



PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Stirling Council 2020-21

Planning Service Annual Report



stirling.gov.uk

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Contents

Page 3	Highlights
Page 4	Introduction
Page 5	Scottish Government Feedback 2019/20
Page 6	Performance Markers: RAG rating 2012/13 - 2019/20
Page 7-13	Performance Update: Development Management
Page 14	Case Study 1: Development Management Performance and Pre Application
Page 15	Case Study 2: Learning from the Covid-19 Response
Page 16	Case Study 3: Planning Enforcement Handbook
Page 17-20	Performance Update: Development Planning
Page 21	Case Study 4: Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS)
Page 22	Case Study 5: Conservation Officer's Group (COG)
Page 23-25	Service improvements
Page 26	Workforce information
Page 27	Planning Committee Information
Page 28	Key
Page 29	Appendix 1 – Supporting Evidence
Page 30	Appendix 2 – Staff Structure
Page 31	Further Information

HIGHLIGHTS

2020/21

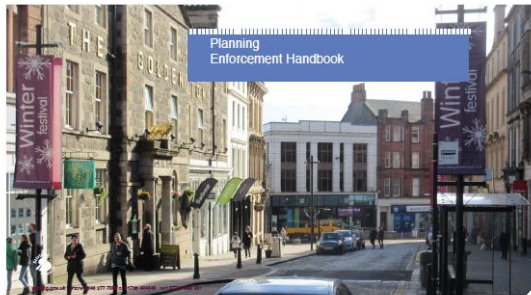
Regional collaborative working to create the 'Forth Valley Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy'

Forth Valley
Indicative Regional
Spatial Strategy 2020

September 2020

Increased public participation in Stirling's Doors Open Day 2020 due to online events organised in collaboration with local and national organisations

Stirling Council



Business continuity during Covid-19 whilst handling almost 1/3 more householder applications than in 2019/20

Stirling Conservation Officers helping to establish the Conservation Officer's Working Group (COG) for staff across all Local Authorities

Cross-service working and public consultation on the 'Engage Stirling' website to create 'Climate & Nature Emergency Plan'

STIRLING COUNCIL DRAFT
CLIMATE & NATURE
EMERGENCY PLAN
2021-2045

Lead
Enable
Inspire

Over £1.3 million awarded in CARS funding to Stirling for heritage projects



Introducing

...the Planning Performance Framework

The planning performance framework was introduced by planning authorities in 2012. Developed by Heads of Planning Scotland and supported by the Scottish Government, the framework captures key elements of a high-performing planning service, such as:

- speed of decision-making;
- certainty of timescales, process and advice;
- delivery of good quality development;
- an overall 'open for business' attitude.

The framework gives a balanced measurement of the overall quality of the planning service and contributes towards driving a culture of continuous improvement.

All planning authorities, strategic development plan authorities and seven key agencies prepare a Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report on an annual basis and receive feedback from the Scottish Government. PPF reports contain both qualitative and quantitative elements of performance and set out proposals for service improvement. They also report on a set of Performance Markers which were agreed by the High Level Group on Planning Performance in 2013.

This year, we were partnered with East Lothian Council and participated in the Peer Review process. We would like to thank East Lothian for their time and feedback.

¹ The remit of the High Level Group on Planning Performance includes supporting improved planning performance and linking performance with planning fees. The Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) co-chair the group with the remaining members comprising: Heads of Planning Scotland; the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives; the Society of Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland and the Royal Town Planning Institute.

...the Stirling Council Planning Service

The Planning Service in Stirling Council has two teams: Development Management and Development Planning. Together, these teams work to deliver integrated outcomes.

► Our Staff Structure is set out in Appendix 2

We are a compact service that focuses upon work that fulfils our statutory planning duties, but we also work closely with other Council services to deliver corporate objectives related to economic development, sustainability, transportation and affordable housing delivery. We work collaboratively on a range of corporate strategies and also deal with managing and promoting our historic environment.

The Planning Service is managed alongside the Building Standards Service. We are part of the Council's Infrastructure Services and under a management team that includes Sustainability, Transport Planning, Council Infrastructure Planning and Environmental Health. This grouping of services provides great opportunity to ensure integrated working to deliver the City Region Deal aims/goals/objectives.

A Planning Service Improvement Plan approved December 2016, continues to be the focus of the efforts of the Service to improve performance.

Scottish Government Feedback 2019/20

Stirling Council's ninth Planning Performance Framework Report, covering the period April 2019 to March 2020, was submitted to Scottish Ministers in July 2020. In December 2020, the Minister for Local Government and Housing provided feedback on the report based around the 15 performance markers agreed by the High Level Group on Planning Performance. Red, Amber or Green ratings were awarded based on the evidence provided, giving an indication of performance and the priority areas for improvement action.

The following graphic illustrates that, for 2019/20, the Scottish Government rated us **green** against six performance markers; **amber** against six whilst only one performance marker was rated **red**.

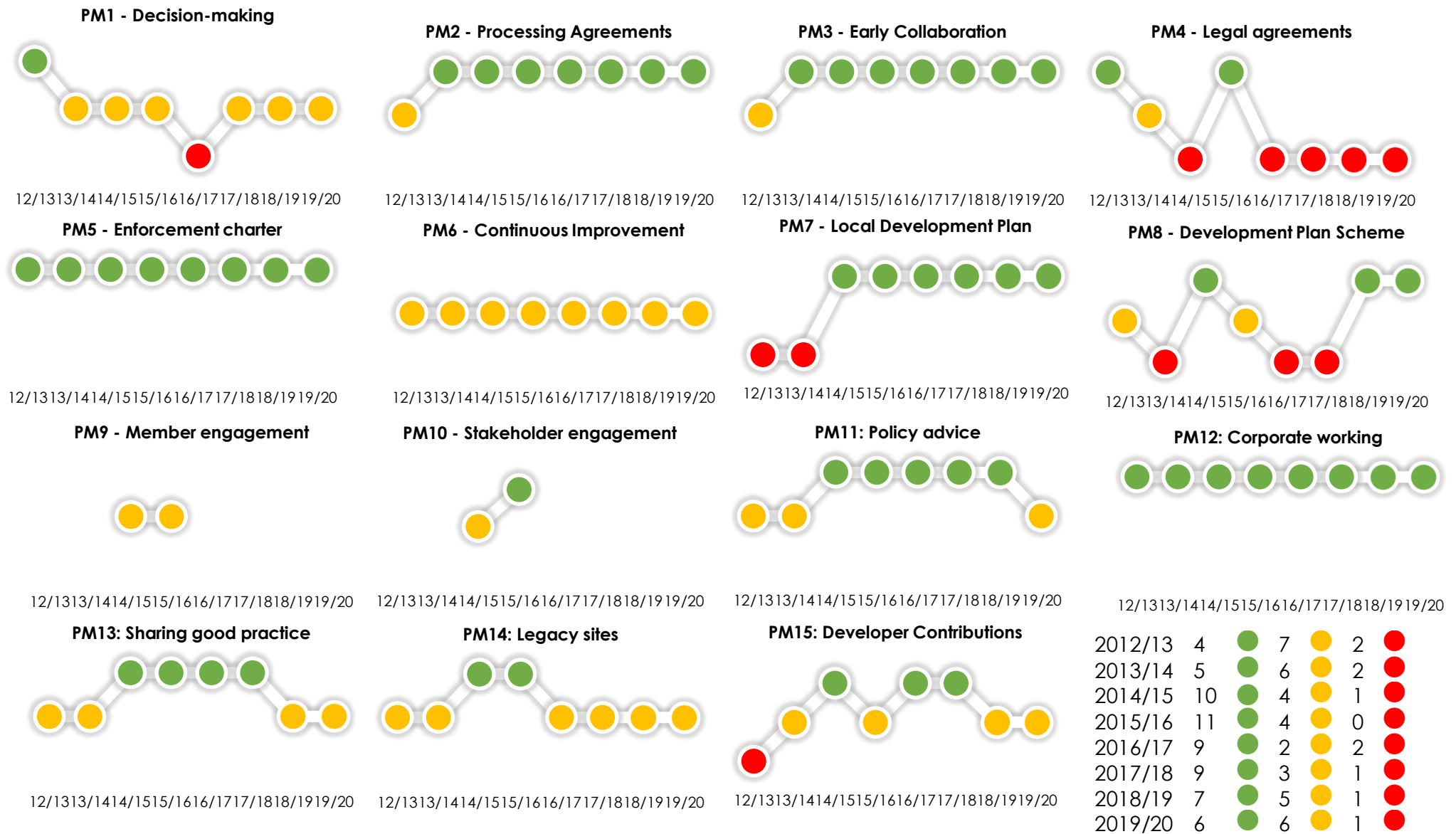
All of the markers remained consistent with the previous year aside from PM11, which changed from Green to Amber.

Part 2 of this Planning Performance Framework Annual Report details the rating given for each performance marker last year (2019-20); the feedback received from the Scottish Government; and a summary analysis of how the Council is performing 12 months on.

► Scottish Government Feedback:

<https://www.stirling.gov.uk/planning-building-the-environment/planning/planning-performance-framework/>

Performance Markers: RAG rating 2012/13 – 2019/20



Performance Update

Including National Headline Indicators & Official Statistics

This section provides evidence of the key Performance Markers by outlining the Scottish Government's 2019/20 feedback and commentary on Stirling Council's progress in 2020/21. This section also includes five case studies to help explain the story of the Planning Service's performance this year.

► Supporting evidence can be found in Appendix 1

► A key for Performance Markers and symbols can be found on page 28.

Development Management

The Development Management statistics for this PPF period reflect the bedding in of a series of changes sought to improve efficiency and performance in the long term, as well as an inconsistent resource base. The number of applications determined when considered alongside pre-application enquiries and the implementation of process changes would indicate increased workload overall.

Indicators & Statistics	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
Percentage of applications valid upon receipt	new	51.2%	49%	35.6%	26.6%	35.1%	↑
Application approval rate	93.8%	94.2%	96.4%	94.6%	94.3%	94.0%	↓
Delegation rate	77.7%	80.5%	80.8%	96.4%	97.1%	98.3%	↑
Number of applications determined	736	790	811	759	759	768	↑

PM1. Decision Making

2019/20 ●

Major Applications: There was 1 major application with a timescale of 196 weeks. This is significantly slower than last year and the Scottish average of 33.5 weeks.

Local (Non-Householder) Applications: Timescales of 11.4 weeks are faster than the previous year but is slower than the Scottish average of

10.9 weeks.

Householder Applications: Timescales of 7.1 weeks are slower than the previous year but faster than the Scottish average of 7.3 weeks. However, this is faster than the statutory timescale.

2020/21 Whilst the number of applications determined in 2020/21 is only slightly above those in 2019/20, the make-up of applications has shifted. As can be viewed from the statistics, there has been a large increase in householder applications and a reduction in the number of local applications. This is reflective of the impacts of Covid-19, with many homeowners carrying out improvement works and/or to create space for home working arrangements. The average timescales for decisions increased and this can be attributed to a number of factors involving a resource pressure at a time of increased workload and also knock-on impacts from Covid restrictions and home working of the service.

In relation to national statistics, Stirling Council is quicker than the average timescales for decisions in relation to householder and major business and industry applications, with the Scottish average being 8.1 and 22.4 weeks respectively. We meet the Scottish average for local business and industry applications. The Council is slower than the Scottish average in relation to

major, local (non-householder) and Local (housing) timescales, with the Scottish average being 41.3, 12.4 and 14.2 weeks respectively.

Drilling down further into the statistics shows that performance in the latter part of the reporting period had stabilised and improved. For example, the average timescales for processing householder applications in February and March 2021 were 6.8 and 6.1 weeks respectively, significantly faster than the Scottish average and well within statutory timescales. This is reflective of an increased resource within the team and lower number of local applications. Furthermore, certain applications can skew performance figures due to the length of time they have taken to progress to a decision. This year, there have been two such local development (non-householder) applications, which if these were removed, then the average timescale would come down to 12.4 weeks, in line with the average national timescales.

<i>Major Development</i>		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
Number of decisions		5	6	9	4	3	5	↑
Average number of weeks to decision		51.6	62.1	57.3	20.6	79.1	52.3	↗
<i>Local Development (non-householder)</i>								
Number of decisions		290	269	313	256	299	213	↓
Average number of weeks to decision		12.4	12.4	12.2	11.2	11.5	13.4	↘
< 2 months	Percentage of decisions	56%	56%	47.3%	43%	39.5%	41.8%	↗
	Average number of weeks to decision	6.8	6.6	6.5	6.1	6.5	6.7	↘
> 2 months	Percentage of decisions	44%	44%	52.7%	57%	60.5%	58.2%	↗
	Average number of weeks to decision	19.5	19.9	17.3	15	14.7	18.2	↘

<i>Householder developments</i>		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
Number of decisions		307	352	311	296	270	359	↑
Average number of weeks to decision		8.3	7.5	7.0	6.5	7.4	7.9	↘
< 2 months	Percentage of decisions	79%	78%	86.8%	84.5%	74.1%	74.9%	↘
	Average number of weeks to decision	6.5	5.8	5.5	5.4	5.8	6.0	↘
> 2 months	Percentage of decisions	21%	22%	13.2%	15.5%	25.9%	25.1%	↗
	Average number of weeks to decision	15.3	13.7	16.9	12.5	11.9	13.8	↘

Housing developments – Major

Number of decisions		4	2	8	2	2	0	↓
Average number of weeks to decision (Major)		21.7	26.8	61.9	16.1	111.9	-	

Housing developments - Local

Number of decisions		111	108	118	101	124	103	↓
Average number of weeks to decision		15.4	16.2	17.1	12.8	12.3	15.0	↘
< 2 months	Percentage of decisions	54%	43%	32.2%	32.7%	38.7%	38.8%	↗
	Average number of weeks to decision	7.3	6.9	7.1	6.2	6.5	6.4	↗
> 2 months	Percentage of decisions	46%	57%	67.8%	67.3%	61.3%	61.2%	↗
	Average number of weeks to decision	22.3	23.1	28.1	15.9	16	20.4	↘

Business and Industry developments – Major

Number of decisions		0	1	0	1	0	2	↑
Average number of weeks to decision		-	98.0	-	14.57	-	21.8	

Business and Industry developments - Local

<i>Business and Industry developments - Local</i>		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
Number of decisions		92	50	24	23	44	43	↓
Average number of weeks to decision		10.8	10.1	8.8	11.2	10.1	10.6	↘
< 2 months	Percentage of decisions	57%	64%	54.2%	34.8%	45.5%	51.2%	↗

	Average number of weeks to decision	6.5	6.7	5.3	5.9	6.6	6.6	→
> 2 months	Percentage of decisions	43%	36%	45.8%	65.2%	54.5%	48.8%	↗
	Average number of weeks to decision	16.4	16.2	12.9	14.1	12.9	14.8	↘

Listed Building and Conservation Area Consent

Number of Decisions	81	81	97	100	89	95	↑
Average number of weeks to decision	12.4	14.9	14.6	10.56	12	12.7	↘

Advertisements

Number of Decisions	21	53	40	26	43	40	↓
Average number of weeks to decision	6.3	7.5	5.0	4.9	10.2	9.6	↗

Hazardous substances consents

Number of Decisions	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Average number of weeks to decision	-	30.1	-	-	-	-	

Other consents and certificates

Number of Decisions	32	28	41	48	44	51	↑
Average number of weeks to decision	4.4	4.9	4.8	5.32	7.6	5.1	↗

EIA Developments

Number of Decisions	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Average number of weeks to decision	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Local Reviews

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
Number of Decisions	6	7	10	7	13	20	↑
Original decisions upheld (No. / %)	4 / 68%	4 / 57%	3 / 30%	2 / 29%	4/31%	14/70%	↑

Appeals to Scottish Ministers

Number of Appeals	4	8	8	7	6	3	↓
Original decisions upheld (No. / %)	1 / 25%	3 / 38%	7 / 88%	3/43%	0/0%	2/67%	↑

PM2. Processing Agreements

Indicators & Statistics

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
Number and percentage of major applications subject to processing agreement	1 (20%)	0 (0%)	5 (56%)	1 (25%)	7 (70%)	0 (100%)	➔

2019/20 ● Stirling continue to encourage processing agreements for all major applications. Processing agreements information is provided on your website.

2020/21 We continue to promote the use of Processing Agreements and their benefit to developers.

► [Information about Processing Agreements can be found on the Planning Application webpage](#)

PM3. Early Collaboration

Indicators & Statistics

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
Number and percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice	257	208	88 (10.8%)	101 (14.5%)	133 (12.8%)	96 (12.9%)	➔

2019/20 ● A new approach to pre-application advice was launched in January 2018, which continues to evolve and ensure that applications are front loaded to assist in reducing delays. The new service has resulted in some applications not being submitted which has been valuable in reducing the need to determine or make acceptable developments which are not deemed to be suitable. The case studies in the previous PPF demonstrated how requests for additional information were kept proportionate.

2020/21 From our records 96, of 741 decisions, are shown to have been the subject of pre-application advice, roughly 13% of applications. We continue to promote the benefits of pre-application advice and the positive impact it has on highlighting early planning issues to applicants.

PM4. Legal Agreements

Indicators & Statistics	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	
Number (Major)	0	0	2	0	1	1	→
Average number of weeks (Major)	-	-	59.9	-	196	21	↗
Number (Local)	5	4	3	7	2	5	↑
Average number of weeks (Local)	28.3	41.1	122.9	82.2	63	54	↗

2019/20 ● The annual statistics showed that no applications were determined which were subject to a legal agreement, however, the PPF stated that there were 3 applications (1 major and 2 local). Based on the information presented in the previous PPF, these timescales are slower than the Scottish average. It was noted that a review of how legal agreements are managed has been initiated.

2020/21 Whilst we have not fully altered the legal agreement procedures, work has taken place to enable faster turnaround times. Further improvements are required, however, the statistics show a very encouraging picture, particularly when compared to the figures for the previous 3 years.

Enforcement

Indicators & Statistics	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Time since enforcement charter published or reviewed (requirement: every 2 years)	1 year, 8 months	5 months	1 year, 5 months	1 month	1 year, 1 month	3 months
Complaints lodged/Cases taken up	143	109	137	160	142	118
Breaches identified (no further action)	85	69	35	42	60	36
Cases resolved/closed	40	59	136	143	218	63
Notices solved	7	1	8	6	0	0
Direct Action	new	new	0	0	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0	0	0	0	0

2020/21 The Covid-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on the Enforcement figures for 2020/21:

- Following a month-by-month analysis of cases received, figures between April-August 2020 (apart from June) were around 45% down on the previous year. Aside from this, all other months were the same.
- Due to lockdown restrictions on site visits, 23 cases are still to be assessed. This has impacted upon the 'cases taken up' figure. As we were unable to conduct site visits for 4 months this year, cases that may have been closed were still open.
- Furthermore, due to Covid, we were delaying in contact/requesting action as well as giving more time for compliance. As a result, under normal circumstances, it is likely that more cases would have been closed in the timeframe.
- Although overall case numbers are down, Enforcement queries relating to potential change of use increased by 320% whilst queries relating to householder developments increased by 370%.

It is also pertinent to note that the accuracy of recording Enforcement figures has improved over the past 2 years since we now record figures on the planning system 'Uniform'.

► [Stirling Council Planning Enforcement Charter 2021](#)

Case Study 1: Development Management Performance and Pre Application

Culture of Continuous Improvement

Key Markers:	PM1 – Decision making, PM6 – Continuous Improvement
Key Areas of Work:	Development Management Processes, Planning Applications, Performance Monitoring, Process Improvement
Lead Officer:	Michael Mulgrew

Overview:

Development Management performance over the last year has been challenging in terms of volume of applications and a pressure on staff resources, alongside Covid restrictions and the challenges faced by having to pivot to a home working environment the service was not previously set up for.

Resource pressure within the team enabled us to take on temporary agency workers and an external consultancy firm to help clear the backlog of applications that had built up throughout the year. There was a significant push from the team to 'clear the decks' prior to the Christmas break which assisted in clearing the backlog and the picture significantly improved post January. By January, the service had dispensed with external agency and consultancy support, but retained a temporary post and successfully recruited two new graduate posts.

In October, the service implemented a new validation process which overall resulted in a more streamlined process with efficiencies in order to get applications validated and passed to Case Officers as quickly as possible. However, there were some teething problems, which resulted in a small number of applications being delayed and incorrectly validated. This issue is now resolved and the validation process as a whole is running efficiently.

Goals:

This case study is reflective of the continuous improvement and will inform future service plans and service delivery.

Outcomes:

The past year has highlighted the pressures faced within the DM Team and as part of our continuous improvement, we are seeking to minimise the pressures and ensure the efficient running of the team. Some projects resulting from this review include:

- A new performance framework to ensure that officers are supported in their roles and to enable issues to be raised at an early stage with Senior Officers and Team Leader. This also includes clear proactive monitoring and justifications of all applications not meeting target timescales. This will be launched summer 2021.
- A review of the internal reporting structure within the team to be more resource efficient. This is in progress and expected to be fully in place by autumn 2021.
- A review of staffing levels within the team. This is ongoing and has resulted in the identification of new posts within the team. A new senior post has already been filled and we expect to fill a planning officer and new compliance officer post by late summer 2021.
- A review of workflow management to reduce and eliminate double handling and ensure current tasks are fit for purpose. This is expected to be completed by late summer 2021.
- The compiling of handbooks, setting out complete end-to-end processes for all tasks within the DM Team. This will set out clearly how and when tasks should be completed and reinforce a consistency of approach within the team. A Senior Officer handbook has been completed and the Officer handbook is expected to be complete by late summer 2021.

Case Study 2: Learning from the Covid-19 Response

Culture of Continuous Improvement

Key Markers:	PM6 - Continuous Improvements, PM12 – Corporate working across services
Key Areas of Work:	Development Management Processes, Planning Applications, Online Systems
Lead Officer:	Michael Mulgrew

Overview:

As we went into Lockdown, the development management function, along with other parts of the Planning Service were not particularly equipped to allow home working. This initially caused a severe impact on workload and processing, however, in conjunction with the Council's IT service, the department got set up with an increased number of laptops and mobile devices. A number of emergency measures were put in place to allow virtual Panels and the use of photographs from agents/applicants to enable processing of applications to continue. We have had to adapt to a new way of working and we are starting to emerge from a period of restrictions as well as the reality of a new 'normal'. The planning service is learning from our experiences over the past year and thinking about what has worked and what we may wish to continue, in some format, in the future.

Goals:

The goal of this work is to inform a culture of continuous improvement and inform future service plans and service delivery models.

Outcomes:

Work is under way on this and already we are seeing more permanent changes to the ways in which we work. For example, we are aiming to reduce the need for physical site visits. Our experience during lockdown has been that not every planning application requires an in-person visit and the characteristics of the site and impact of the development can often be adequately assessed using existing Council GIS data, information available online and that submitted by the applicant/agent. As restrictions have now eased in Stirling, we have put in place a new Site Visit Framework to assess the need for a site visit which takes into account the characteristics of the site, information available and the scale and impact of the development. This is a flexible approach that allows for a site visit where required but also allows us to utilise other sources of information. This approach has additional benefits in reducing the amount of staff time taken up with site visits and associated travel times and contributes to the Council's wider commitments to reducing carbon emissions; both important in the context of a pressure on staff resource and the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency.

Other outcomes are yet to be concluded but it is likely that with the current IT equipment the service has, we will be able to work flexibly and remotely. We are also keen to explore if the current suspended requirements to post physical site notices will be something that will continue as this will enable further cost and time savings in printing and physically posting such notices.

Case Study 3: Planning Enforcement Handbook

Governance

Key Markers:	PM1 – Decision Making, PM6 – Continuous Improvement
Key Areas of Work:	Enforcement, Process Improvement, Staff Training
Lead Officer:	Charlotte Brown

Overview:

Following a period of staff changes within the Enforcement team, it became apparent that the processes and procedures practiced within the service were not formalised or written down. This led to some inconsistencies and duplication of work. It was proposed and agreed that a review of the processes and systems in place would be undertaken, with formalised processes recorded centrally.

In reviewing the breadth of Enforcement cases, it was decided that they could be broadly classified into 9 key categories. From here, a process was recorded in how an officer would deal with each, including key decision points and standardised correspondence templates. An exemplar case is also listed for each key category, which allows the officer dealing with a new case to see how the process would work in practice.

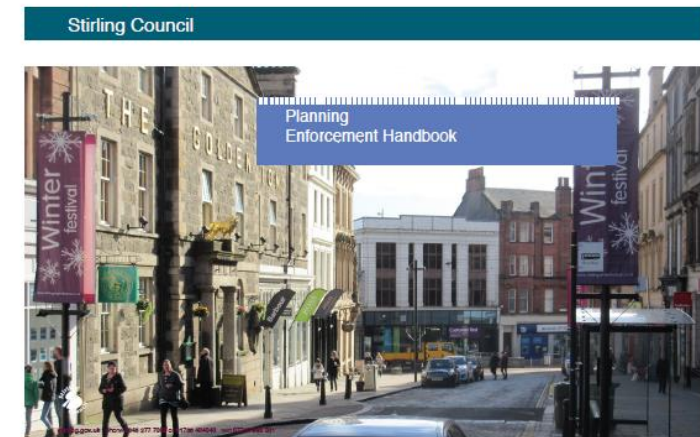
Goals:

The goal of this work was to increase efficiency in dealing with cases, and enable appropriate processes to be used for each key category.

Outcomes:

The enforcement handbook details the 9 key categories, process maps and standard letters. It also includes much of the base knowledge required for any new enforcement staff, or planning staff adopting planning enforcement responsibilities. Detailing the key principles of Enforcement, the relevant legislation, the potential notices that can be served in Enforcement and any important exclusions or exceptions.

This internal working document is now in use within our Planning Enforcement team, and has been used to aid in the transition of 2 members of staff into the sub-team so far. It is hoped that the document will also provide the basis to enable others to provide assistance within the sub-team, without the need for extensive training and management. This would provide greater resilience within the service, and enable staff, particularly though working in Development Management, to extend their skills and knowledge.



Development Planning

The review of Supplementary Guidance documents has continued to be progressed following the adoption of the Local Development Plan in October 2018. Reviewing and clarifying guidance on developer contributions has been the main focus of the work this year.

The publication of the NPF4 Position Statement within this PPF reporting period has placed a greater emphasis on more outcome focussed monitoring to inform and support the preparation of the next Local Development Plan. This has resulted in a new monitoring process for

Housing in the Countryside, which will see the first audit published later in the year.

► LDP webpage: [Stirling Local Development Plan 2018](#)

PM7. Local Development Plan

PM8. Development Plan Scheme

Indicators & Statistics	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Age of local development plan at end of reporting period (requirement: < 5 years)	1 year, 6 months	2 years, 6 months	3 years, 6 months	0 years, 5 months	1 year, 8 months	2 years, 8 months
Will the local development plan be replaced by its fifth anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Was the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	Yes – later	No	n/a	No	No	Yes
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Yes	Yes	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes

2019/20 ●

A new Development Plan Scheme is currently being prepared to cover the replacement of your LDP under the new Development Planning Legislation. This will include indicative timescales and will be updated as the new regulations and guidance emerge.

2020/21

It is anticipated that a new interim Development Plan Scheme and Participation Statement will be published in September 2021 subject to approval by the Council's Environment and Housing Committee. Based on the indicative programme, it is expected that the LDP will not be replaced until 2026, at which point it would be approximately 3 years out-of-date. The delay is due to impact of the pandemic on the timescales for implementing the new Act, which the Council has committed to preparing the next Plan under. The Council will however, have a 'new style' plan within 5 years of the new planning system commencing in line with The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 Development Planning - Transitional Guidance.

PM11. Regular and Proportionate Advice

2019/20 ●

You have an ongoing programme of work to review and condense the supplementary guidance you have in place. However, it is not clear what progress has been made during the reporting year.

2020/21

Supplementary Guidance (SG) for Small Settlement Designations, Transport and Access for New Development, and Advertisements is expected to be adopted later in the year following approval by the Council's Environment and Housing Committee. A review of the draft SG Developer Contributions is still ongoing with a revised draft expected to go out to consultation by the end of the year (2021).

The SG Programme is undergoing review. This is driven in part by the adoption of the Council's Climate and Nature Emergency Plan 2021-2045, in June 21. The updated programme will be published on the website once finalised.

► [Supplementary Guidance](#)

Land Supply and Development

Indicators & Statistics	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Established housing land supply (units)	7653	7364	7030	7858	7483	8009
5-year effective housing land supply – programming (units)	1624	2025	2217	2708	3058	2778
5-year effective housing land supply – total capacity (units)	new	new	6641	2708	3058	2778
5-year housing supply target (units)	2080	2080	2080	2080	2866	2290
5-year effective housing land supply (years)	3.9	4.9	5.3	6.5	5.3	6.1
Housing approvals (units)	264	124	125	573	573	153*
Housing completions over last 5 years (units)	1540	1564	1490	1448	1271	1076
Marketable employment land supply (ha)	60.55	74.3	75.2	86.03	87.13**	
Employment land take-up (ha)	0	2.9	1.4	2.99	4.56**	

* This figure does not include applications approved for change of house type.

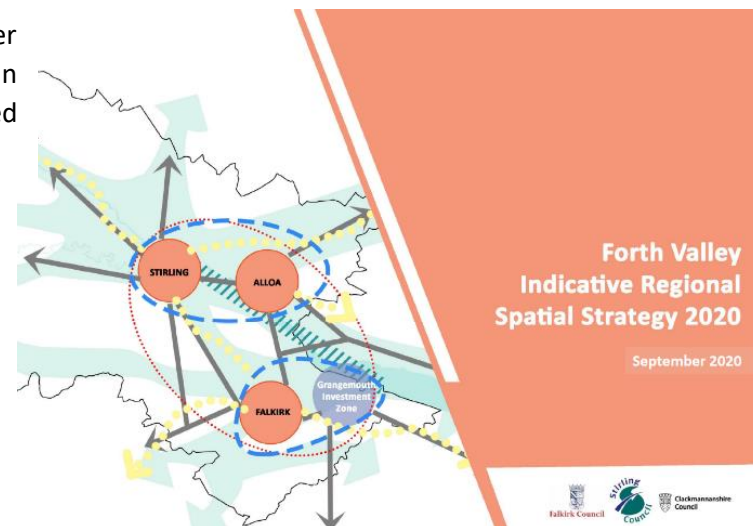
** These figures are from the 2020 Employment Land Audit, which covered the period 1st July 2018 to 30th June 2020. This was to take account of the non-completion of the 2019 audit.

PM13. Sharing Good Practice, Skills and Knowledge between Authorities

2019/20 ● You have not provided any information on how you have worked with other authorities to share and learn from each other. You have provided some examples within your Service Improvements of providing training and awareness raising with elected members and communities.

2020/21 The Council has worked with Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Councils on the preparation of an iRSS for the Forth Valley area, final draft submitted in April 2021, to ensure that our collective interests are properly represented in NPF4. Building on this collaboration, the group meets regularly to discuss LDP work programmes and share ideas, amongst other things.

We are also represented on the Local Place Plan Benchmarking Group, which is facilitated by the Improvement Service, to share best practice in relation to Community Planning.



PM14. Legacy Cases

Indicators & Statistics	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Number of cases cleared during reporting period	13	9	25	11	3	7
Number remaining	32	35	25	21	22	18

2019/20 ● Stirling only cleared 3 cases during the previous reporting year, with 22 cases still awaiting conclusion. This is a slight increase on the figures for 2018/19.

2020/21 A number of legacy cases were cleared within the reporting period via withdrawing of those applications or progressing to a decision. The number of legacy cases at the end of the reporting period is at its lowest level in 6 years. Actions to further reduce legacy cases were hampered by the impacts of Covid. However, going forward a new performance management framework is being put in place to ensure active monitoring of all cases to reduce the number becoming legacy. It is also hoped that a number of legacy cases dating back a significant number of years will also be cleared within 2021/22.

PM15. Developer Contributions

2019/20 ● Last year's report outlined that you had revised your supplementary guidance on developer contributions. It is not clear from your report if this is still in place or if any further revision has been carried out.

● It is not clear from your report how developer contributions are covered during pre-application discussions.

Overall RAG = ●

2020/21 The draft supplementary guidance on developer contributions remains under review. It is expected that a revised draft will be presented to committee later in the year.

To support this, the Council has developed a developer contributions tool, which enables users to insert details about a development's location and size and the tool produces a list of likely contributions. This will be used as part of pre-application discussions, enabling development viability assessments to be undertaken early in the process, and will form the basis for draft Heads of Terms. The tool will be published on the Council's website once the revised Supplementary Guidance is in place.

Case Study 4: Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS)

Quality of Outcomes

Key Markers:	PM2 – Project Management, PM12 – Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit
Key Areas of Work:	Conservation, Regeneration, Design, Town Centres, Collaborative Working, Community Engagement, Placemaking, Economic Development
Lead Officer:	Catherine Malley

Overview:

The Council was successful in its application to Historic Environment Scotland (HES) for Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) funding. A CARS is a five-year HES programme that offers grant funding to support heritage based economic regeneration within Conservation Areas.

Goal:

To deliver heritage-focused community and economic growth projects within projects in the historic Mercat Cross and Old Town area of Stirling City Centre.

Outcome:

The CARS will help deliver key conservation projects at The Stirling Arcade and John Cowane's House. The Stirling Arcade, built in 1881, is one of only five surviving shopping arcades in Scotland and is one of the oldest in Europe. It has been chosen as a CARS project to help sustain and grow its use and viability as a Victorian shopping arcade. John Cowane's House is a category A listed building, and one of the last remaining significant historic structures within Stirling Old town for which no 'new' life and purpose has yet been identified. It is to be restored as a free-entry visitor attraction managed and guided by community volunteers

The key projects will complement and augment the benefits of the City Region Deal and other strategic projects such as Stirling Station Gateway, Sustrans Community Links, and the Forthside Masterplan, to provide economic impacts across the city and across the wider Council area. The proposed Stirling CARS will play a crucial role in this by focussing regeneration along the main routes linking key heritage assets in the city's historic core with its commercial centre.

The Planning Service, in collaboration with other Council services and the local community, played an integral role in preparing the application and securing the bid. The expertise of the Council's Conservation Officer was instrumental in identifying priority projects for key historic buildings as well as training opportunities, adding to the quality of the bid by securing greater outcomes for Stirling's people, built and cultural heritage, and economy.

Case Study 5: Conservation Officers Group

Quality of Outcomes

Key Markers:	PM13 – Sharing Good Practice, Skills and Knowledge between Authorities
Key Areas of Work:	Conservation, Skills Sharing, Design, Collaborative Working
Lead Officer:	Fionn McIntosh

Overview:

Conservation Officers have specialist and detailed knowledge of the Historic Environment but they often work in isolation. Conservation officers from Stirling and Glasgow decided to set up a group for Conservation Officers within Scotland's Local Authorities, working primarily in planning departments, to alleviate that isolation and to enable information sharing. The group is for all officers who undertake historic environment roles in their area regardless of specific job title or any 'conservation' training and skills. The Scottish Traditional Building Forum (STBF) and Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) were both quick to volunteer to assist to help set up the group and the idea gained early support from both the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES).

Membership of the group includes at least one person from each Local Authority in Scotland. Meetings cover Continuing Professional Development, case studies, presentations and discussions. Other organisations i.e., Historic Environment Scotland, Institute of Historic Building Conservation, Association of Local Government Archaeology Officers etc. will be invited to along to certain meetings.

BEFS offered to act as secretariat for the group and secured funding to assist with the formation, set-up and management of the group and 'host', a neutral space for discussion. BEFS are also amenable to hosting an up to date list of all legislation and guidance relevant to Scotland's Historic Environment, all of which would be assisting in setting up the Group without adding to Conservation Officer Workload.

Goal:

The Conservation Officers Group (COG) is primarily for its members to find out who their counterparts in other Council areas are, communicate freely and easily with each other, exchange knowledge, ask for and share information/best practice & advice, discuss conservation issues, offer experience/support etc.



Outcome:

The group is working towards the delivery of the following outcomes:






- Raise the profile and understanding of the work being achieved by building Conservation Officers and the value the role can add to Local Authorities;
- Give more of a voice to the promotion of traditional buildings, their conservation, sustainability, materials, repairs & maintenance etc.;
- Provide an easily accessed online location where recent/relevant documentation and policies can be signposted; and
- Potentially enable group responses to relevant issues, primarily regional or national i.e. National Planning Framework, Local Plans, Historic Environment Scotland's involvement, the current staffing resource, legislation, planning issues etc., where there are collective needs.

Service Improvements

Actions outlined below are integrated actions to enable the service to achieve the goals of the Stirling Council Planning Improvement Plan. Whilst some actions stand alone in progressing the service in a single area, many of the actions are integrated and connected, each progressing the works of the service to achieve wider outcomes of consistency, transparency and reliability.

Our actions remain ambitious for the coming year, such commitments have meant that many areas of action have been partially but not yet fully implemented. Whilst work is ongoing, it is hoped that the steady progression across 6 key areas will achieve an integrated package of improvements that will have a fundamental improvement upon how the service operated internally, and its interaction with others.

Delivery of service improvement actions committed in previous year (2020/21)

Frontloading	Improving Determination Timescales	Meeting Customer Expectations	Minimising Risk	Learning and Development	Placemaking and Collaboration
Commitments and Progress					
Frontloading					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to review opportunities for full or partial cost recovery of the pre-application process for implementation in 2021  - Completed system review and ready to go once vacancies in the team are filled to enable timely provision of costed pre-application service. b. Implement standard conditions for consultees within the development management process  - Conditions have been reviewed but need to complete cross-service collaboration before implementing. 					
Improving Determination Timescales					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Continue to complete each quarter with exception reporting and clockstopping within 2 weeks of close of period  d. Complete protocol for legal and planning services dealing with legal agreements  - Now part of a wider improvement package agreeing Heads of Terms at point of decision-making. e. Establish protocols for extended delegation arrangements including a risk matrix for allocation f. Introduce the Enterprise system to Conservation Officers  					

- g. Implement a scheme of improvements to officer case handling procedures, to be reviewed at the end of the PPF period
● - Seniors Handbook completed and Case Officer Handbook commenced.

Meeting Customer Expectations

- h. Conclude changes to the structure and working practices of Admin Support to develop a Gateway Service in conjunction with Building Standards
●
- i. Hold workshop with Stirling Area Access Panel to strengthen understanding and build positive working relationships
●
- j. Implement new standard conditions
● - Please see comments above under b.
- k. Review/introduce report of handling templates for Certificates of Lawfulness, Prior Notification and Prior Approval
● - Templates complete but not consistently implemented.
- l. Complete and publish good practice guide for range of key issues including: bats and development, flue installation, ancillary accommodation, non-material variations
● - Partially complete but not implemented.
- m. Develop aids to assess proposals in Conservation Areas including flow-charts, templates for pre-app enquiries, including review of conservation area decisions, response times etc.
● - Pending resources available once CARS has commenced.

Minimising Risk

- n. Publish risk register of major environmental projects for publication
● - Complete but not published.
- o. Report and publish s75 register
● - Complete but not published.
- p. Introduce S75 monitoring tracker in collaboration with other Stirling Council departments
● - Register and process established. New Compliance Officer post will undertake regular monitoring.

Learning and Development

- q. Hold an Elected Member briefing session regarding Housing in the Countryside (policy interpretation, design guidance and conditions)
● - Covid-19 Lockdown restrictions inhibiting member training.
- r. Establish CPD feedback protocol to capture and share key learning outcomes
● - Few Learning Sessions have taken place in the Covid-19 period.

- s. Introduce further scrutiny around Scottish Minister decisions, and explore any potential opportunities for Elected Member Briefing Sessions

Placemaking and Collaboration

- t. Develop Forthside masterplan in collaboration with the Key Agencies group
 - - Forthside framework now being developed.
- u. Work with sustainable growth agreement on exemplar environmental standards and vacant and derelict land
 -

Planned Service Improvements in 2021/22

Commitments

Frontloading

- a. Commence pre-application process charging
- b. Implement standard conditions for consultees within the Development Management process

Improving Determination Timescales

- c. Implement new performance framework including weekly exception reporting and monthly officer reviews
- d. Complete protocol for legal and planning services dealing with legal agreements alongside Heads of Terms outlining and process map

Meeting Customer Expectations

- e. Review/introduce report of handling templates for Certificates of Lawfulness, Prior Notification and Prior Approval
- f. Publish Technical Advice Notes for a range of key issues including: bats and development, flue installation

Minimising Risk

- g. Completed officer handbook of end to end process procedure for all applications types
- h. Publish risk register of major environmental projects for publication and review quarterly
- i. Report and publish s75 register and review at quarterly cross-service meeting

Learning and Development

- j. Hold an Elected Member refresher on decision-making
- k. Re-establish Development Management Clinics reviewing practice

Placemaking and Collaboration

- r. Develop Forthside masterplan in collaboration with the Key Agencies group

Workforce Information

Stirling Council Planning Service is a relatively small team split across three key areas of delivery: Development Planning, Development Management and Gateway. The following information is correct as of the end of the PPF reporting period (31st March 2021).

	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				✓	See Appendix 2

Staff Age Profile	Headcount
Under 30	6
30-39	5
40-49	3
50 and over	18
Total	32

	Headcount		FTE	
	RTPI	Total	RTPI	Total
Development Management	8	11	6.4	8.9
Development Planning	4	5	4	5
Enforcement	0	2	0	2
Specialist	1	4	1	2.8
Support	0	10	0	9.3
Total	13	32	11.4	28

Planning Committee Information

Committee & Site Visits	Number per year (2019/20)
Full Council meetings	1
Planning committees	11
Area committees	N/A
Committee site visits	0
Local Review Body	7
Local Review Body site visits	0

Key

Performance Markers

1. Decision-making	2. Processing Agreements	3. Early Collaboration	4. Legal Agreements	5. Enforcement Charter
6. Continuous Improvement	7. Local Development Plan	8. Development Plan Scheme	9. Elected Members engaged early	10. Stakeholders engaged early
11. Regular and Proportionate Advice	12. Corporate working Across services	13. Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge	14. Stalled sites/legacy sites	15. Developer Contributions

Demonstrating a high-quality planning service

A. Quality of Outcomes	B. Quality of Service and Engagement	C. Governance	D. Culture of Continuous Improvement
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✓	Performance meeting target
✗	Performance not meeting target
*	Corrected figure
↗	Performance improving
→	Performance maintained
↘	Performance declining
↑	Number increasing
↓	Number decreasing

The PPF also reports on 'National Headline Indicators' – developed by Heads of Planning Scotland to measure and promote a successful planning service, and 'Official Statistics' – planning authority performance data collected quarterly by the Scottish Government Communities Analysis Division on the detail of planning decisions and timescales.

These indicators and statistics are presented within the PPF with the symbols on the left used to provide additional detail and context.

Appendix 1 – Supporting Evidence

Web Links signposted

Supporting evidence is signposted throughout this PPF Report and has been brought together as a single list here:

Content	Link
Scottish Government Feedback	https://stirling.gov.uk/planning-building-the-environment/planning/planning-performance-framework/
Processing Agreements	https://stirling.gov.uk/planning-building-the-environment/planning/planning-applications/
Stirling Council Enforcement Charter	https://stirling.gov.uk/media/23273/enforcement-charter-2021.pdf
Stirling Local Development Plan 2018	https://www.stirling.gov.uk/planning-building-the-environment/planning/development-planning/local-development-plan-2018/
Supplementary Guidance	https://stirling.gov.uk/planning-building-the-environment/planning/development-planning/supplementary-guidance/
Stirling Council Climate & Nature Emergency Plan 2021-2045	https://stirling.gov.uk/media/23445/2-cane-plan-final-july-2021-low-res.pdf

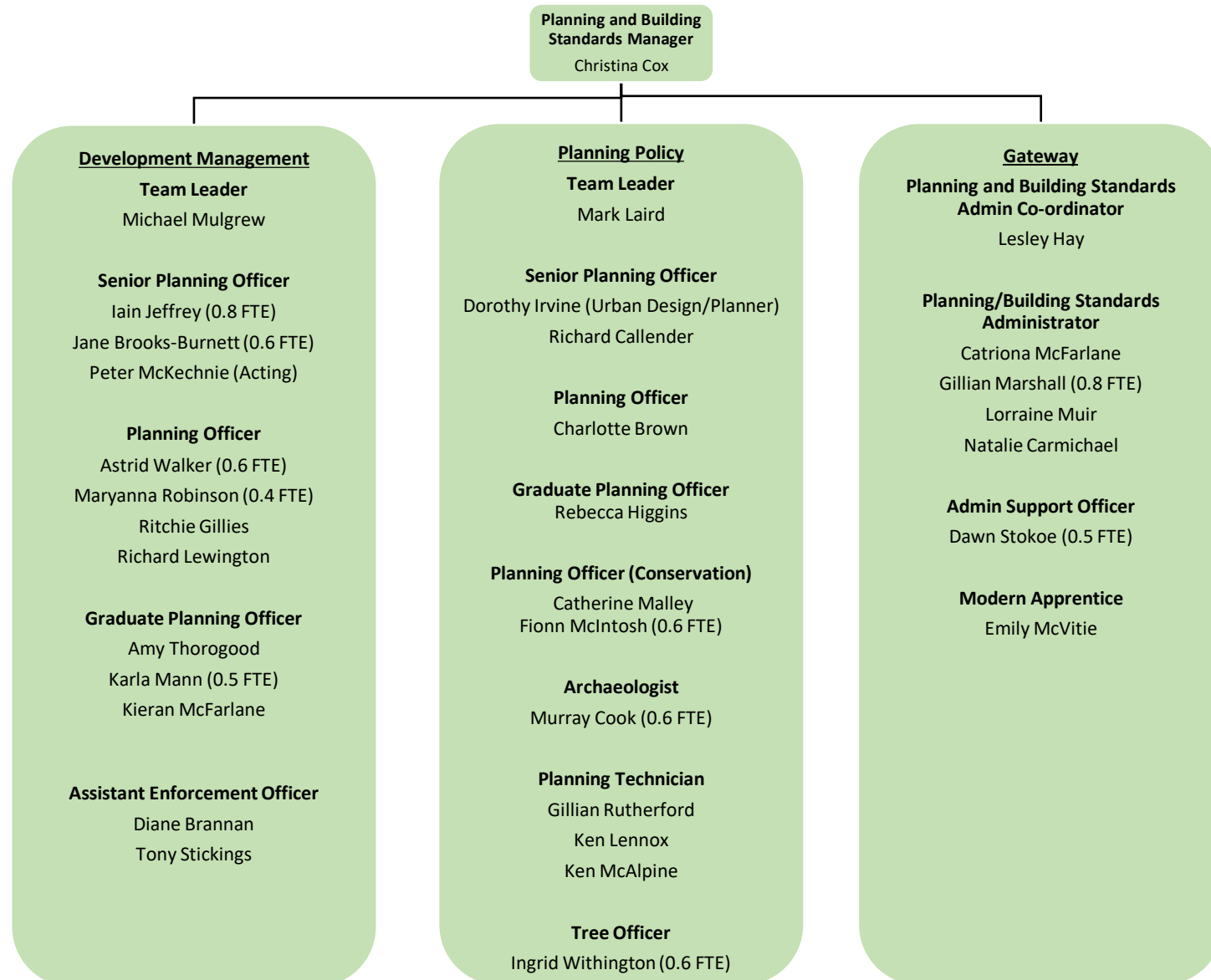
Case Study Overview

This table tracks the case study topics included in the last three PPFs (2019-2021). This is in order to improve the range of case study topics discussed in future PPFs. The PPF10 box references the case study number within this document, as this information shall be collated by HOPS for all local authorities.

Case Study Topics	PPF8	PPF9	PPF10	Case Study Topics	PPF8	PPF9	PPF10	Case Study Topics	PPF8	PPF9	PPF10
Design	✓	✓	4, 5	Economic Development			4	Performance Monitoring			1
Conservation	✓	✓	4, 5	Enforcement			3	Process Improvement	✓		1, 3
Regeneration			4	DM Processes	✓		1, 2	Project Management	✓		2
Environment	✓			Planning Applications			1, 2	Skills Sharing	✓		5
Greenspace	✓			Interdisciplinary Working	✓			Staff Training	✓		3
Town Centres			4	Collaborative Working	✓	✓	4, 5	Online Systems			2
Masterplanning				Community Engagement	✓		4	Transport			
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	✓			Placemaking	✓	✓	4	Active Travel			
Housing Supply				Charrettes				Other: please note			
Affordable Housing				Place Standard				Accessibility			

Appendix 2 – Staff Structure

(as of 31 March 2021)



Further Information

Please contact:

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Formats

Copies of this report are available by request in a range of other languages, large print and on audio tape. To request articles in any of these formats please email or call 0845 277 700



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