our staff to process all documents and applications quickly.
- We continue to provide a duty officer service over the phone using telephone call backs. Our offices remain closed to members of the public due to COVID restrictions, but our staff are still on hand to deal with general enquiries and can assist customers who may require guidance on application submission requirements using the telephone or email as well as providing information on how to use the e-Planning portal

Some of the feedback we have received from our customers:

- “ The Planning Officer was very helpful and kept us up to date with progress, however there seemed to be an admin issue towards the end as we didn't not receive the decision letter until quite a time after the extension of time deadline date. ”
- “ Just a quick email to advise that the help given to me by Kerry Strachan was brilliant. She is a great asset to the company, can't thank her enough. ”
- “ Hi Paul, Thanks for the email. By coincidence I was discussing with a colleague this morning how much I enjoyed your clear communication style. Makes life easier for all involved. ”
- “ Thank you so much Alan, Mags has been in touch and we're now clear on how to resolve this- we really appreciate your help. ”
- “ Bill, Perfect ! You have been brilliant ! Thanks again ”
- “ Hi Chris, Well done on your paper today at the ETSPT committee. Your work on this project has been the subject of much praise from the architects, course and clubhouse, general manager and more importantly the investors. I hope that you and your colleagues involved in this project can attend the opening and share in the success of this fantastic development? David Scott the general manager has indicated that once Covid restrictions are over he wants everyone involved from the Council to attend an event to meet the owners and investors. ”

“ The Planning Officer was very helpful and kept us up to date with progress, however there seemed to be an admin issue towards the end as we didn't not receive the decision letter until quite a time after the extension of time deadline date. ”

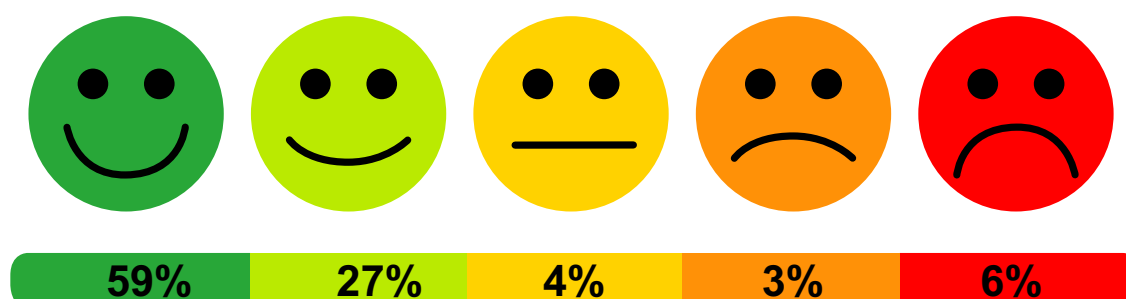
“ Just a quick email to advise that the help given to me by Kerry Strachan was brilliant. She is a great asset to the company, can't thank her enough. ”

During 2020/21 we have asked for feedback from customers and this has been continued through our online survey, which is sent to the applicant/agent once an application has been determined. During the period of 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, the Development Management team sent 1987 invitations to customers asking them to complete our online survey. The survey has 16 questions with a mixture of open, closed and equality monitoring questions. The results of this survey are provided as a percentage of responses.



345 completed
17% return rate
69% completed by agents

Overall Satisfaction Levels during 2020/21



The following themes were highlighted by our customers: -

- **Finding information online**
- **Application timescales - and limitations due to COVID restrictions**
- **Communication on the progress of a planning application.**

Actions for 2021-21 PPF11 Reporting period

- 84% of survey respondents are over the age of 45. This has increased by 20% since the last reporting period. It is unclear why this has substantially increased but might be due to the COVID pandemic. We will monitor this in our next reporting period. Whilst this is unlikely to change as people in the younger age groups are less likely to apply for planning permission, it is also reflective of the poor levels of engagement in the planning system generally, particularly by people under the age of 35. We have made efforts to tackle this and some staff have visited schools to engage with younger age groups. We will continue to explore new ways to further communicate with younger people.

- We will continue to investigate how we can use technology to provide improved communication to our customers. For example, we will explore ways in which we can provide notifications to customers at key stages in the planning application process. Our communications 2021 project is investigating several new ways to communicate with our customers using the technology that we have available.
- Whilst over the past years significant inroads have been made in reducing application processing times, the survey outcome shows this is the most pressing concern for applicants and agents alike. The average processing time for Householder Applications (excluding Extension of Time and Processing Agreements) was 8.2 weeks during this reporting period. This reflects issues arising due to COVID restrictions. Although most of our staff have been away from the office, this allowed us to explore new ways of working remotely to ensure business continuity. While delays are inevitable in processing some applications, it is important to ensure that where a case is ready to be determined, the decision is delivered and communicated quickly. We will continue to promote a Section 69 instead of Section 75, which helps reduce the time taken further as planning contributions are dealt with upfront.
- We are currently collaborating with our IT team to create an online form for customers with various planning queries. This form will be interactive and provide the customer with an instant response to their enquiries.

Summary

Case Study Title:

Working and Learning from our Customers

Location and Dates:

Customer Survey 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021

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

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

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

- 6 Continuous improvements

Key Areas of Work

- Process Improvement
- Staff Training

Stakeholders Involved

- General Public
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

During 2020/21 we have asked for feedback from customers and this has been continued through our online survey, which is sent to the applicant/agent once an application has been determined. During the period of 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021, the Development Management team sent 1967 invitations to customers asking them to complete our online survey.

The feedback allows the Planning Service to look at key areas for improvement in relation to Development Management

Goals:

To listen and respond to customers.

To develop guidelines and processes to assist the customer.

To look at innovative ways which will enable the customer to self-serve through the use of technology.

Outcomes:

Outcomes from our 2019-20 survey that have been implemented: -

We have identified issues relating to communication with our customers during COVID and implemented a Communications 2021 project to improve our customer engagement while we do not have access to our office phonelines.

We have improved our central email inbox by using auto-sorting so that they can be dealt with more quickly and efficiently.

We advised our customers to submit planning applications and additional information online via the ePlanning.scot portal so that they can be processed in a timely manner while working from home.

We continue to provide a duty officer service to deal with general enquiries and customers who may require guidance on application submission requirements. Since we did not have a contact number available during COVID, we have implemented a call back service to our customers.

Name of key officer

Kerry Strachan, Planning Improvement Technician

5. Service Improvements

A: Delivery of Service Improvement Objectives 2020-21

The following table provides Fife Council's assessment of how we consider we have delivered on our service actions and objectives identified in PPF9. Additional details and information on many of these are reported in this PPF. Many of our objectives which we set last year have been superseded and overtaken by the need to develop new ways of working and adapting our processes to meet the challenges arising from COVID 19.

Committed Improvement & Actions in PPF9	Complete	Self Assessment RAG Status as at 31 March 2021
Explore further opportunities for shared service delivery with other planning authorities.	Ongoing	The implications of the COVID 19 pandemic reduced the opportunities for this area to be further developed within the PPF 10 period. The demands on resources and adapting to home working meant this was no longer a priority for the Service.
Set up Customer Consultation Groups to enhance and tailor our service improvements. Agents and Developers are a priority group.	Ongoing	The focus of this aspect of our improvements was also largely superseded and impacted by the implications arising from the pandemic. We do however consider that we were able to deliver a consistency of service throughout the pandemic.
Publish new/update Customer Guidance on Environmental Health issues and planning: Noise, Contaminated Land, Air Quality.	Yes	In collaboration with colleagues in Environmental Health we have developed new guidance to provide advice to prospective applicants. We have also reviewed existing advice relating to Contaminated Land and Air Quality and ensured links on our website direct applicants to the appropriate information.
Review our processes and procedures to address outcomes of Planning Bill	Ongoing	Again, this review was overtaken by adapting and reviewing our procedures to provide a continuity of service throughout the pandemic
Provide a flexible tailored approach to delivering investment in Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline Town Centres and Strategic Development Areas by having dedicated planners/virtual teams to provide support to prioritise initiatives and projects to deliver LOIP.	Yes	Despite the challenges presented by COVID we have where possible sought to continue to provide dedicated support and advice to customers and colleagues across the service who are leading these initiatives
During the PPF 10 period we will further develop the strategic focus of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) to promote and secure investment in the Mid Fife area. We will expand the existing work we do with developers and house builders to focus on this geographic area and also to engage specifically with SME housebuilders as well as larger businesses to drive investment and growth in this key area for Fife. As part of this response we can advise that Head of service and other managers met with a range of investors.	Ongoing	The former Development Plan team has been renamed the Policy & Place team to reflect the range of activity it carries out. Part of that work is working closely with Community managers to align the next LDP with a refreshed LOIP with a focus on for priority areas for the Council: leading economy recovery; tackling poverty and preventing crisis; reducing the impact of the climate emergency; building community wealth and wellbeing.

B: Service Improvement Objectives 2021-22

Our improvement agenda is driven from feedback from our customers collated from surveys (see case study 5: Working with and Learning from our Customers) and lessons learned from complaints. The most significant area to reflect on during the PPF 11 reporting period is the adaptations to the way we work and engage with our customers arising from the implication of the COVID 19 pandemic (Case study 3). This has presented significant challenges but also opportunities to reconsider our business and service delivery models. We continue to apply LEAN as a tool to drive change, secure innovation and critically evaluate our business to seek opportunities to improve it. The following list gives an overview of some of the main objectives we aim to deliver within the PPF 11 reporting period:

1. Learning from Covid and adaptations to service delivery.
2. Explore continued operation of online planning committees to contribute to continuity of the Planning Service.
3. Undertake webinars and workshops with agents and developers to work to improve the quality of applications particularly to focus on the need to provide more upfront technical details such as Flooding and Drainage information at the validation stage.
4. Progress the outcomes from our Communications Project outlined in case study 5.
5. Communicate and engage with young people to ensure that their voice is heard and they can contribute to the planning process as part of an engagement strategy for the new LDP.
6. Continue to develop and use IT to improve customer information and provide updates as to the progress of their applications.

6. National Headline Indicators

A: NHI Key Outcomes - Development Planning

Development Planning	2020-21	2019- 20
Local and Strategic Development Planning:		
<p>Age of local/strategic development plan(s) at end of reporting period</p> <p><i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i></p>	<p>As at 31st March 2021: All local plans were superseded by the adoption of Fife's Local Development Plan (FIFEplan).</p> <p>FIFEplan Local Development Plan (Adopted 21st September 2017) – 2 years 6 months</p> <p>TAYplan (Approved 11th October 2017) – 2 years 5 months</p> <p>SESplan (Approved 27th June, 2013) – 6 years, 9 months</p>	<p>As at 31st March 2020: All local plans were superseded by the adoption of Fife's Local Development Plan (FIFEplan).</p> <p>FIFEplan Local Development Plan (Adopted 21st September 2017) – 18 months</p> <p>TAYplan (Approved 11th October 2017) – 17 months</p> <p>SESplan (Approved 27th June, 2013) – 5 years, 9 months</p>
<p>Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?</p>	<p>Not fully. The LDP review will be project managed and undertaken under the provisions of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. FIFEplan 2 preparation timescales will be included in a future Development Plan Scheme when further information is available from the Scottish Government. It is anticipated that work on the LDP will commence close to the end of 2021 to coincide with Scottish Government timescales for publishing secondary legislation for LDPs.</p> <p>In the meantime, the Council will monitor the use and effectiveness of the policies and proposals within the adopted Local Development Plan, and gather evidence to help inform the approach to preparing the next Local Development Plan.</p> <p>Reflecting the provisions of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, the SESplan and TAYplan authorities have not programmed any future replacement of their current Strategic Development Plans. However, interim Regional Spatial Strategies are currently being prepared. While Fife will maintain cross-boundary working with the Dundee City Region authorities, for the purposes of future regional planning, the whole of Fife is contained within the Edinburgh & South East Scotland Regional Spatial Strategy. An interim Regional Spatial Strategy was submitted to the Scottish Government in 2020.</p>	<p>Not fully. As per the adopted plan, FIFEplan 2 is project managed and programmed to be adopted within 5 years of the current (2017) adopted plan (2022). Reflecting the contents of the Planning Bill. The TAYplan and SESplan SDP authorities have not programmed any replacement of the respective extant SDPs</p>
<p>Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?</p>	No	No
<p>Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?</p>	N/A Given the stage the Local Development Plan is currently at, as per the Development Plan Scheme, no engagement or consultation was undertaken within the PPF10 period. This was reflected in the DPS with no requirement.	N/A Given the stage the Local Development Plan is currently at, as per the Development Plan Scheme, no engagement or consultation was undertaken within the PPF9 period. This was reflected in the DPS with no requirement.

Effective Land Supply & Delivery of Outputs	2020-21	2019-20
Established housing land supply	33,629 units	34,526 units
5-year effective housing land supply programming (1) (2)	7,355 units	7,139 units

5-year effective land supply total capacity	Units	Units
Dunfermline and West Fife HMA (3)	4683	4,913
Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Central Fife HMA (3)	2392	2,114
SESplan (Fife) (3)	n/a	n/a
St Andrews and North East Fife HMA	1131	970
Cupar and North West Fife HMA	630	614
Greater Dundee HMA	239	235
5-year housing supply target (4)	n/a	n/a
5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place)(5)	Years	Years
Dunfermline and West Fife HMA	6.9	8.0
Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Central Fife HMA	7.7	6.8
SESplan (Fife) (3)	n/a	n/a
St Andrews and North East Fife HMA	6.5	6.5
Cupar and North West Fife HMA	4.6	4.9
Greater Dundee HMA	4.1	4.5

Housing approvals	178 applications	153 applications
Housing completions over the last 5 years	5,725 units	5,442 units
Marketable employment land supply	214.7 ha	202.7 ha
Employment land take-up during reporting year	1.6 ha	33.9 ha

1. The 2019/20 figures are sourced from the 2019 Fife Housing Land Audit and the 2020/21 figures are sourced from the 2020 Fife Housing Land Audit.

2. Fife does not have an overall housing land requirement and is covered by 2 strategic development plans. The reported housing market areas are those stipulated in SESplan and TAYplan.

3. In PPF8, the 2018-19 totals for Dunfermline and West Fife HMA and Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes and Central Fife HMA were combined to give an overall figure for the SESplan area of Fife. Since PPF9, capacities have been reported by individual HMAs.

4. Fife is covered by 2 strategic development plans (SDP), TAYplan to the north and SESplan to the south. Neither SDP sets a housing supply target as both were prepared under Scottish Planning Policy 2010.

5. This calculation uses the adjusted annual housing land requirement as the denominator. See Housing Land Audits – Position Statements.

6. This figure is the number of approved applications for housing/residential development including PPP proposals: we do not record the actual number of units approved and cannot therefore determine this figure from the records held in Uniform.

We publish our housing statistics online in Fife Council's [Housing Land Audit](#), which includes the most up to date figures.

B: NHI Key outcomes – Development Management:

Development Management:	2020-21	2019-20
Project Planning		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	8%(121)	11%(154)
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	50% (8)	72% (16)
Decision Making		
Application approval rate	96.7%	96.1%
Delegation rate	95.4%	96.7%
Validation	36%	31%
Decision-making Timescales		
Major Developments	39.7 weeks	64.9 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	9.6 weeks	9.4 weeks
Householder developments	8.2 weeks	7.3 weeks
Legacy Cases		
Number cleared during reporting period	39	21
Number remaining	14	13

C: Enforcement activity

	2020-21	2019-20
Time since enforcement charter published / re-viewed	4 months	12 months
Requirement: review every 2 years		
Complaints lodged and investigated	586	636
Breaches identified – no further action taken	150	202
Cases closed	473	557
Notices served	0	3
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	1	0
Prosecutions	0	0

D: NHI Key outcomes – Commentary

Commentary

Short contextual statement

Despite the disruptive impact of COVID which has created difficulties and challenges throughout the Planning Service not to mention the wider impacts to our lives. The Planning Service in Fife has maintained a continuity of service through the pandemic and we have been able to draw on our past investment in electronic case processing and remote working. Notwithstanding this, challenges such as how to provide committee decisions and operate without site visits were among many issues which arose requiring a flexible approach to deliver the throughput of applications.

The health and wellbeing of our colleagues was also an important consideration with different people exposed to many life pressures and personal challenges over and above the disruption to their working lives. The pressures arising from COVID particularly colleagues who were solitary home working, dealing with family issues, home schooling and the overall psychological pressures and impact of lock down periods have made mental health and wellbeing issues even more of a focus during the pandemic period.

The challenges however presented opportunities to explore new ways of working and created opportunities to adapt and deliver the services we provide which we may not have considered or required to implement had the necessities not arisen. As we note in our case study, as we move to the new normal reviewing how we do things and what we have learned during COVID will influence and shape the service we deliver and how we undertake our business for the future.

We are proud that we have continued to not only deliver a planning service throughout the pandemic, and while we are by no means through the issues arising from it, we have continued to determine applications create opportunities for new business investment, support the housing and residential development sectors and put in place new processes to deliver new infrastructure.

7. Scottish Government Official Statistics

Scottish Government Official Statistics are drawn from quarterly returns by planning authorities. They are collated into an annual set of figures that is published on the Scottish Government website. The template below allows the information from these returns to be recorded in a consistent format. Additional guidance on how to access the statistics is included within the template itself.

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

Timescales	2020-21	2020-21	2019-20
Overall			
Major developments	8	39.7 weeks	64.9 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	290	13 weeks	9.4 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	(56.2%) (43.8%)		
Householder developments	738	8.2 weeks	7.3 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	(74.7%) (25.3%)	7.2 11.1	6.8 10.5
Housing Developments			
Major	5	32.6 weeks	73.7 weeks
Local housing developments	56	13.5 weeks	13.4 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	(51.8%) (48.2%)	7.4 20.1	6.8 19.2
Business and Industry			
Major	0	0	21.1 weeks
Local business and industry developments	31	11.1 weeks	8.4 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	(51.6%) (48.4%)	16 15	6.1 15.1
EIA Developments	2	22.7	0
Other Consents			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As listed in the guidance(right) 	478	6.2 weeks	5.6 weeks
Planning/legal agreements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major: average time Local: average time 	3 2	39.1 weeks 28.7 weeks	79.7 weeks 34.3 weeks

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

		Original decision upheld			
	Total number of decisions	2020-21		2019-20	
Type	No.	No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	21	18	85.7%	7	70%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	13	4	30.8%	8	50%

C: Context

We are pleased to present this PPF which we consider demonstrates a wide range of innovative improvements and examples of where we have found capacity despite (and in many cases because of) the ongoing challenges presented by the COVID pandemic to prioritise the views and feedback of our customers despite continuing business pressures. We strive to deliver continuous improvement, while supporting our staff; and empowering and enabling them to deliver as high a quality of service as possible to the residents, visitors and businesses of Fife.

8. Workforce Information

The workforce information below provides a snapshot of the Planning Service staff position as at 31st of March 2021. This information is also an integral part of providing the context for the information presented throughout this PPF document.

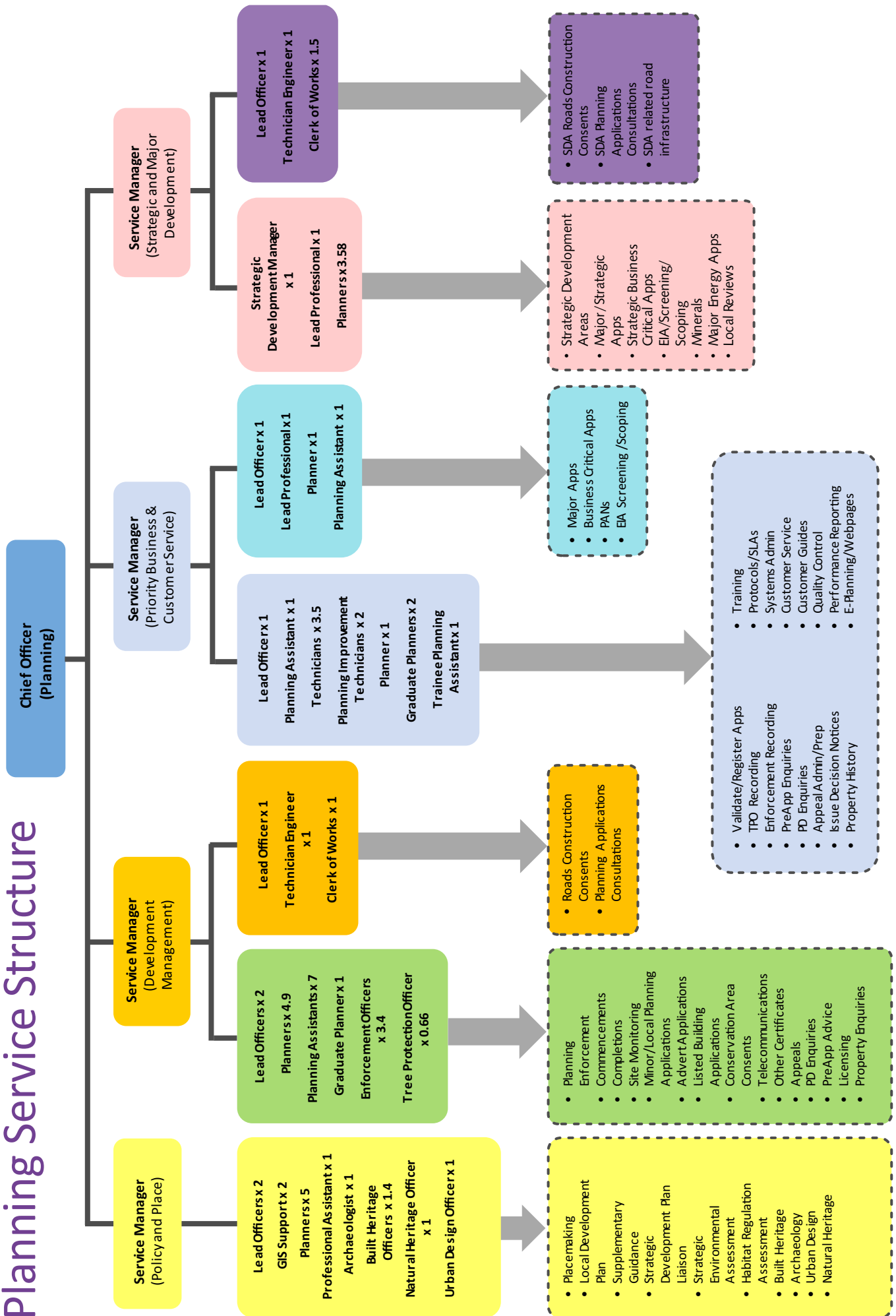
	Tier 1 <i>Chief Executive</i>	Tier 2 <i>Director</i>	Tier 3 <i>Head of Service</i>	Tier 4 <i>Manager</i>
Head of Planning Service			1	

RTPI Qualified Staff	Headcount	FTE
Development Management	18	18
Development Planning	10	9.39
Enforcement	1	1
Specialists	0	0
Licentiate	4	4
Other (including staff not RTPI eligible)	34	31.85

Staff Age Profile	Headcount
Under 30	7
30-39	12
40-49	17
50 and over	29

RTPI Chartered Staff	Headcount
Chartered Staff	33 people covering 32.39 FTE posts.

Planning Service Structure



9. Planning Committee Information

The following table provides information on the number of meetings and site visits by those bodies throughout the 2020-21 PPF 10 reporting period

Committee & Site Visits	Number per year
Full council meetings	6
Planning committees	20 - Central & West Fife (10) & North East Fife (10)
Area committees	29
Committee site visits	1 - Central & West
Local Review Body	5
LRB site visits	0

10. Supporting Evidence

Case Study Topics	Issue covered by Case Study	Case Study Topics	Issue covered by Case Study
Design	1 and 2	Interdisciplinary Working	2
Conservation	1 and 4	Collaborative Working	1, 2, 3
Regeneration	1 and 4	Community Engagement	4
Environment	1 and 4	Placemaking	
Greenspace		Charrettes	
Town Centres	1 and 4	Place Standard	
Masterplanning		Performance Monitoring	3 and 5
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	2	Process Improvement	3 and 5
Housing Supply		Project Management	1,2, and 5
Affordable Housing		Skills Sharing	3, 4 and 5
Economic Development	2	Staff Training	5
Enforcement		Online Systems	3 and 5
Development Management Processes	1,2,3 and 5	Transport	
Planning Applications	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Active Travel	
Other: please note			

[Planning Homepage](#)

[Fife Council Online Planning Portal](#)

[FIFEplan](#)

[Development Plan Scheme](#)

[Enforcement Charter](#)

[Strategic Development Plans](#)

[—DPEA Fife Core Library](#)

Other documents and supporting evidence is accessed from the hyperlinks within this document.

11. Contact & Communication

This PPF has not covered every aspect of Fife Council's performance on planning matters and it has not listed all the different team achievements and outputs. It has focussed on the higher level and more obvious achievements as required by the PPF template. Fife Council welcomes comments about the services provided, suggestions for improvements and endorsements of good practice. If you wish to provide specific comments or you require any further information on the contents of the PPF, the available supporting evidence or you wish to enquire about other areas of performance and achievement then please contact.

PAM EWEN

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Acknowledgements

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End notes