

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Planning Performance Framework

No.11 2021/22

From mountain to sea

aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Contents.

2021/22

Please note that this is an interactive document allowing you to link to the associated content from the contents page.

Throughout the document there are also links to other associated documentation specific to text and the case studies. Please click on the Aberdeenshire Council logo in the header of any page to move back to the contents page.

04. Aberdeenshire Council Vision

05. Foreword – Alan Wood – Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services

06. Introduction

07. Summary of Local Development Plan Team Year

08. Summary of Development Management Team Year

09. Summary of Environment/ Specialist Services Team Year

10. Summary of Planning Information and Delivery Team Year

11. Performance Markers – Response to 2020-21 Feedback

12. **Part 1:** Qualitative Narrative Case Studies

13. Quality of Outcomes

26. Quality of Service & Engagement

34. Governance

41. Culture of Continuous Improvement

50. **Part 2:** Supporting Evidence

51. Checklist for Part 1: Qualitative Narrative Case Studies

52. **Part 3:** Service Improvements 2022-23

53. **Part 3A:** In the Coming Year

57. **Part 3B:** Delivery of our Actions and Improvements Committed in 2020-21

Contents.

2021/22

Please note that this is an interactive document allowing you to link to the associated content from the contents page.

Throughout the document there are also links to other associated documentation specific to text and the case studies. Please click on the Aberdeenshire Council logo in the header of any page to move back to the contents page.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 63. Part 4: National Headline Indicators (NHI) | 71. Part 5B: Official Statistics – Decision-making: Local Reviews and Appeals | 84. Part 9: Summary of Key Performance Markers 2021-22 |
| 64. Part 4A: NHI Key Outcomes – Development Planning | 72. Part 5C: Official Statistics Context | |
| 66. Part 4B: NHI Key Outcomes – Development Management | 73. Part 6: Workforce Information | |
| 67. Part 4C: NHI Key Outcomes – Enforcement Activity | 75. Organograms | |
| 69. Part 5: Scottish Government Official Statistics | 79. Part 7: Planning Committee Information | |
| 70. Part 5A: Official Statistics – Decision-making Timescales | 81. Part 8: Feedback from Customers (Complaints, Service Requests and Compliments) | |

Aberdeenshire Council Vision.





Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL 

From mountain to sea

Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

The best area

Helping to create and sustain the best quality of life for all through:

- happy, healthy, confident people
- safe, friendly and lively communities
- an enterprising and adaptable economy
- our special environment and diverse culture

The best council

Aiming to provide excellent services for all by:

- involving, responding and enabling
- finding new and more efficient ways of doing things
- providing elected leadership for our area
- working with our partners in the North East and beyond
- always looking to the future

Foreword.

I am pleased to introduce the 2021/22 Planning Performance Framework, the 11th in a series of annual reports which celebrates the work of the newly created Aberdeenshire Planning and Economy Service across a number of national performance indicators.

The Planning and Economy Service was recently formed following a Council wide Chief Officer review and comprises of Planning, Roads Development, Protective Services and Economic Development. The Service has a critically important role in shaping better quality places across Aberdeenshire, protecting, and enhancing our built and natural environments, engaging with communities, and working with investors to deliver new development to meet the needs of Aberdeenshire's citizens and support our growing economy.

Despite increased application numbers and reduced staffing levels over the last 12 months our culture of continuous improvement and drive to enhance our quality of service has been unwavering. Significant progress has been made in formalising our flexible working practices and streamlining our processes to better suit the

needs of our customers and our teams. We have successfully transitioned to a digitally delivered planning system.

Understanding the needs and experiences of our customers has enabled the Service to forge strong collaborative relationships with our communities, the development industry and investors. This has allowed necessary changes to be made to the way we deliver the planning system in Aberdeenshire leading to the Service maintaining Customer Service Excellence status for the second year running. In terms of service delivery, the collaborative relationships between the Planning and Economy Service, communities, development industry and investors has facilitated the consenting and delivery of important access, regeneration and development programmes as well as progression of the proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 to examination throughout this PPF period. This collaborative approach has been a key driver in the delivery of new homes, business and employment opportunities with the necessary infrastructure to create successful sustainable places and achieve the outcomes set out in the [Council Plan 2020-22](#).



Alan Wood
Director of Environment and
Infrastructure Services

Introduction.

This Planning Performance Framework document should be read in conjunction with the suite of high-level documents that exist for Aberdeenshire Council.

The current [Aberdeenshire Council Plan 2020-22](#) was agreed in October 2020. It is centred around three pillars – Our People, Our Environment and Our Economy.

Within the three pillars are [6 strategic priorities](#) – Education; Health and Well-being; Infrastructure; Resilient Communities; Economy and Enterprise; and Estate Modernisation.

The Council Plan is supported by a number of other [Plans and Reports](#).

The Planning Service now sits within the wider Planning and Economy Service which in turn sits within the [Environment and Infrastructure Services Directorate](#).

The Aberdeenshire [Local Development Plan](#) 2017 and the Aberdeen City and Shire [Strategic Development Plan](#) 2020 remain at the time of reporting significant planning tools which continue to aid the delivery Aberdeenshire-wide and Planning Service objectives.



Kinnaird Head Castle & Lighthouse

Summary of the Local Development Plan Team Year

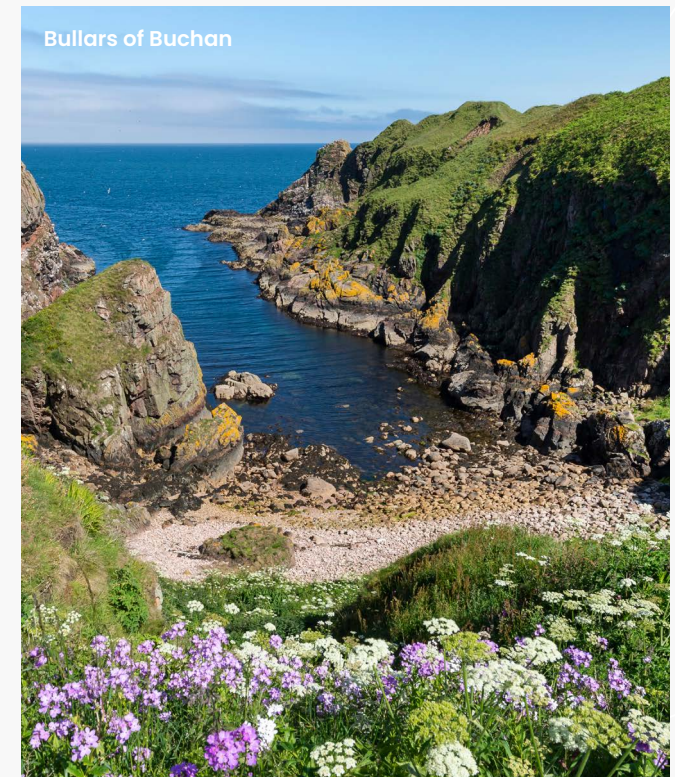
The primary focus of the Local Development Plan Team during the 2021-2022 period was servicing the requirements of the Scottish Government Examination of the Proposed Local Development Plan for the Aberdeenshire area. In response to 1416 submissions on the Proposed Local Development Plan, received in 2020, 58 summaries of issues were prepared within “Schedule 4” documents, and submitted to Ministers on 12 March 2021. On 24 May 2021, Claire Milne was identified as the Lead Reporter, and on the 5 July 2021, the Examination formally started with the conclusion of the examination of conformity with the planning authority’s Participation Statement under Section 19(4) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended). The examination of the Proposed Plan under Section 19(3) commenced on 28 June 2021.

Subsequently 23 Information Requests were made by The Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA) to clarify matters raised in the Proposed Plan. In the interests of a rapid resolution to the Examination each information request, after both internal and external consultations had been undertaken, were responded to within the deadlines set by the DPEA. Nine informal information requests were also serviced. A response to the Proposed Plan from the DPEA was received in late June 2022.

In May 2021, concurrent with the programme of servicing the Examination, work was undertaken to update and enhance all of the current portfolio of Planning Advice to reflect the terms of the emerging plan. 24 pieces of advice were either reviewed or replaced with guidance that can be used to support the emerging plan. All of these were subjected to targeted stakeholder engagement and endorsement by key groups, including elected members. Only one of these remains to be completed and this relates to advice on the sensitivity of Aberdeenshire’s landscapes to wind turbines.

Significant assistance has also been given to other Services, including a major contribution to the assessment and resolution of projected education estate capacity issues within South Formartine.

Last, but not least, the Local Development Plan Team engaged internally and prepared responses to two major pieces of draft Scottish Government Policy; The Development Plan Regulations and Guidance, and the Guidance on Open Space Audits and Play Space Sufficiency Assessments. Detailed comments were also fed into the Council’s Submission to [Draft National Planning Framework 4](#).



Summary of Development Management Team Year

Development Management Team has continued to support the economic climb out of the pandemic to recovery in the north-east through continuing to provide a full service to its customers and their communities. The focus over the last year has been to continue and improve business continuity and build upon the expertise accrued to digitally deliver the service. Flexible working practices have been able to evolve to allow choices for both staff and customers. Hybrid ways of working have become more prevalent as real time site visits have increased as have options to work back in offices.

Throughout the year the key focus for staff has been retaining strong lines of communication with the customer. Complicit in providing an enhanced service, in addition to communication, has been continued relationship building and collaboration with customers, communities and investors. Reflective of this approach the Service retained their accreditation to Customer Service Excellence (CSE) (see [Case Study 17 – Culture of Continuous](#)

[Improvement](#)).

Challenges have remained around recruitment, although some vacancies have been filled during the reporting year. There has been a significant increase in the number of planning applications received and made valid in the reporting year and there have been elements of impact on overall performance given staffing levels. Notwithstanding, the number of planning application decisions that have been made has increased compared to 2020-21 and overall, a satisfactory level of performance has been achieved.

As always enhancement and improvement of service delivery and performance has been on-going. As part of the Continuous Improvement Framework, (see [Case Study 17 – Culture of Continuous Improvement](#)) significant work has been carried out in progressing various improvement projects and achieving a more holistic approach to continuous improvement in general. One such project has been changes to the Scheme of Governance for decision making, (see [Case Study 14 – Governance](#)) which

has now been completed and approved. The Legacy Case focus remains within a refresh of the process and concerted efforts to reduce and prevent legacy cases going forward (see [Case Study 15 – Governance](#)).

Staff development and career progression remains an important part of the service's retention and training strategy and the service training database has continued to be expanded and accessible to all staff. Individual performance and development monitoring is being achieved through the roll out of Personal Performance Plans for all staff.

Collaborative work with other parts of the Environment & Infrastructure Directorate and Area Teams has coincided with various funding streams and bids, levelling up and regeneration projects.

Summary of Environment/Specialist Services Team Year

The Environment and Specialist Services Teams continue to make an important contribution to the quality of design, placemaking, regeneration and environmental and biodiversity agendas through a wide variety of project work, and by providing specialist support to planners and other Council professionals, partners and stakeholders. In 2021/22:

- *Working with other Services, partners and community groups continued to be an important part of our activity.*
- *We continued to review our processes and seek customer feedback to make sure we add value.*
- *We looked at increasing public engagement and how we can best use modern technology to do this.*

Specifically in terms of different strands of our work the main highlights/focus of our work in 2021-2022 were:

Built Environment

Following the successful drawdown of Historic Environment Scotland, Heritage Lottery and other external funding the [Fraserburgh 2021](#) project is nearing

completion. The F2021 Project has been awarded the overall winner for planning excellence as well receiving the award in the best project category at the [Scottish RTPI Planning Excellence Awards](#). The project now goes forward to the National RTPI Awards and Fraserburgh was named most improved town at the 2021 SURF awards.

Elsewhere work is progressing on the vinery project and redevelopment of Macduff Cross, projects that will bring improvements to the built environment and in the case of the vinery work towards addressing social challenges with partners in one of our regeneration towns.

Natural Environment

2021 was challenging with the advent of significant storm events across Scotland. This resulted in significant loss of tree cover and increased workloads for the team as emergency works to trees and subsequent assessment of woodland areas and replanting schemes proved challenging. In addition to this Aberdeenshire Council is actively working to deliver solutions to the climate and biodiversity emergency, through increased woodland and tree cover. Trees

and woodland have a key role in cutting emissions and capturing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Expanding our forests and woodlands with the "right tree in the right place" will contribute to reduced greenhouse gas emissions, allowing an important commercial natural resource to be sustained, enhancing biodiversity, and providing spaces for people to enjoy. Other work included:

- *Funding – external funding was increasingly sought and opportunities maximised to support project delivery;*
- *[Nature](#) – increased focus to work actively across Aberdeenshire's communities on a range of projects that delivered nature restoration, safeguards wildlife and tackles the cause of biodiversity loss, especially climate change;*
- *Access – significant focus to engage and support communities to enhance and improve access provision within their local community.*

Specialist Services

Both [NESBReC](#) & [Archaeology](#) teams agreed Shared Service Agreements with Aberdeen and Moray Councils respectively. These

SSAs build upon the services provided to Authorities for a number of years.

Aberdeenshire's Historic Environment – the "What Does Heritage" mean to you survey – undertaken by the Archaeology Service received 359 responses. It provided good feedback on people's favourite sites in the region and why people enjoy the historic environment, which are all a good basis for the Archaeology Service going forward in terms of what future promotional activities to undertake. One highlight to mention is that in response to a question asking whether heritage and the historic environment make a positive difference to people's lives, 66% responded that they strongly agree it does.

Across the teams all of our work is supported by [strategies](#), action plans and performance indicators, to ensure alignment with national and corporate priorities and that our activities make the best use of resources available, and the teams will continue to educate on, promote, enhance and protect the natural and built environments into 2022-23.

Summary of Planning Information and Delivery Team Year

The Planning Information and Delivery Team (PIDT) has produced its first Team Strategy within the reporting period which will be used to drive the work of the Team over the next 3-years. The Strategy outlines the vision of the Team along with associated aims and objectives. Key priorities for the Team are set around the Council's Strategic Priorities. Monitoring and updates will be provided by way of an Annual Report with a full review scheduled for 2024.

It has been another busy year for the Team. It continues to analyse and present information for Council Services and residents and to facilitate cross-service working across Council Services with particular focus on aiding the progression and delivery of allocated sites identified within the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP).

In addition to the usual reports that are produced on a regular basis, such as the Housing and Employment Land Audits, the

Delivery Programme and various informative bulletins, the Team has undertaken a review of the Town Centre Health Check process. A Case Study entitled "Town Centre Health Checks 2021" is included in the Quality of Service and Engagement Section.

The Team has been involved in responding to several significant consultations, such as on the draft regulations and guidance for future Local Development Plans and has led Aberdeenshire Council's response on the Draft National Planning Framework 4 and the consultation on proposals for regulations for Local Place Plans.

Work has also continued with various regeneration projects including the Bridge Street Public Realm Improvement Project in Banff. A Case Study entitled "Bridge Street Banff Regeneration – Update" is included in the Quality of Outcomes section.

Since the restructuring of the Directorate the inclusion of Economic Development has brought further collaborative input to

a variety of projects and funding initiatives. The Team continues to be involved in the projects associated with the national Levelling Up fund and the joint north-east bid for Green Freeport status.

The Planning Information and Delivery Team continues to work to ensure that decisions are made using best available data and to unlock sites and projects across Aberdeenshire embracing a 'One Council' approach.

Performance Markers

Response from 2020-2021 Feedback

This section relates to the RAG ratings feedback received from the Scottish Government on the previous PPF 10 (2020-21). In relation to PPF10, 1 out of the 15 Key Performance Marker areas was awarded an amber rating with the rest awarded green ratings. The one amber rating was Stalled Sites/Legacy Cases. This is summarised below and reported back with a response for 2021-22 (see also [Part 3A – Development Management Team](#), in relation to commitments for the coming year).

2020-21 Performance Marker	Feedback and RAG RATING from 2020-21 – Amber	2021-22 Response
<p>14. Stalled sites / legacy cases: Conclusion/withdrawal of planning applications more than one-year-old (reducing number of applications more than one-year-old from the same time last year).</p>	<p>You have cleared 58 cases during the reporting year; 42 remain which is a slight increase since last year. Report acknowledges that progress on reducing legacy cases has been affected by the pandemic.</p>	<p>The reporting of these cases remains figures based rather than how such cases are project managed. Due to the continued Covid-19 pandemic during the reporting period, the focus on planning application decision making has continued to be centred around ensuring business continuity and meeting customer care objectives.</p> <p>Despite the challenges, there have been continued efforts across the Development Management Service and the Legacy Group to progress stalled/legacy cases to determination where possible. This was especially so in recognition of the fact that the number of legacy cases was rising during the reporting period. Case Study 15 (Aberdeenshire Council Legacy Strategy) in the Governance section of this PPF outlines the work, and also the re-focus on the operation and purpose of the Legacy Group. In this respect, a total of 51 stalled/legacy applications were cleared with 31 of these the subject of a PPA. The number cleared through the reporting year is marginally less than the number cleared in 2020-21 but with the re-focus of the Legacy Group and a priority being given to certain types of application, 24 cases were concluded in February and March 2022 alone. However, with the continued backlog that continued to be created due to the pandemic and other factors, including an overall increase in numbers of applications received which impacted on capacity of staff, a total of 52 cases remained at the end of March 2022. This is an increase of 10 from the end of March 2021. 23 of these have PPAs in place.</p> <p>Case Study 15 evidences the re-focussing of the Legacy Group and its work in trying to prioritise and progress legacy case applications to their conclusion and use of project management tools where possible and appropriate.</p>

Part 1:

Qualitative Narrative Case Studies



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Craigievar Castle

Quality of Outcomes

Case Studies

1. **Aberdeenshire Council Planning Performance in Development Management 2021-22**
2. **Aberdeenshire Council Planning Performance – Major Applications – 2021-22**
3. **Bridge Street Banff Regeneration – Update**
4. **John Trail Hotel (Fraserburgh 2021)**
5. **The Vinery Banff**
6. **Providing for Nesting Swifts in the Built Environment**
7. **Land at Ury Estate Stonehaven – Erection of 6 Pump Petrol Filling Station (APP/2022/0564)**

Fettercairn Distillery

Case Study 1.

Aberdeenshire Council Planning Performance in Development Management 2021-22

Location and Dates:

Aberdeenshire Council,
April 2021 – March 2022

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

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

Key Markers:

- 1 – Decision-making
- 12 – Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

Key Areas of Work:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Performance Monitoring
- Project Management

Stakeholders Involved:

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

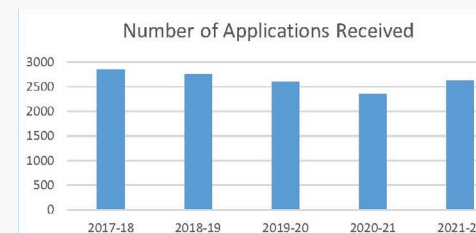
Overview:

Throughout the majority of the PPF reporting year, as a result of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, the focus on development management performance remained with ensuring business continuity but also focussed on maintaining a good level performance and customer care. All Development Management staff have primarily continued to work from home for office based tasks. Despite the continuing challenges, which also included recruitment and staff capacity challenges, the overall performance levels in relation to planning application decision timescales, while in some categories slower, have been maintained at a reasonable level. The use of Planning Processing Agreements (PPAs) have continued to be used though to project management cases where delays were occurring due to the challenges faced by all parties involved in planning application assessment and determination processes.

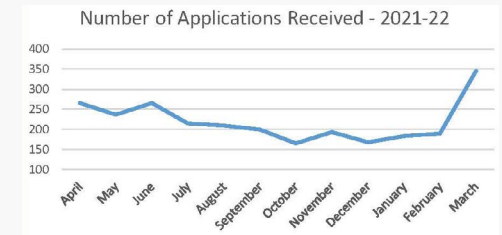
The feedback on last year's PPF provided an overall green rating in the decision-making key marker category. In 2020-21, Major applications (10.9 average weeks) were faster than the previous year and were faster than the Scottish average of 41.3 weeks. As such a green rating was given. Local (non-householder) applications (10 average weeks) were marginally slower than

the previous year but they were faster than the Scottish average of 12.4 weeks. An amber rating was given. Householder applications (7.8 average weeks) were marginally slower than the previous year but were faster than the Scottish average (8.1 weeks) and still within the statutory timescale of 8 weeks. As such a green rating was given.

The total [number of applications received and made valid](#) increased to 2633 compared to the 2352 received and validated the previous year and reflected the increased economic activity that occurred as the pandemic eased and processes adapted. The numbers per month fluctuated with greater numbers received and validated in the Spring of 2021 but then also a significant increase in March 2022 as a result of the impending Planning Fee increases introduced on 1 April 2022.



Over the reporting year, including applications that used a PPA, 2329 planning applications were determined. For 2020-21 this figure was 2036.



Performance in Major applications is reported in more detail in [Case Study 2](#). A total of 16 applications for major development were determined 7 of which were not the subject of a PPA. The average weeks total taken for these 7 applications is 49.4 weeks. Last year there was only 1 Major application out of 7 that was determined without a PPA or within the statutory 4 months. The average weeks taken last year was therefore 10.9 weeks.

Performance in [Local \(non-householder\) application decision-making](#) has fallen but is still considered to be maintained at a reasonable level taking account of the challenges faced. Last year, 73% of applications were determined in less than 2 months. This year the percentage figure is 61.9%. In terms of average weeks, the figure last year was 10 weeks. This year the figure is 12.9 weeks. This 12.9 weeks figure while slower than the previous year, is only marginally slower than the national average weeks figure of 12.4 weeks recorded for 2020-21.

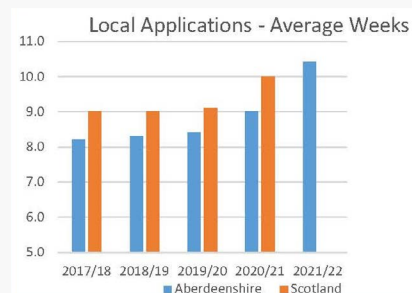
Performance in [Householder application decision-making](#) has dropped marginally in terms of percentage of applications determined within 2 months. Last year the figure was 91%. This year the figure is 88.2%. In terms of average weeks taken though compared to last year the figure is exactly the same at 7.8 weeks. At 7.8 average weeks this remains quicker than the national average weeks timescale of 8.1 week reported in 2020-21 and it remains faster than the statutory timescale of 8 weeks.

[Rates of approval and delegation](#) continue to remain consistently high with 95% of applications approved and 93.9% of applications decided through delegated powers. This reporting year there has been a review of the Scheme of Governance/Powers of Delegation to Officers and this is the subject of a [Case Study](#) under the Governance Section of this PPF. In terms of all [local developments](#), (excluding those on PPAs) in 2020-21, 81.4% were

decided in less than 2 months, equating to 9 average weeks timescales. In 2021-22, 74.4% of all local development applications (excluding those on PPAs) were decided in less than two months, with the average weeks timescales being 10.4 weeks.

Goals:

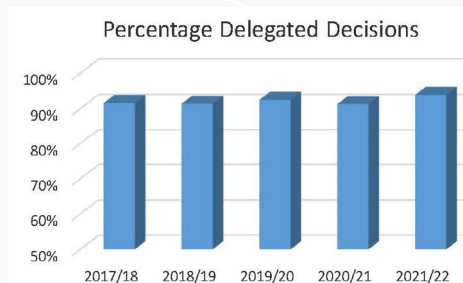
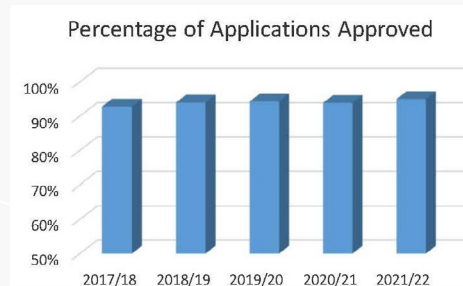
Due to the continued impact of the Covid-19



making timescales key marker areas, while slower in some categories, are regarded as satisfactory, particularly taking into account the challenges faced as a result of the pandemic for all parties that contribute to the development management process and those faced in terms of recruitment and staff capacity over the reporting year.

Name of key officer

Neil C Stewart - Team Manager



pandemic, the main focus remained achieving business continuity but at the same time maintaining a reasonable level of performance in relation to performance indicators while still seeking quality outcomes and maintaining a quality customer service.

Outcomes:

The figures achieved, in relation to the decision-



Balmoral Castle, Ballater

Case Study 2.

Aberdeenshire Council Planning Performance

– Major Applications 2021-22

Location and Dates:

Aberdeenshire Council,
April 2021 – March 2022

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

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

Key Markers:

1 – Decision-Making
12 – Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

Key Areas of Work:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement
- Project Management

Stakeholders Involved:

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

Overview:

Case Study 1 focusses on Aberdeenshire Council's overall performance primarily on local and other development types.

The Scottish Government Statistics ([Part 5 of this PPF](#)) provides details of the number of Major applications determined in the reporting year but excludes those that were the subject of Planning Processing Agreements (PPAs). While PPAs are promoted for all Major applications of the [16 Major applications](#) determined in this reporting year 9 were the subject of a PPA and 7 were not. Of the 7 applications not on a PPA, 2 applications were determined within the statutory 4 month determination period. For the 7 applications not on a PPA, the average weeks timescale recorded is [49.4 weeks](#). This is slower than the 10.9 weeks figure recorded in 2020-21 but the 2020-21 figure related to only one Major application out of the 7 determined not being on a PPA. The contributory factor to the higher 49.4 weeks figure this year though relates to the determination of 1 significant and complex legacy case application dating from 2018 ([APP/2018/1814](#)) which took 177.7 weeks. This was for 550 houses, community facilities, shops etc. at Land at Menie Estate Balmedie.

For those Major applications that used a PPA all 9 were determined within their agreed PPA timescales. Of these 9 applications, 5 were legacy cases of a complex nature and this

reflects the priority to determine such cases – one of which dated from 2016.

Two applications that were not the subject of a PPA were determined within the 4 month statutory determination period (these included Committee processes). These were:

[APP/2021/1949](#) – Polytunnels at Fettercairn
[APP/2021/2284](#) – Variation of Conditions at Landfill Site Balmedie

The use of PPAs is promoted for all major applications and the use of these has continued to prove useful as a project management tool in those where PPAs were agreed.

Summary breakdown of all Major Applications is below:

16 – total number issued during the reporting period

9 – number project managed with use of a PPA

9 – number issued within the agreed PPA timescale

7 – number issued with no PPA

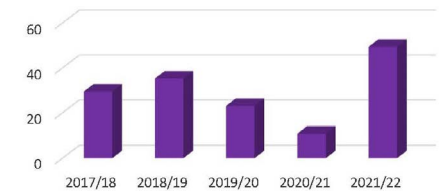
5 – number issued with no PPA (beyond statutory 4 month determination period)

2 – number issued with no PPA (within statutory 4 month determination period)

Goals:

The Planning and Economy Service continues to try to demonstrate a

Major Applications - Average Weeks



commitment to maintaining and improving performance in the quantitative and qualitative elements of the assessment and determination of Major planning applications through the use of project management tools, collaborative working, and improving pre-application discussions.

Outcomes:

The use of PPAs, as a project management tool, for all Major applications continues to be promoted. The number of Major applications determined was greater than in previous years and there has been a priority to determine complex legacy cases in this category. Of the 16 major applications determined (with or without a PPA) 6 were legacy cases. The overall average figure at 49.4 weeks (those not on a PPA) is greater than in previous years but the main contributory factor here is 1 complex legacy application that took 177.7 weeks to determine.

Name of key officer

Neil C Stewart – Team Manager

Case Study 3.

Bridge Street Banff Regeneration – Update

Location and Dates:

Bridge Street, Banff – June 2016 – ongoing throughout reporting period

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

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers:

12 – Corporate working across services

Key Areas of Work:

- Design
- Conservation
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Town Centres
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Placemaking

Stakeholders Involved:

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Private Sector Architects

Overview:

This case study is a follow on from [Case Study 4, Page 20 of PPF 9 \(2019-20\)](#). Since 2017, the Planning Information & Delivery Team (PIDT) has been leading a public realm improvement project for Bridge Street and Bridge Street car park, Banff.

The PIDT coordinated the production of an Options Appraisal and subsequent Design Statement undertaken by external consultants and engineers and with input from relevant colleagues in planning, roads development, roads safety, flood prevention, car parking, lighting and roads policy.

In May 2019, the project was successful in being awarded £709,030 from the Scottish Government through the Aberdeenshire Town Centre Fund. The PIDT proceeded with submitting a [planning application](#), co-ordinating the detailed/technical designs with input from an external consultant and all the relevant services within Aberdeenshire Council.

The project received planning approval on the 20 December 2019 and was put out to tender on Public Contracts Scotland in February 2020, however an appointment could not be made due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The project was re-tendered in February 2021 and Hunters Construction (Aberdeen) Ltd were appointed to undertake the construction of the scheme.



Bridge Street Banff – Before

Construction started in May 2021 and concluded in February 2022.

Goals:

The aim of the project is to regenerate this area of lower Banff which has been identified as a priority regeneration area. The goal is to improve the environment of Bridge Street and make it more attractive for businesses, visitors and residents. The main issues that were considered for the Bridge Street improvements included street lighting, drainage, pedestrian/traffic conflicts and general appearance.

Embracing “One Aberdeenshire” principles, this project is part of a multi-faceted approach to regeneration involving all relevant services as well as external stakeholders.

The PIDT were responsible for managing the project from concept to design stages, identifying and securing funding, progressing through planning, detailed design and tender phases, and managing the project through the construction phase. The Teams’ involvement will continue throughout the 12-month maintenance period.

Case Study 3.

Bridge Street Banff Regeneration – Update

Outcomes:

Throughout the reporting period the construction of the scheme has been ongoing with Hunters Construction as the main contractor. The construction faced the twin challenges of Brexit and ongoing restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic; however, difficulties were overcome and the construction proceeded without any major issues, albeit slower than anticipated.

The main issue was the delivery of the stone which was being shipped from Portugal. The extra customs checks and lack of delivery drivers meant that shipments were delayed by weeks in some cases. Careful management of the phasing of the works was required to ensure that delayed stone deliveries did not result in works being put on hold.

The on-site works were managed on a day-to-day basis by two Aberdeenshire Council Roads Engineers who took on the roles of Project Manager and Site Supervisor as per NEC4 contract definitions. It is hoped that the skills obtained throughout this unique project will benefit Aberdeenshire Council's Roads Department in future projects and schemes.

Additional funding was sought during this period as a result of higher costs of materials and unforeseen expenses and a

total of £105,155 was awarded through the Place Based Investment Fund, bringing the total budget to £814,185. The management of the budget was the responsibility of the PIDT.

As the whole street was required to be closed for the duration of the works, liaison with residents and businesses was essential and Hunters appointed a 'Community Liaison Officer' as a point of contact for any queries. During the overall project, the PIDT have been actively engaged with the general public as well as Local Members and senior management, regularly communicating updates and managing enquiries. This contact will continue throughout the 12-month maintenance period to ensure snagging issues are identified and resolved.

During the works, the PIDT had regular communication with utility companies and helped co-ordinate upgrades to their assets. Scottish Water replaced several lead and copper water pipes, SGN replaced several inadequate gas connections and BT also took the opportunity to replace some of their assets. This was an added benefit that came from opening the whole street as this work might not otherwise have been undertaken for some time.

Following completion of the Street works, the adjacent car park was levelled, resurfaced, spaces were demarcated including disabled



Bridge Street Banff – After

spaces, and lighting and a new perimeter fence was installed. The previous car park was under-utilised, and it is hoped that this new parking area will reduce pressure for the demand for on street parking on Bridge Street and the wider Town Centre. The car park will remain free to use.

Name of key officer

Kirsty Black – Project Co-ordinator

Case Study 4.

John Trail Hotel (Fraserburgh 2021)

Location and Dates:

Fraserburgh 2020 – 2021

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

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers:

12 – Corporate working across services

Key Areas of Work:

- Conservation
- Regeneration
- Town Centres
- Placemaking
- Collaborative Working

Stakeholders Involved:

- General Public
- Authority Planning Staff
- Key Agencies

Overview:

The Regeneration Strategy for Aberdeenshire 'From Strategy to Action: Developing Excellence in our North Coast Communities 2016' identified Fraserburgh as one of four northern towns in Aberdeenshire earmarked for regeneration and was highlighted as the location of highest priority by Aberdeenshire Council. [The Fraserburgh Regeneration Action Plan 2016-2021](#) highlighted eight action themes, and the strategic priorities included enterprise, skills/education, environment,

and the town centre. The Fraserburgh 2021 (F2021) CARS/TH heritage led regeneration project was an integral strand of the overall regeneration effort in Fraserburgh and was initiated, led and managed by planners within the Planning Service.

A key driver of the scheme was to bring derelict and under-utilised historic buildings within the town centre back into active use. The John Trail was identified during the development phase of the F2021 project as a key historic building within the town centre, which was sitting in a derelict and dilapidated condition. The stakeholder consultation undertaken as part of the scheme's development identified a need

for more hotel accommodation in the town centre for visitors and tourists, with a key aim to promote and keep people within the town centre environment.

The F2021 project facilitated a feasibility study into the viability of a hotel in Fraserburgh and identified a new owner for the John Trail building in the form of the Northeast of Scotland Preservation Trust (NESPT). It further enabled a multi-agency partnership-funded approach. With funding from Aberdeenshire Council, Historic Environment Scotland, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, Place Based Investment Fund, Scottish Town Centre Fund, and Architectural Heritage Fund. This project

ultimately led to the restoration and refurbishment of the John Trail building into a boutique hotel ready for an operator. A planning application was granted for the works under application reference [APP/2019/1398](#).

Goals:

The John Trail Hotel project delivers on the Council's regeneration strategy in terms of improving the town centre environment and the economic viability of the place. Bringing a vacant building back into use and providing hotel accommodation to encourage visitors to come and stay within the town centre of Fraserburgh. The John Trail building is situated on Mid Street in the heart of Fraserburgh town centre. The Council took the regeneration strategy focus on Fraserburgh but recognised the placemaking qualities of the historic environment and its ability to instil local pride in a central location within the Conservation Area and stimulate economic prosperity.

The Planning Service took a lead role in a prolonged exercise over several years to secure the ownership of the John Trail building, which due to complex reasons had no registered owner. Without the Planning Service utilising the legislative tools available to it, to facilitate the transfer of ownership to a viable organisation the project would not have been possible.



John Trail – Before

Case Study 4.

John Trail Hotel (Fraserburgh 2021)

The John Trail Hotel project is a physical embodiment of how successful heritage led regeneration schemes can be achieved by delivering a project in line with the Historic Environment Policies laid out in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017.

Specifically in relation to Policy HE2 Protecting historic and cultural areas – the John Trail was a significant, historic building situated on Mid Street. The architectural team appointed were experienced not only in conservation but also sustainability. This experience helped deliver a project which was sensitive to the traditional and historic nature of the building, with the external treatments following best practice guidance from Historic Environment Scotland in their Managing Change Guidance Notes. This ultimately ensured the team delivered a project which retained and enhanced the character and appearance of the building and the wider Fraserburgh Town Centre Conservation Area.

Outcomes:

The John Trail building has been fully conserved externally to the highest conservation standards based on evidential information in relation to the slate roofing, lead work, lime pointing, masonry repairs, replacement sash and case windows and restoration of lost architectural elements such as the dormer details and traditional shop frontages. The honesty and integrity

of the restoration has helped differentiate the various phasing of the building and enhanced the street scene dramatically in that area. The property acts as an exemplar of Historic Environment Planning Policy in action and will be utilised as an example of a good quality conservation project in the town.

A small but sensitively designed extension to the rear has facilitated additional accommodation but the material palette has ensured it does not distract from the historic nature of the settlement.

Internally the property was in a significant state of decay following a fire and years of bird infestation, water ingress and neglect. This left greater scope for interior alterations and the building now accommodates an 11-bedroom hotel with a reception area, kitchen and restaurant. The property is currently being marketed for a commercial operator.

Not originally part of the scheme the Clydesdale Building, which is category 'B' listed and immediately adjacent to the John Trail Hotel, became vacant. The North East Scotland Preservation Trust have acquired this building and are planning to increase the scale of the hotel offering. This would not have been achievable without the initial John Trail Hotel project. They are currently in the process of securing funding and this

is a good example of how positive change can act as a catalyst for further positive development.

The John Trail Hotel project was visited by the panel as part of the SURF awards 2021 judging in which Fraserburgh was awarded 'Most Improved Place in Scotland'.

Name of key officer

Cheryl Roberts
Fraserburgh 2021 Project Coordinator



John Trail – After

Case Study 5.

The Vinery, Banff

Location and Dates:

Airlie Gardens, Banff
April 2021 – June 2022

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

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers:

12 – Corporate working across services

Key Areas of Work:

- Conservation
- Regeneration
- Town Centres
- Collaborative Working
- Placemaking

Stakeholders Involved:

- General Public
- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

The Vinery was a building which had been in a poor and uninhabitable condition for a number of years. This Category B listed building is part of the Common Good estate and situated on the edge of the town centre of Banff, within the town's Conservation Area and is on the Buildings at Risk Register of Scotland.



Vinery Banff – before

The project has developed in response to a decline in the physical appearance of the Vinery coupled with the identified social regeneration needs of the town, whilst also being shaped by community input. Community consultation was carried out in October 2018 to identify the preferred use for the site – horticulture. The use and design of the building were developed on this basis and throughout, the community have been involved with ongoing discussions on the use, operation and operator chosen for the site.

Following an original approval under planning application reference [APP/2020/0614](#) and an amended design approval under planning application [APP/2021/1192](#) and following delays due to Covid-19, works started on site in April 2021 to see the restoration of the buildings into an area which is flexible, able to be used as both a community space within the bothy as well as a growing space within the gardens and vinery.

Funding was sought from the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, with further funding from the Town Centre Fund and Aberdeenshire Council to bring the buildings back into use with the use of traditional materials and methods of working.

Goals:

The work carried out at the Vinery is in line with the Historic Environment Policies as set out in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017.

Policy HE1 Protecting historic buildings, sites and monuments – The Vinery, bothy and turret were all in a poor condition and were requiring substantial investment. The work currently being carried out is to the highest quality and respects the original structure and materials.

Policy HE2 Protecting historic and cultural areas – the restoration of The Vinery enhances both the character and appearance of the Banff Conservation Area due to its prominent position. The highest standards of conservation practice and quality design have been used throughout the restoration.

Policy HE3 Helping to reuse listed buildings at risk – The Vinery has been on the Buildings at Risk Register and in a derelict condition for many years. These works have saved the

Case Study 5.

The Vinery, Banff

building from being lost due to its unstable condition and its risk of vandalism.

In terms of social and community goals the project also aimed to target barriers to employment and poverty by providing training, work experience and building confidence for local people and improve mental and physical health and wellbeing by developing new opportunities linked to the local environment. In addition there were aims to improve social capital by bridging the generation gap and building a greater sense of community pride in one of Banff's prominent sites and boost the economy by growing and developing products that can attract tourists and local shoppers alike.

Outcomes:

Construction works are almost complete at the site, with a completion date of June 2022, after which Aberdeen Foyer take on the lease for The Vinery.

Aberdeen Foyer has successfully gained funding for 5 temporary part time posts at The Vinery for people who have been long term unemployed. They intend to run their employability outreach services from the building there and have also been actively reaching out to existing community groups, businesses and schools in the Banff area to develop partnership working opportunities, with an emphasis on gardening and growing.



Vinery Banff – nearing completion

Aberdeen Foyer recently held a Wellbeing Week in the town as an introduction to the services they will provide at The Vinery and this included cooking, yoga and mindfulness. There is a community opening event planned for August 2022.

The project will see a listed building removed from the buildings at risk register and brought back into productive community use. It will also see the gardens which have been underused gradually becoming maintained by the Aberdeen Foyer and community groups. The site is located at

the entrance to the town and was derelict creating an eyesore. It is hoped that the restored site will give a good first impression of the town.

Name of key officer

Yvonne Tough – Environment Planner

Case Study 6.

Providing for Nesting Swifts in the Built Environment

Location and Dates:

Various sites in Huntly, Kintore and Inverurie
2021-22

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

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers:

- 3 – Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
- 12 – Corporate working across services

Key Areas of Work:

- Design
- Conservation
- Environment
- Collaborative Working

Stakeholders Involved:

- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff

Overview:

Development Management Planners and Environment Planners have been working with private developers, Council Housing Officers and local interest group [Huntly and District Swift Group](#) to secure existing swift nest sites and provide new nesting sites during new build and renovation projects, where appropriate. The steps to this project are as follows: –

1. Use existing data on known nest sites to ensure developers are aware of known constraints as early in a scheme's development as possible. An important step in securing existing swift nesting colonies is collating and sharing data on existing sites and this has been achieved by incorporating data on nesting sites into reports provided by [North East Scotland Biological Records Centre](#) (NESBReC) on planning applications.
2. Where nest sites are identified in buildings with planning proposals which may have an impact on colonies, Environment Planners and Development Management Planners have engaged with Local Developers and local swift group members aiming to secure good outcomes for swifts. Current sites include The Foundry in Inverurie, The Cruickshank Building in Huntly and Kintore Town House.
3. Securing sites to provide new nesting provision in areas with potential for swifts to use new sites, with sites currently at Osprey Heights in Inverurie and new Social Housing in Huntly.
4. Working with voluntary local wildlife recorders to record and send records to NESBReC on locations of existing sites to support information provided to Planners.

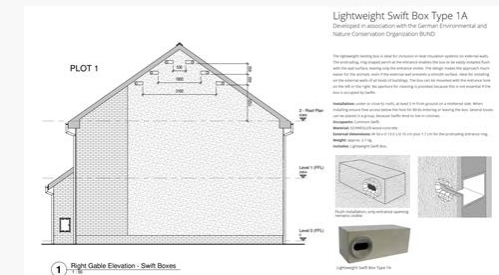
Goals:

This work supports implementation of Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Policy EI – Natural Heritage and PI – Layout Siting and Design (biodiversity enhancement). Swifts have recently been added to the red list of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC 5) and retaining and securing existing nest sites is key to their conservation going forward.

Outcomes:

1. Securing existing colonies. The three current schemes in existing buildings are at various stages of progress from recent approval (Kintore Town House) to renovation (Cruickshank and The Foundry). The local swift group continue to have interest in these projects and will assist with long term monitoring.
2. Enhancement. For enhancement in new build projects listed above approval is granted and the local swift group will assist with monitoring success post construction.
3. Action is secured by inclusion in Species Protection Plans (secured by condition) and by inclusion of details in approved plans. Case studies from these projects, when completed, will be shared with Planners to raise awareness and provide working examples.

4. NESBReC is working with local volunteer recorders to expand the knowledge of existing swift nest sites so data is available for future projects.



Swift Brick Installation in Housing in Huntly



Name of key officer

Emma Williams – Environment Planner

Case Study 7.

Land At Ury Estate, Stonehaven – Erection of 6 Pump Petrol Filling Station (APP/2022/0564)

Location and Dates:

December 2021 to May 2022,
Ury Estate, Stonehaven

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

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers:

- 1 – Decision making
- 3 – Early collaboration with applicants and consultees
- 12 – Corporate working across services

Key Areas of Work:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working

Stakeholders Involved:

- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

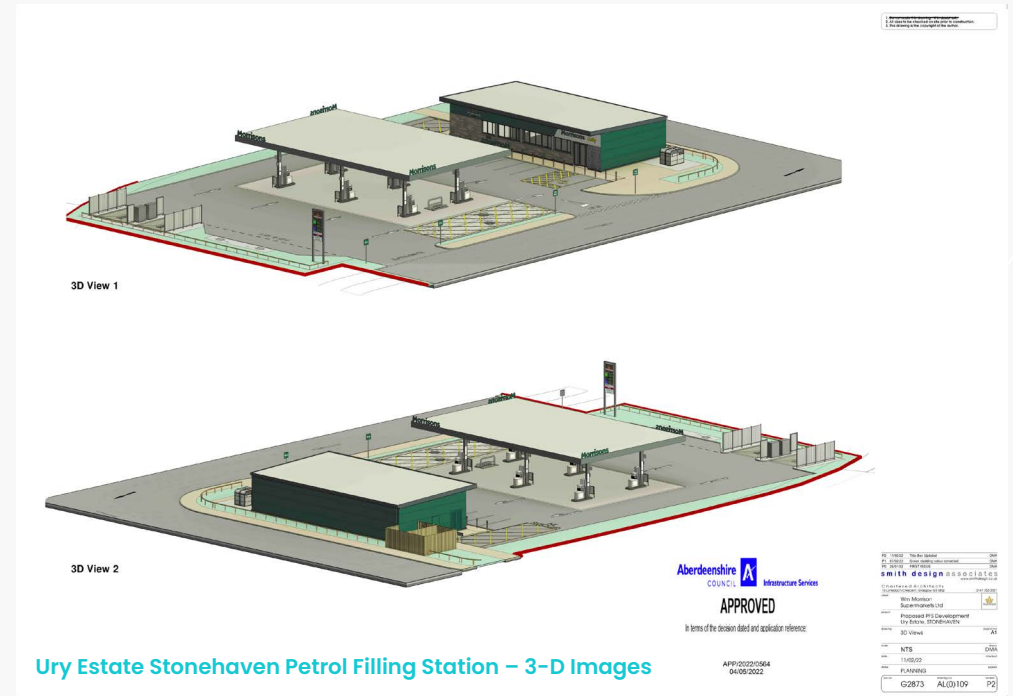
There are significant ongoing developments at Ury Estate on the edge of Stonehaven, including a consented major development for a supermarket, the developers for which proposed to add a petrol filling station (PFS).

Pre-application advice was sought for the PFS on 16th December 2021. Consultation was undertaken with 7 different key consultees. A Pre-application response from the Planning Service was provided to the developer on 6th January 2022, summarising the responses from consultees, setting out the requirements for supporting information to accompany any future application, giving a clear steer on required amendments to the initially submitted design/detail, and identifying the relevant policies and likely outcome of any future application.

Further engagement on the scope of some supporting information was undertaken before a planning application for the PFS was submitted on 30th March 2022. ([APP/2022/0564](#)).

There was a considerable amount of public interest, with 46 valid public comments received.

Following the detailed pre-application discussion and response that took place, consultees responded in a timely manner with only one issue arising which was resolved via the Planning Service's request for information from the applicant and subsequent further pro-active and efficient engagement with the consultee.



Ury Estate Stonehaven Petrol Filling Station – 3-D Images

The application was then determined under the Council's Scheme of Governance, with the application recommended for approval to Local Councillors on 26th April 2022. Following their agreement that officers could use their powers of delegation to determine the application, the final grant of permission was issued on 4th May 2022, 5 weeks after validation of the application.

Goals:

It was considered that, while the development in itself was not overly significant in scale and type, it was an important one in the community and as such it may generate public interest and would require the input and agreement of a number of consultees. The goal was therefore to engage pro-actively with stakeholders through the pre-

Case Study 7.

Land At Ury Estate, Stonehaven – Erection of 6 Pump Petrol Filling Station (APP/2022/0564)

application service in order to set out clearly requirements and identify issues, all with a view to receiving a comprehensive submission that could be considered, assessed and determined efficiently and with a positive quality outcome.

Outcomes:

This Case Study demonstrates that with the positive engagement of stakeholders including consultees and the Planning Service at the pre-application stage, in order to analyse and set out clear expectations, and identify issues and processes, a good quality and efficient outcome can be achieved. It demonstrates the benefits of collaborative working and good processes, and that important developments that could have complex matters to resolve can be dealt with in an efficient timeous manner.

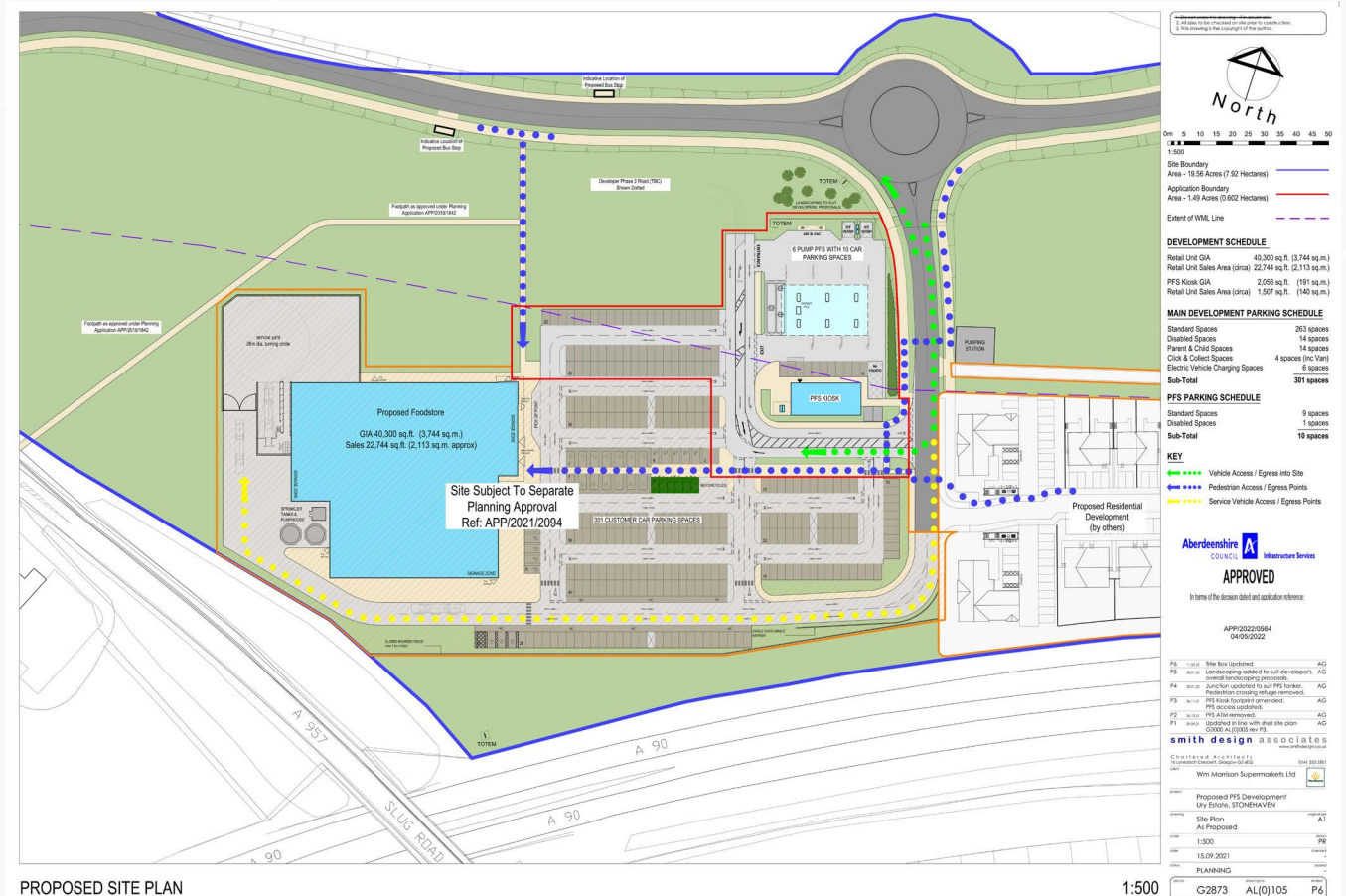
“Very efficient service from planning officers – an engaged pre-application process with direct contact with the case officer resulted in us being able to work together to deal with the planning issues upfront. The planning application that followed was validated quickly given the pre-application feedback received.

The officer dealt with the application expeditiously and diligently resulting in a timely decision which delighted the client, consultants and land owners. Many thanks and hope that other officers and local authorities can learn from this example.”

Cara Ware – Peacock and Smith (Agent)

Name of key officer

Neil Mair – Senior Planner



Land at Ury Estate Stonehaven – Petrol Filling Station – Proposed Site Plan

Quality of Service and Engagement Case Studies

- 8. Aberdeenshire Council Response to Winter Storm Damage (Protected Trees)
- 9. Preparation of Planning Advice for LDP 2022
- 10. Peatland Restoration and Historic Environment Guidance Note
- 11. Town Centre Health Checks 2021

Hill of Dunnideer, near Insch



Case Study 8.

Aberdeenshire Council Response to Winter Storm Damage (Protected Trees)

Location and Dates:

Aberdeenshire Council
November 2021 – May 2022 (and ongoing)

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

- Quality of service and engagement
- Quality of outcomes

Key Markers:

12 – Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

Key Areas of Work:

- Environment
- Collaborative Working

Stakeholders Involved:

- General Public
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Key Agencies

Overview:

The unprecedented storms of winter 2021/22 had a significant impact on the tree and woodland resource across Aberdeenshire.

Officers from the Environment Team worked with colleagues in Landscape Services to provide an immediate response to the public and tree surgeons following the storm

events. Advice and guidance were provided to clarify what would constitute emergency work in order to ensure the appropriate legislative requirements were followed.

Goals:

To respond efficiently and effectively to the significant increase in statutory tree related work following the extreme storm events in the winter of 2021/2022.

Outcomes:

The initial storm event (Storm Arwen) occurred over a weekend in November 2021. During this time officers from the Environment Team and Landscape Services remained in contact and discussed potential actions required in anticipation of a high volume of enquiries relating to trees. This ensured a uniform approach was in place for the Monday morning.

In the immediate aftermath of this, the following was undertaken:

- Aberdeenshire Council website was updated with details on the process for undertaking emergency works.
- Tree surgeons and arboriculture consultants were contacted directly to confirm the process affecting protected trees and request confirmation of all emergency work carried out.



Storm clearance Haddo

Case Study 8.

Aberdeenshire Council Response to Winter Storm Damage (Protected Trees)

- A specific database was created to record storm damage to protected trees and any associated emergency works which were required.
- Officers responded to individual enquiries and provided appropriate advice and reassurance.

Following this emergency response stage, a plan has been developed to quantify the extent of the known damage to the protected tree resource and identify areas where damage has occurred but not been reported.

The next stage will be to contact affected landowners and seek replacement planting where appropriate and reasonable.

As a result of the extent of the damage sustained, several of the affected Tree Preservation Orders will require a full review.

Experience of responding to the initial storm event demonstrated the need for flexibility in ways of working as well as the importance of being ready with an immediate cross-service response in the event of future extreme weather events. The actions

taken following Storm Arwen provided a framework for responding effectively to the subsequent extreme storm events which occurred throughout the winter (Storms Barra, Malik and Corrie) and which each disproportionately affected different parts of Aberdeenshire.

The recording, reporting, and responding processes which were put in place following Storm Arwen and refined following Storms Barra, Corrie and Malik, will be of benefit in future years should extreme storm events become more frequent occurrences.

Name of key officer

Fiona Chirnside and Eleanor Munro,
Environment Planners



Storm damage Auchenblae Den

Case Study 9.

Preparation of Planning Advice for LDP 2022

Location and Dates:

March 2021 – June 2022

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

- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers:

- 11 – Regular and proportionate policy advice
- 12 – Corporate working across services

Key Areas of Work:

- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working

Stakeholders Involved:

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

Overview:

Planning advice is operational material designed to provide clarity on the application of Local Development Plan (LDP) policy and is used to demonstrate best practice in the way in which the terms of the policies of the LDP can be met.

As part of the production of the new Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2022, a review of the current suite of planning advice was undertaken.

Targeted stakeholder consultation with both internal and external stakeholders was undertaken in order to produce robust and comprehensive planning advice. For example, engagement with the Environment Service, Developer Obligations colleagues and Development Management colleagues were just some of the internal stakeholders the Policy Team engaged with during the production of the planning advice. In terms of external stakeholders, engagement with stakeholders such as SEPA, Scottish Water and VisitAberdeenshire was undertaken.

Due to the Examination by the Government of the new LDP that has been on-going throughout the production of the planning advice, it was not seen to be appropriate to undertake full public engagement due to the risk that requests for policy change would be sought. This is not possible to achieve through the planning advice. The planning advice was presented to the Member Officer Working Group (MOWG) for information purposes and to obtain feedback from Members.

Goals:

The review and update of the planning advice was done with the aim of ensuring that any of the [current planning advice](#) did not become obsolete as the new LDP evolved and to ensure that all the planning advice was as up to date as possible in the information that it presented and the

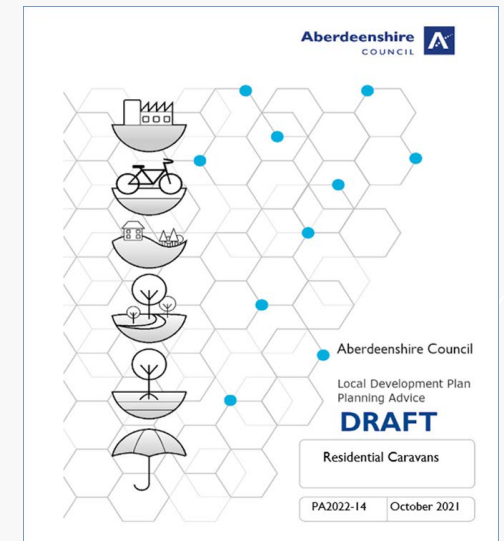
references it made in the context of the new LDP.

Part of the function of the review was also to identify any gaps in the current suite of planning advice and to produce any new pieces of advice that were required to provide clarity on the application of the new LDP policies. Some of the new pieces of planning advice included guidance on energy statements and guidance on securing positive effects for biodiversity, both of which have been produced with engagement from internal or external stakeholders.

Outcomes:

This case study has demonstrated successful collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders to produce detailed and up to date planning advice. It exemplifies a culture of continuous improvement through the undertaking of a review process in which advice that provides clarity on the application of the LDP policies has been updated to be robust and accurate. This works to ensure best practice is achieved when meeting the new LDP policies.

As the outcomes of the Examination of the new LDP may cause changes to the terms of the adopted plan, follow up work will involve ensuring any changes to the new LDP are appropriately reflected in the planning



advice. The same process will have to be undertaken when the National Planning Framework 4 is published.

At the time of writing this case study, three pieces of planning advice are still outstanding, and work is being undertaken to progress them to present at the next MOWG meeting in June 2022.

Name of key officer

Lisa Crossan, Policy Planner

Case Study 10.

Peatland Restoration and the Historic Environment Guidance Note

Location and Dates:

Aberdeenshire,
November 2021 – March 2022

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

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

Key Markers:

- 1 – Decision making
- 3 – Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
- 12 – Corporate working across services
- 13 – Sharing good practice, skills, and knowledge between authorities

Key Areas of Work:

- Process Improvement
- Planning Applications
- Environment
- Development Management Processes
- Conservation

Stakeholders Involved:

- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Other – Local Authorities

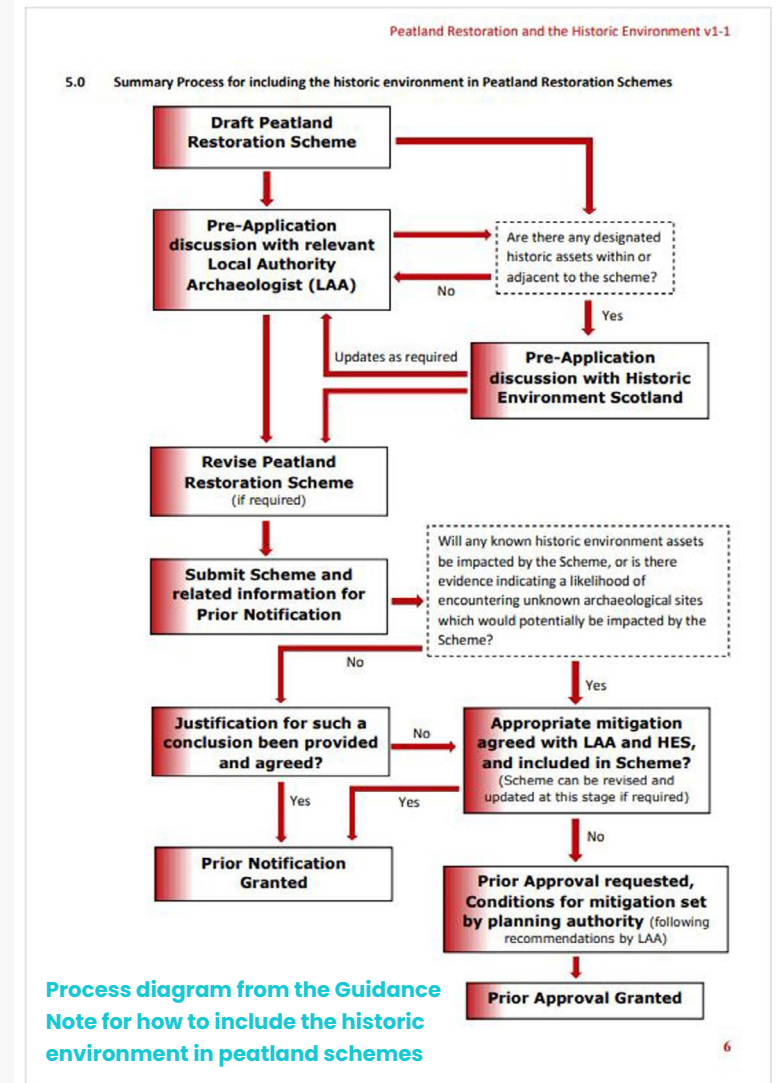
Overview:

Following peatland restoration works being included under the updated Permitted Development Regulations implemented in April 2021, it was identified that Prior Notification applications were being submitted without the necessary due consideration of their potential impact on the historic environment. To address this issue a [Peatland Restoration and the Historic Environment Guidance Note](#) was developed initially for Aberdeenshire, but which has since been adopted as Best Practice across all Local Authorities and the Key Agencies in Scotland.

Goals:

The Guidance Note was written with a view to maintaining and improving the Service's high level of performance in advising and determining Prior Notification and Prior Approval applications.

This was to be achieved by better informing not only Development Management Staff about what information is expected to be submitted for peatland restoration schemes, but also to provide clear and concise guidance to those undertaking such schemes.



Case Study 10.

Peatland Restoration and the Historic Environment Guidance Note

An initial draft guidance note was circulated to all key agencies, organisations, and local authorities in Scotland in November 2021 with a view to establishing an agreed approach between all those involved in peatland restoration schemes and the historic environment in order to meet the requirements of the updated Permitted Development Regulations. A second draft was subject to a national consultation, including key agencies and organisations from England and Wales in January 2022; and a third draft underwent a further national consultation in February 2022.

During these consultations it became apparent that the issues initially identified by Aberdeenshire were being encountered elsewhere, and all those involved were interested in reaching a standard approach which could be applied across Scotland. The document was therefore written with a view to it being universally applicable, and with expert advice feeding into it from multiple stakeholders.

As a result, the final version of the Guidance Note was implemented within Aberdeenshire Council in early March 2022 before it was rolled out across Scotland. It was formally adopted by the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) Scotland on 30 March 2022, followed immediately by Historic Environment

Scotland, NatureScot, and Peatland ACTION. Following on from this work English Heritage, Cadw, and ALGAO UK are using it as the basis for a similar guidance note in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Key Agencies have offered the following feedback:

Dr Tom Gardner, Senior Ancient Monuments Officer, Historic Environment Scotland, said:

"The newly ratified Peatland Restoration and the Historic Environment Guidance marks a crucial step in recognising and mitigating against the possible impacts of peatland restoration on heritage assets. Importantly, the guidance document also recognises the critical importance of peatland restoration, not only in the struggle against human induced climate change and biodiversity loss, but also in safeguarding heritage assets put at risk by peatland deflation and erosion. Finally, the work represents a triumph of stakeholder engagement, with broad-reaching consultation responses reflecting the views and passion of all involved."

Barry Dunne, Peatland Action Project Manager, NatureScot, said

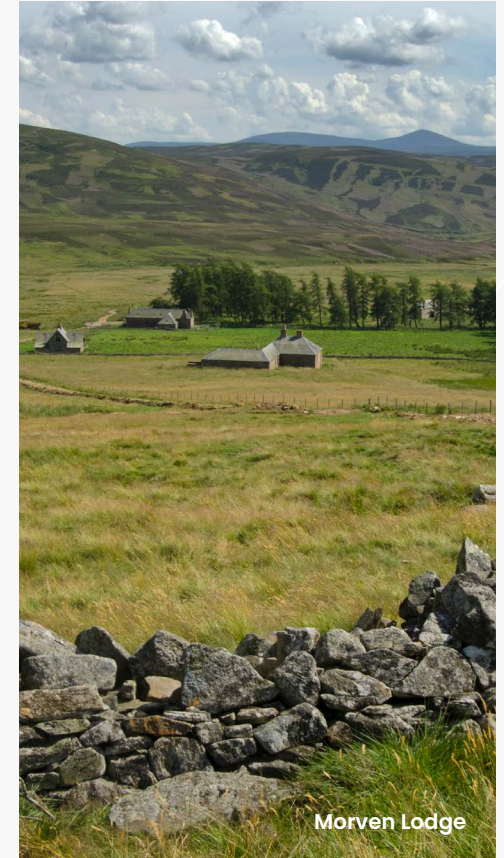
"NatureScot welcomes this guidance which has been developed in partnership with the full range of Peatland Action

delivery partners across Scotland. Peatland restoration presents a great opportunity to protect and preserve Scotland's wonderful archaeology. We look forward to adopting this guidance to help us deliver benefits for the climate, wildlife and our historic environment."

Since its implementation, the Guidance Note has raised the standard of supplementary information being submitted with applications, helped decrease response times for such applications, and improved the overall protection and management of the historic environment.

Name of key officer

Bruce Mann, Archaeologist



Morven Lodge

Case Study 11.

Town Centre Health Checks 2021

Location and Dates:

10 principal town centres across
Aberdeenshire, September 2021

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

- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers:

- 11 – Production of relevant and up to date policy advice
- 12 – Corporate working across services

Key Areas of Work:

- Town Centres
- Community Engagement
- Place Standard
- Placemaking

Stakeholders Involved:

- General Public
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP, 2014) states that, *“Local authorities, working with community planning partners, businesses and community groups as appropriate, should prepare a Town Centre Health Check. The purpose of a health check is to assess a town centre’s strengths, vitality and viability, weaknesses, and resilience. It will be used to*

inform development plans and decisions on planning applications. Health checks should be regularly updated, to monitor town centre performance, preferably every two years. Local authorities, working with partners, should use the findings of the health check to develop a strategy to deliver improvements to the town centre.”

Town Centre Health Checks have been completed in Aberdeenshire since 2003. However, considering the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on town centres and the increasing recognition that good quality baseline data is essential for creating robust and sustainable town strategies, a review of the previous Town Centre Health Check process has been undertaken to see where value could be added to make these documents relevant, easy to use and informative.

To inform the content of a refreshed health check, the requirements of the SPP were reviewed and compared with several other town-focused toolkits. To explore how these aspirations could be met, a pilot project was undertaken to trial both new methods of collecting data across a wider set of indicators and organising and presenting the information. The pilot project was completed in Inverurie during July 2021 with the outcomes reviewed prior to the full roll-out in September 2021.



Case Study 11.

Town Centre Health Checks 2021

Ten town centres were reviewed through the initial year of the refreshed Town Centre Health Checks, including: Banchory, Banff, Ellon, Fraserburgh, Huntly, Inverurie, Macduff, Peterhead, Stonehaven and Turriff. Each of the health checks followed the same methodology as outlined above to review all aspects of the town centre.

The Town Centre Health Check reports have been produced for each town to present the results of the survey work, desktop research and community and business views. The results are presented to enable an understanding of the vitality and viability of the town centre. Reports are structured to broadly follow the [Place Standard](#) themes.

The results contained within the health check reports are not to be considered definitive of the well-being of a town centre, but they are intended to provide an evidence based comparative perspective on this matter and assist in identifying actions that could be undertaken to improve and maintain their status.

The 2021 suite of Town Centre Health Checks have been published on the [Council's website](#). Health checks for the 10 principal towns will continue to be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis allowing for any trends to be identified.

Goals:

During the review of the methodology, it was agreed that Town Centre Health Checks should support the implementation of the Local Development Plan by providing a robust baseline and ensuring compliance with Scottish Planning Policy.

Additionally, they should add value by collecting data on a wider set of indicators that provide insight into economic, social, and environmental factors that play a part in the vitality of a town centre.

It was important to work collaboratively both within the Council and externally with local businesses and the community to collect and share baseline data to allow for a clear, easy to follow and accessible format and methodology. Due to the increased detail that is included with the Town Centre Health Check reports they also provide the foundations for other town strategies and plans and any subsequent funding applications.

Outcomes:

The 2021 Town Centre Health Checks provide an up-to-date baseline of information for ten of the largest towns within Aberdeenshire. They allow for a better understanding of the issues and opportunities associated with the individual town centres and allow for a

better understanding of the local community views through the information gathered through the community survey.

Following the publication of the Town Centre Health Checks 2021 officers have been involved in several sessions with groups to discuss the process undertaken and identifying where different groups can use the Town Centre Health Checks. Additionally, it is acknowledged that the reports provide information that officers can use to submit to enhance funding applications which will help to benefit the town centre.

The next step will be to role the project out for year two where the ten towns previously mentioned will be monitored again. In addition, on a biannual basis Officers will undertake health checks for the other towns where the Town Centre First principle applies, these being categorised as 'Other Towns' within the Local Development Plan. These include: Aboyne, Alford, Kemnay, Laurencekirk, Mintlaw, Portlethen and Westhill.

Name of key officer

Fiona Thompson – Project Officer (Delivery)



Stonehaven Harbour

Governance

Case Studies

- 12. Cross Team Collaboration in Preparing Short Films
- 13. LDP Examination – Further Information Requests
- 14. Scheme of Governance (Planning Delegations) Review
- 15. Aberdeenshire Council Legacy Case Strategy

Old Slains Castle, Cruden Bay

Case Study 12.

Cross Team Collaboration in Preparing Short Films

Location and Dates:

Online – May – June 2021

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

- Governance
- Culture of continuous improvement

Key Markers:

12 – Corporate working across services
13 – Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities

Key Areas of Work:

- Design
- Collaborative Working

Stakeholders Involved:

- Authority Planning Staff

Overview:

Officers from the Planning Policy Team and the Environment Team worked together to produce an introductory [film](#) for the next 'Annual School' being hosted by the Institute of Historic Building Conservation in Aberdeen in June 2022. The Policy Planner selected the footage and applied skills learned in work previously on the Local Development Plan, to produce and edit the short film. The Environment Planners advised on the film's content and provided feedback.

Goals:

Over the course of producing two Local Development Plans, the Planning Policy Team has developed their video editing skills and have produced 32 films since 2015. They have been able to use this knowledge to provide cross team collaboration to share their filmmaking skills.

The officers from the Planning Policy Team and Environment Team had previously worked successfully together in 2020/2021 to produce 24 films that showcased the finalists and winners of the 12th biennial Aberdeenshire Architectural and Landscape Design Awards (AALDA), which was delayed and had to be moved to a 'virtual' format due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This experience and previous collaboration proved essential as officers had less than three weeks to produce this film as well as maintaining their normal workload. It also provided an excellent opportunity for the Environment Planners to learn more about video editing, and for the Planning Policy Officer to improve their filmmaking skills and their knowledge on design and historic buildings, from the feedback provided.

Outcomes:

Ongoing collaboration between the Planning Policy Team and Environment Team continues to bring benefits in terms of improving filmmaking styles and skills, but

also in providing opportunities for Officers to gain continuous professional development through building skills and knowledge in different functions of the Planning and Economy Service. This collaborative working allows the Planning Policy Team to continuously improve on how information is presented visually, as new videos will be produced for the next Local Development Plan.

Moving forward, the Planning Policy Team will continue to work with the Environment Team for their 13th Aberdeenshire Architecture and Landscape Design Awards, beginning with a video seeking nominations for next year's awards.

Name of key officer

Alison Hogge, Policy Planner



IHBC Annual School - Aberdeen 2022

214 views • 24 Jun 2021

4 DISLIKE SHARE SAVE ...

[IHBC Annual School Film 2022](#)

Case Study 13.

LDP Examination – Further Information Requests

Location and Dates:

August 2021 – April 2022

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

- Governance
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers:

9 – Stakeholders, including Elected Members, industry, agencies, the public and Scottish Government are engaged appropriately through all key stages of development plan preparation

12 – Corporate working across services

Key Areas of Work:

- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working

Stakeholders Involved:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

During the examination of the [Proposed Local Development Plan](#) 23 Further Information Requests were received covering a wide range of topics. These topics included housing land supply and delivery, Gypsy/Travellers, strategic transport, developer obligations, woodland, rural development policies and wind turbines, and individual settlement and site matters. The Planning Policy Team provided a response to each request in partnership with other teams and services within Aberdeenshire Council. This joint working involved planning staff from Planning Information and Delivery, Environment, and Development Management, as well as other staff in Housing, Transportation, Education, and the Flood Risk and Coastal Protection teams.

The involvement of other teams and services in preparing responses varied between acting as a reviewer, collating information, to preparing the draft response to the questions raised. Through discussions with the relevant team on receipt of an information request, roles and responsibilities were established early on to clearly project manage each response in an appropriate manner and within the allotted time.

Goals:

In responding to Further Information Requests the main goal was to aid the reporter in progressing the Proposed Local Development Plan through its examination. This formed part of a key commitment to deliver a new LDP for the Aberdeenshire area within the five – year cycle. Each request had a provisional two-week deadline to which all responses were successful in meeting. They each also set out to supply the reporter with accurate and relevant information, utilising the expertise of multiple teams and services to avoid additional requests or hearings which could lengthen the examination process.

Outcomes:

This work is an example of the collaborative work undertaken by staff, demonstrating a 'One Aberdeenshire' commitment for continuous engagement with the LDP process and an appreciation of its value. The alignment of priorities by all staff to deliver timely, detailed responses to complex topics sets out ways to undertake joint working to improve on both communication and the quality of outcomes for the next LDP.

Name of key officer

Fiona Reid, Senior Policy Planner



Front Cover of Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan

Case Study 14.

Scheme of Governance (Planning Delegations) Review

Location and Dates:

Aberdeenshire
April 2021 – May 2022

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

- Governance
- Culture of continuous improvement

Key Markers:

1 – Decision making
6 – Continuous improvement
12 – Corporate working across services

Key Areas of Work:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement

Stakeholders Involved:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Other – Elected Members

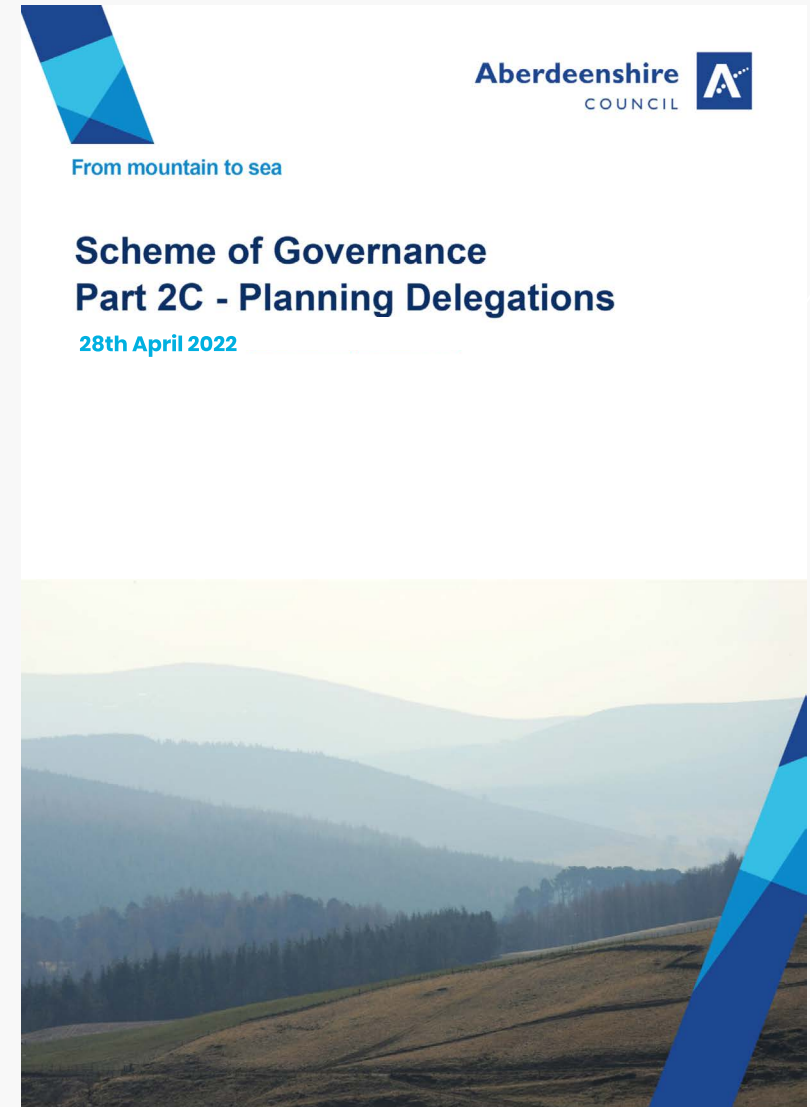
Overview:

Aberdeenshire Council, being a large rural authority has a complex pattern of governance arrangements and decision-making bodies. It features six area committees and an Infrastructure Services Committee that deal with Planning Applications as well as some planning application decisions made by Full Council. Traditionally Members have had significant involvement in planning application

decision making and have seen planning as a key part of their remit. Whilst this did allow for a democratic process of decision making, the scope, even on relatively minor applications, also meant that Aberdeenshire Council had the lowest level of delegated decision making of any Authority in Scotland outside of the National Park Authorities.

The reduced rate of delegation increases timescales for decision making and the resources required to determine those applications. As such a detailed review of the Planning Delegations contained within the Councils Scheme of Governance was proposed, to consider options which provided greater delegated decision making, whilst ensuring key decision making on controversial or complex applications remained with elected members. The Planning Service working with the Councils Legal and People Service undertook a number of engagement sessions with Members using online forums and polls to gather views. Further engagement was carried out with various committees before final recommendations were put to Full Council.

Whilst the outcomes of the review were not as far reaching as had been originally proposed by the Planning Service the revised scheme has been successful in resolving a number of issues with the existing delegations and in providing a proportionate increase in the ability of officers to determine applications under delegated powers. The Council agreed to review the effectiveness of the changes with a view to potentially considering other options for delegation as part of the scheme in the future.



Case Study 14.

Scheme of Governance (Planning Delegations) Review

Goals:

The Planning Service set out to ensure a review of the operational effectiveness of the Planning Delegations as well as ensuring legislative compliance. The goals of the review were to:

- Balance efficient resource use, ensuring delegations are proportionate whilst retaining Elected Member decision making on more significant applications.
- Improve performance in decision making timescales.
- Provide greater confidence, certainty and clarity for stakeholders in the handling of applications.
- Achieve best value as part of the decision making process.
- Provide clarity on aspects of the delegations through guidance.

Outcomes:

A revised set of Planning Delegations were agreed on [28 April 2022](#) at Full Council and will come into force on the 4 July 2022. Whilst Members ultimately agreed some variations to the operation of some processes which did not go as far as the recommendations that the Planning Service had proposed, there were a number of measures agreed which should increase the level of delegated decision making on more straightforward applications.

This included:

- Focusing decision making on most significant applications including significant departures and National Applications with the Councils Infrastructure Services Committee rather than the Full Council.
- Streamlining provision for MSC and other related applications including greater delegation to officers in most cases.
- Delegation of certain application types in all cases.

The use of the delegations will be monitored over the next year with a view to potentially recommending further streamlining next year following the additional proposed changes to Schemes of Delegation under the 2019 Planning Act.

Name of key officer

James Wheeler – Senior Planner



Balmoral Castle, Ballater

Case Study 15.

Aberdeenshire Council Legacy Strategy

Location and Dates:

Various locations across Aberdeenshire,
March 2015 – Ongoing

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

- Governance
- Culture of continuous improvement

Key Markers:

1 – Decision – making
14 – Stalled sites/legacy cases

Key Areas of Work:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working
- Process Improvement

Stakeholders Involved:

- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

The Legacy Group which has been in place since March 2015 to focus on legacy applications, continues to work on existing cases which have been pending for over one year with a view to concluding them as quickly as possible. Regular meetings and improved communication between the Legal and Planning Teams has enabled a holistic

view of all pending legacy applications and, by improving internal communication and knowledge of the unique issues for individual applications, there has been an increase in confidence to liaise with applicants and use the processes and techniques available to conclude applications promptly.

Notwithstanding this, due to the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on application timescales and further increases in caseloads there has been an overall increase in legacy cases in 2021-22. In recognition of this challenge there has been recent re-consideration of the approach to legacy case management. A draft Legacy Strategy has been produced which aims to identify and focus attention in the long term on legacy case prevention not just the management of existing cases and provide an appropriate structure of management.

Over the last review period, work has been ongoing to improve the Legacy Group structure to ensure that appropriate seniority is involved to progress with applications, particularly where a difficult decision is required to be made.

Additionally, changes have been made to the monthly 'Legacy Monitoring' updates issued by the Legacy Co-ordinator to the



Crawton Waterfall, Fowlsheugh

Team Managers and Legal colleagues. The updates now include a forecast of the cases that are at risk of becoming legacy cases (i.e., those becoming 9 months old). Additional application information has also been included which allows the applications to be categorised and

organised more easily. The forecast is aimed at Planning and/or Legal colleagues to raise any outstanding issues and with a more focussed effort by those involved to allow these to be resolved in time. Tasks will be utilised via an application to alert Planning Officers and Managers to these

Case Study 15.

Aberdeenshire Council Legacy Strategy

cases and seek an updated position in order to consider whether further active management is required.

Goals:

The revised Legacy Strategy aims to meet two key objectives:

1. To ensure that the Legacy Group is able to make decisions which allow legacy cases to be determined, with a view to ensuring such cases are dealt with as consistently as possible; and,
2. To seek to focus the work on preventing legacy cases rather than just managing existing cases. The use of additional information and the organisation of updates should assist with meeting these objectives.

Outcomes:

During the period April 2021 – March 2022 a total of 51 legacy applications were determined, 31 of which were on Processing Agreements. During recent consideration of the new legacy strategy, a concerted effort from Development Management Teams saw 24 applications concluded between February and March 2022 alone, in addition to a number of cases prevented from becoming legacy.

The chart shows the breakdown of pending legacy case applications per year, at the end of March 2022, including those that are on processing agreements (total 52).

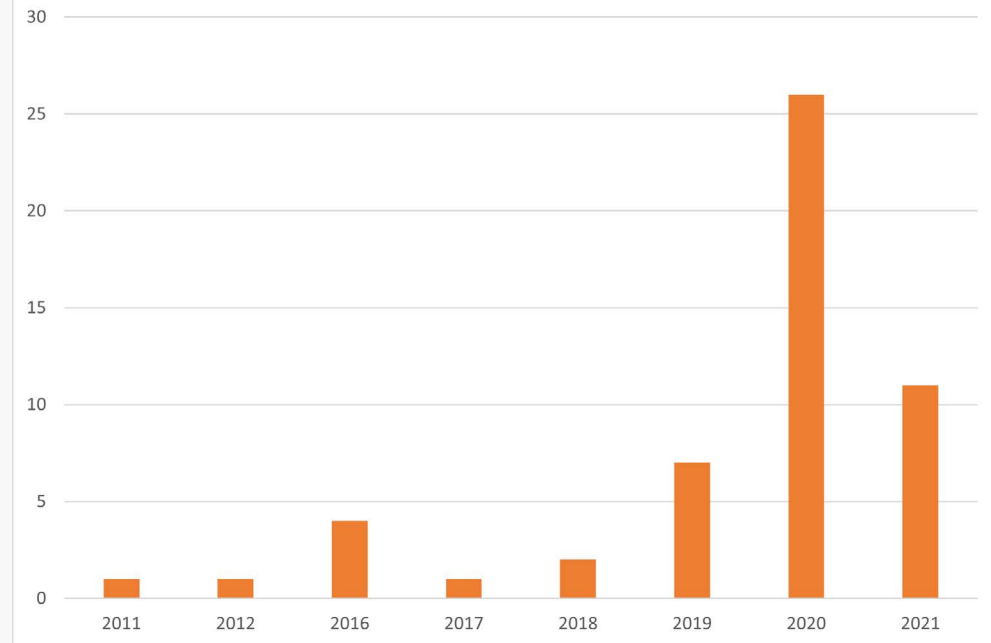
Although a high number of cases have been concluded in the last year, legacy applications dating from 2020 remains higher than usual and has had an affect on the overall numbers. This is partly as a result of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the ability to undertake the usual site surveys/visits and a subsequent backlog now with this type of work, which often involves consultants and legal processes.

The Legacy Team continues to be an excellent example of different services working together and we will continue to strive to achieve further positive outcomes.

Name of key officer

Kirsty Black – Project Co-ordinator

Number of Legacy Case Applications Per Year Pending at End of March 2022 (Total 52)



Culture of Continuous Improvement

Case Studies

- 16. Lunchtime Learning
- 17. Continuous Improvement Framework – Commitment
- 18. Pre-application and Major Application Review – Commitment
- 19. Masterplan Process – Update – Commitment
- 20. Environment and Planning Enforcement Teams – Combined Approach to Fraserburgh



Dales Park School Nursery, Peterhead

Case Study 16.

Lunchtime Learning

Location and Dates:

On a four week cycle from 3 March 2022
(Virtual)

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

- Culture of continuous improvement

Key Markers:

- 12 – Corporate working across services
- 13 – Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge

Key Areas of Work:

- Conservation
- Environment
- Greenspace
- Town Centres
- Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Economic Development
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Placemaking
- Skills Sharing
- Staff Training

Stakeholders Involved:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

A series of internal seminars have been established as open “lunchtime learning”

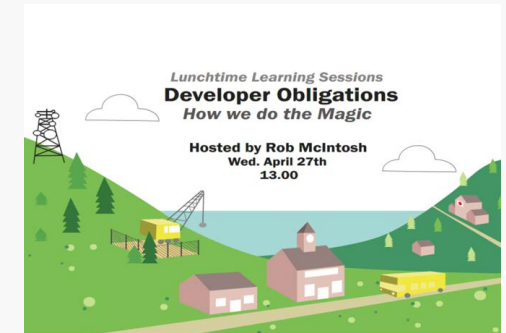
events for planning and related professions within the Council. These events are specifically designed to share a deeper understanding and appreciation of planning related topics between planners and other associated professionals within Aberdeenshire Council.

A series of events were programmed on a four – week cycle that explores items of current interest, allowing experienced staff to present to a wide audience of development management, planning policy, and environment planning practitioners to share their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Other services are also invited and attend these sessions, including roads and drainage engineers, environmental health, and legal officers.

During the Lunchtime Learning events, presenters are encouraged through online presentation to explore and allow discussion of emerging topics within their subject and engage with attendees regarding the implications of the change. Talking to an internal audience has allowed participants to be radical in their comments and has fostered an informal approach to the meetings.

Topics discussed to date include the 20-minute neighbourhood concept, and the processes and procedures used to assess,

collect and manage developer obligations from the development industry. Future programmed topics include a discussion on Flood Risk, Biodiversity Enhancement from New Development and the implications of the emerging Local Heat and Energy Strategy.



Case Study 16.

Lunchtime Learning

Goals:

The Lunchtime Learning events were developed to address a perceived disadvantage associated with the hybrid working model adopted for staff of Aberdeenshire Council, and the perception that staff working from home were disadvantaged by the professional isolation that this can cause. One of the principal goals was to widen the understanding of staff on how other functions are delivered within the Council and from this foster greater cooperation and cross service coordination. The sessions are designed to increase understanding of what can be difficult topics and allow officers to take this knowledge into their day-to-day work.

The variety and breadth of the topics identified for discussion allows those attending to gain insights into subject topics which, while not part of their core work, add to their competency and ability to engage meaningfully on a wide range of what are often niche subjects. The goal is to provide greater value, to the interactions between staff and with customers through the sharing of a common foundation.

Outcomes:

Feedback from attendees demonstrates that these objectives are starting to be met. Events to date, although entirely voluntary, have been attended by in excess of 50 staff members in each case. Specific comments made by non-planning staff on the value of the discussions has been particularly welcome, showing that the choice of topics has a wide appeal and interest. Planning staff have expressed appreciation for the opportunity to gain the deeper understanding of topics that may have to be considered in the course of their work.

Name of key officer

Piers Blaxter – Policy Team Leader



Banchory Town Hall

Case Study 17.

Continuous Improvement Framework Commitment

Location and Dates:

Aberdeenshire April 2021 – Ongoing

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

- Culture of continuous improvement

Key Markers:

6 – Continuous Improvement

Key Areas of Work:

- Development Management Processes
- Process Improvement

Stakeholders Involved:

- Authority Planning Staff

Overview:

Aberdeenshire Council committed to establishing a Framework for Continuous Improvement through the 2021-22 PPF period. During this time, the focus has been on ensuring three main aspects of this framework are progressed. These aspects are:

- Ensuring a high level of customer service linked to our service improvements.
- Providing a more holistic management of Continuous Improvement Projects including ensuring the right projects are prioritised to focus on key projects with potential to deliver service improvements.

- Consolidating our existing communication and back office by developing a single SharePoint site for all development management teams.

This year we have continued our commitment to a high level of customer service through our commitment to Customer Service Excellence (CSE). CSE Accreditation was secured again following external assessment in March 2022.



This included, as a key part of the emerging framework discussed below, a review of our customer feedback including revised formats for customer feedback surveys and agents forum, the roll out of Personal Performance Plans and forming a Planning Technicians group and forum. The feedback from the [assessment](#) includes a reduction in areas of partial compliance with several areas of good practice and one area of compliance plus.

Aberdeenshire Councils Planning Service has historically undertaken a significant number of projects focused on internal and external service improvements. These have however not always been considered collectively and strategically. A Project Portfolio Tracker has been set up to ensure better programme management of projects with monthly meetings with managers to ensure progress. Staff and customer suggestions for improvements are now being captured and for more complex or non-urgent matters raised these are discussed at the monthly meetings. The Planning Service has also been considering the Working and Liaison Groups that it is involved in and as part of this work it was identified that existing working groups and their rolls and remits were reviewed to ensure they were achieving best value. This work is ongoing.

The Service has also committed to improving co-ordination and communication of information via use of a single Microsoft SharePoint Site for communication and non-Uniform document storage with it being open to all Development Management Teams. This project which is key to the emerging framework is due to be completed by the end of Q3 2022. This will allow for a single Knowledge Hub for internal staff guidance and resources, projects and access to background documents such as historic planning records as well as single space for improvement suggestions.

Business Area	Project Name	PPF Commitment	CSE Commitment	Legal Req	Customer Feedback	Staff Suggestion	Status	Priority	Dependence	Target or Completion Date	Project Lead	Description	Expected Outcomes/Benefit	Update	Staff Resource
DM	PPF	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Outgoing	High	None	Initial target for end of June 2022 for review work	Chris Ormiston/Neil Stewart	Planning Authorities key performance framework	PPF 11 (12/22)	Committee to staff in respect of case studies	All
DM	New Pre App Process (Local and Householder Apps)	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Post Implementation Monitoring	High	None	Initial target for end of June 2022 for review work	Chris Ormiston/Neil Stewart	New Pre App Process for Local and Householder Apps	Internal Guidance/Uniform Set Up	Update 10/05. Catch up end of May with intention to agree ways forward by June.	Chris Ormiston, Bruce Strachan, Stuart Newla, Donna Dagnin, Iain MacMillan, Caroline Ormiston, Neil Stewart
DM	New Pre App Process (Major Apps)	Y	N	N	Y	Y	In progress	High	Masterplan Process	To follow on from templates approach	Chris Ormiston/Neil Stewart	New Pre App Process for Major Apps	Internal Guidance/Uniform Set Up	To follow pre app work	Elizabeth Tully, Stuart Newlands, Rory Hume, I Strachan, Caroline Ormiston, Neil Stewart, Sally Wood
DM	Masterplan Process	Y	N	N	Y	Y	In progress	High	New Pre App Process (Major Apps) Also linked to LDP	Initial target for end of June 2022 for set up of uniform	Darren Ross	New Masterplan Process	Amended S.O.G Increased Delegation to Officers	01.04.2022 - need to finalise systems work with Alison Training to be set up with staff	Neil Stewart, Alison Hogge, Martin, Aude Chabban, C Ross

Case Study 17.

Continuous Improvement Framework Commitment

Goals:

The Planning Service set out to consolidate its approach to Continuous Improvement. This included ensuring the embedding of CSE as a key part of our approach to Continuous Improvement, provide improved management of projects and better organisation and communication with staff.

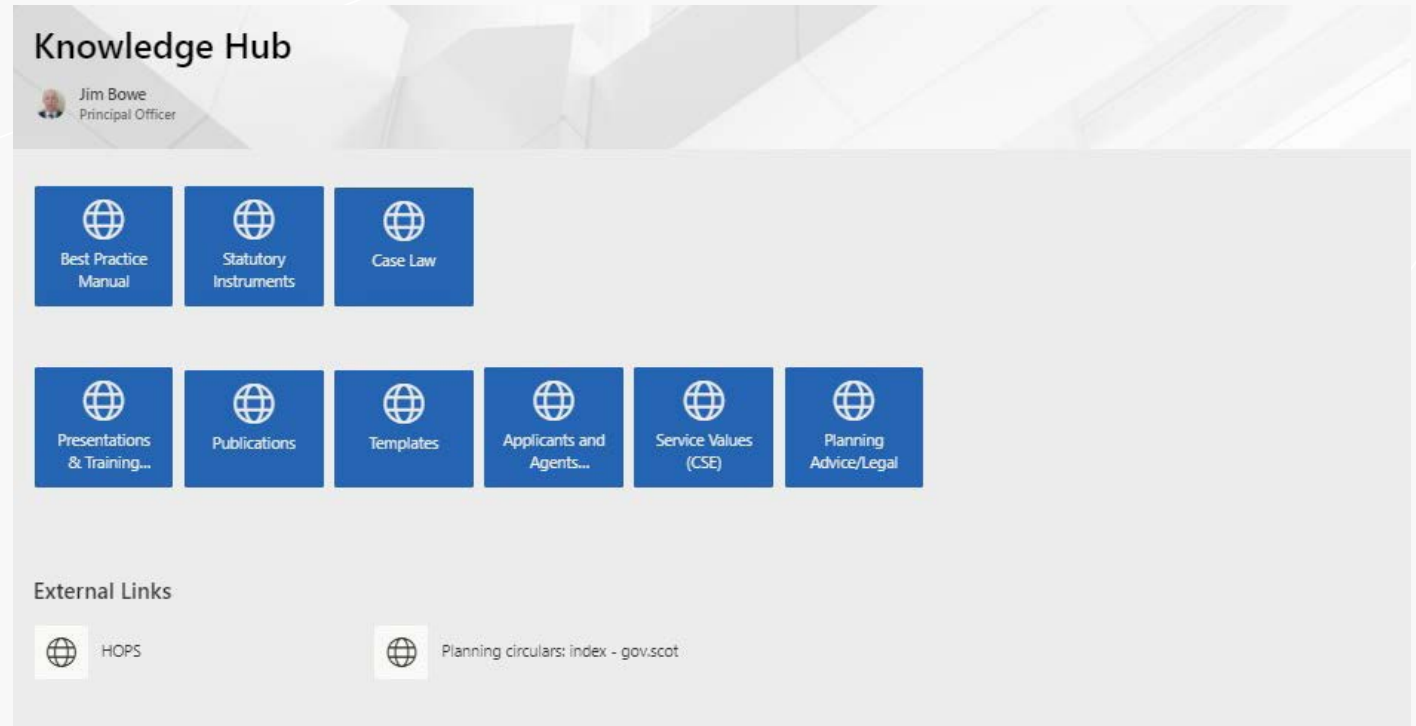
Outcomes:

Although the Framework is on-going, we have made significant progress despite workload pressures.

- Significant progress on our areas for improvement as part of our annual CSE Assessment and acknowledgement of work undertaken to date.
- Continuous Improvement monthly meetings established and Project Tracker implemented.
- Progress towards single SharePoint Site ongoing including centralising historic planning files.

Name of key officer

James Wheeler – Senior Planner



Case Study 18.

Pre-Application and Major Application Process Review- Commitment

Location and Dates:

Aberdeenshire – throughout 2021-22

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

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

Key Markers:

3 – Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
 6 – Continuous improvement – progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through the PPF
 12 – Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit
 13 – Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities
 15 – Developer contributions – clear expectations in pre-application discussions

Key Areas of Work:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement
- Project Management
- Online Systems

Stakeholders Involved:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Developer/Agents
- Authorities Other Staff
- Key Agencies

Overview:

This Case Study relates back to Case Study 12 in [PPFI0 2020-21](#). The review of the pre-application process remains a committed service improvement and demonstrates the continuous approach to improvement the Council aims towards. The remit of the review includes all pre-application work and is being progressed in conjunction with the review of the Master Planning process.

The new pre-application process on Householder and Local Developments was rolled out in October 2020. Since implementation, this updated process has been the subject of continual monitoring, review, and feedback from agents, consultees and staff during the PPF reporting period.

A decision on the introduction of a charging structure remains on hold, although it is anticipated that work will commence on progressing a charging structure in the next reporting period now that the new fee regulations and the potential for discretionary charging has been introduced as of 1 April 2022.

Goals:

The aims of this project are to eliminate variation between Development Management teams in Aberdeenshire Council in the governance and processing of pre-application enquiries by streamlining the process and providing a clear and concise process map for customers and staff.

In doing so, this will provide an improved service to the customer in terms of efficiency and confidence in advice provided while hopefully contributing towards better outcomes on the ground. The approach also demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvements and delivery of a high-quality service.

Outcomes:

During this PPF reporting period, the group has focussed on the continual monitoring and review of the process via the review of individual customer pre-app response surveys and staff feedback. A formal wider engagement process commenced in October 2021, with surveys issued to [agents](#), consultees and [staff](#) seeking feedback on key areas. A separate interim update on the process was also presented to agents at the annual [Agents Forum](#) held in November 2021 and feedback sought from agents in attendance.

From an initial review of the October 2021 survey responses, the group has been able to identify key trends and areas for review, including benchmarking opportunities which have been incorporated into a review action plan that the group are currently working on. Based on the feedback received, the group are focussing on the usability and functionality of the website; communication and timescales; the quality of the responses provided and measuring whether there are any direct impacts on the subsequent formal planning applications submitted in terms of timescale and decision reached. Work has commenced on the agreed actions and will include a cross sample check of pre-application enquiries lodged since roll out of the new process.

Once this review process has been completed, the group will produce a report outlining key recommendations which will be presented to Senior Management to facilitate discussion and agreement, prior to communication with staff and customers on the outcome of the review and any updates that may require to be introduced to secure further improvements in efficiencies and quality of service deliverability.

Case Study 18.

Pre-Application and Major Application Process Review- Commitment

Work on the revised Major application enquiry process has progressed during the reporting period in conjunction with the Master Planning process group to ensure consistency between the processes for major applications that require a masterplan. The roll out of the major application enquiry process is on hold until the group has completed the review of the householder and local development enquiry process as it is clear from work undertaken to date that the general principles and process agreed on completion of this review can be applied to the major application enquiry process. It is anticipated that this process will be completed during the next PPF reporting period.

Name of key officer

Chris Ormiston, Team Manager

Neil Stewart, Team Manager



Faithlie Centre, Fraserburgh

Case Study 19.

Masterplan process – Update – Commitment

Location and Dates:

Aberdeenshire – throughout 2021-2022 and ongoing

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

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

Key Markers:

6 – Continuous improvement
12 – Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

Key Areas of Work:

- Development Management Processes
- Masterplanning
- Process Improvement
- Collaborative Working
- Project Management

Stakeholders Involved:

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

Overview:

As detailed in [PPF 2020/2021](#) a commitment was given that in 2021/2022 we would undertake significant stakeholder

engagement, alignment with the Major Development process and progress implementation of the process to coincide with the adoption of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2022. In the reporting period the group delivering the project undertook a stakeholder engagement session with key consultees. We also issued a feedback questionnaire to all agents who had submitted a Major Development, Proposal of Application Notice (PoAN) or a Masterplan since the current Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan was adopted in April 2017. Recognising that response rates were not as high as expected at the annual [Agent Forum](#) we reiterated a request to work with Agents and, following this, a stakeholder forum was held on 9 December where participants who had indicated a willingness to engage took part in a workshop.

Alongside this, [3 separate sessions](#) were dedicated to Elected Members to secure their buy in to the project.

One of our key customers, Catherine Thornhill Land Manager, Barratt & David Wilson Homes North Scotland said of the process:

"The proposed Masterplan process and the consultation with the industry to date has been really encouraging and well received. If the revised process achieves the buy-in of all parties, including consultees and

elected members, this should result in a more efficient and streamlined process, with Masterplans which are agile vision statements that dovetail with the major application consultation process. The appointment of a lead officer, and the authority delegated to them is welcomed and should result in a more efficient use of time and staff resources for all parties. The new approach as set out is a breath of fresh air."

Goals:

The main goal over the 2021/2022 period has been to refine the [draft guidance/Planning Advice Note](#) prepared by Officers and to engage with all who had a stake in the project. It was considered essential to secure buy in that the principles the group were striving to achieve were not only covered by SMART objectives but also deliverable in so much as those using the process were content with the direction of travel. Following analysis of all engagement sessions, refinements were made or considered not to be required to the Planning Advice Note and processes therein. A key goal was to streamline the Masterplan process and also Masterplans in general whilst ensuring appropriate and commensurate community engagement was encouraged. It is recognised that Masterplanning is not a statutory process and, as such, the requirement for public engagement can

only be encouraged. That said it is further recognised that where a Major Development requires a Masterplan there is a mandatory process to go through which involves community consultation. Another goal is the alignment and linking of Masterplan process with the Major Development and Local Development pre-application processes.

Outcomes:

It is intended that this process will coincide with the adoption of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2022.

A number of internal processes were modified, and it is proposed to monitor the success of the project over the next 12 months in the form of feedback questionnaires, engagement at the Annual Agents Forum and, crucially, through the delivery of successful Masterplans.

Name of key officer:

Darren Ross – Team Manager

Case Study 20.

Environment and Planning Enforcement Teams combined approach in Fraserburgh

Location and Dates:

Fraserburgh 2021 – the project is ongoing

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

- Culture of continuous improvement

Key Markers:

6 – Continuous improvement
12 – Corporate working across services

Key Areas of Work:

- Conservation
- Enforcement
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working

Stakeholders Involved:

- General Public
- Authority Planning Staff

Overview:

One of the aims of the Fraserburgh 2021 project was to raise standards of development within the newly designated town centre Conservation Area. During the latter years of the project a number of unauthorised developments took place which had a downgrading effect on the good work that had been achieved by local property owners and the local authority. Over the last year a joint approach has been developed between the Environment and Planning Enforcement teams to regularise detrimental unauthorised changes

and prevent any further proliferation of unauthorised development.

Goals:

- Raise awareness of the need for permission for certain types of work within the Conservation Area to prevent further breaches.
- Survey and create a record of unauthorised development within the project area.
- Contact affected owners and discuss a way forward either through the submission of an application or the reversal of works.
- It is hoped that by being proactive at this stage, owners will be less likely to undertake work without permission in the future.

Outcomes:

- Letters have been sent to all property owners within the project area explaining the need for permissions, advising of survey work and asking for owners to contact the Council if they have undertaken work without permission.
- An initial 17 properties have been identified and prioritised for contact. All have been contacted and conversations are ongoing to seek resolution. Some owners have agreed to reverse works undertaken and others are seeking to submit applications. Work continues to secure the necessary improvements.

- Discretion has been used to deal with works which are unauthorised but not particularly adverse to the amenity of the Conservation Area.
- To date one enforcement notice has been served.
- Work is ongoing to identify any further unauthorised development.
- An officer working group has been established and regular meetings held to agree action, timescales, process, and procedure.

- Meetings have improved understanding between the two teams and provided a template for future working.

Name of key officer:

Deborah Conway – Environment Team Leader



Loch Callatér

Part 2:

Supporting Evidence



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Fraserburgh Harbour

All supporting evidence for this Planning Performance Framework has been integrated within the body of the text by use of hyperlinks to relevant documents, websites or other information.

A variety of resources are at the heart of the work and include:

- Statistical information;
- Customer feedback and inputs from various events and engagement exercises;
- Testimonials;
- Evidence of collaborative partnership working with internal and external parties;
- Process improvement projects including customer and staff based initiatives;
- Relevant Council and Service specific documents.

Checklist for Part 1

Qualitative Narrative Case Studies			
Case Study Topics	Issue covered by case study	Case Study Topics	Issue covered by case study
Design	3, 6, 12	Interdisciplinary Working	1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 13, 16, 18, 20
Conservation	3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 16, 20	Collaborative Working	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20
Regeneration	3, 4, 5	Community Engagement	3, 11
Environment	3, 6, 8, 10, 16	Placemaking	3, 4, 5, 11, 16
Greenspace	16	Charrettes	
Town Centres	3, 4, 5, 11, 16	Place Standards	11
Masterplanning	19	Performance Monitoring	1, 2, 14, 18
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	9, 13, 16	Process Improvement	2, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19
Housing Supply		Project Management	1, 2, 18, 19
Affordable Housing		Skills Sharing	16
Economic Development	16	Staff Training	16
Enforcement	20	Online Systems	18
Development Management Processes	1, 2, 7, 10, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19	Transport	
Planning Applications	1, 2, 7, 10, 14, 15, 18	Active Travel	
Other			

Part 3:

Service Improvements 2022-23



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Aberdeenshire Council, Peterhead

3A. In the Coming Year

Local Development Plan Team

In the coming year we will:

- Take the Reporters recommendations from the Examination into the Proposed Local Development Plan 2020 and assess whether they are fit for purpose or there are grounds for not accepting their content. This conclusion will be presented to Aberdeenshire Council and a decision made whether to adopt the Local Development Plan 2022 (as modified). We will ensure that all those who assisted us with the production of the plan, even those who ultimately made no objections, are advised of the Council's intent to adopt the plan. Statutory processes will be followed to secure adoption of the plan within four months of receiving the Reporters Recommendations, this also allowing 4 weeks for the Scottish Government to issue a direction to us if they are unhappy with this conclusion.
- We will confirm and publish at least 25 non-statutory Planning Advice papers to support the implementation of the Proposed Plan.
- We will prepare and publish a Post-Adoption Statement for the Environmental Report for the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Local Development Plan 2022.
- Following a period of engagement with Community Councillors, young people and the development industry we will publish a Development Plan Scheme that sets out the general programme for the production of the Local Development Plan 2027. We will make a formal start to the preparation of the Local Development Plan 2027.
- Engaging with relevant stakeholders we will start to collect the information that is necessary for the Evidence Report of the Local Development Plan 2027 and to seek endorsement of the conclusions that can be drawn from this evidence.



Glen Garioch Distillery, Oldmeldrum

In the Coming Year

Development Management Team

In the coming year we will:

Local and Major Development Pre-Application Review – continue to monitor the Householder and Local Development pre-application process, utilising customer and user group survey responses received in the previous reporting period, to refine the process as required. Further consideration and work is required to enable a decision to be taken in relation to the introduction of a fee charging structure for the process. Completion of the review of the Major Development pre-application process, and initial development of a process, which allows alignment with key elements of the Masterplan process, specifically in relation to the format of meetings/workshop discussions with stakeholders as applicable to the pre-application process. (see [Case Study 18 – Culture of Continuous Improvement](#)).

Review of Masterplan Process – following the finalising of planning advice on Masterplanning (see [Case Study 19 – Culture of Continuous Improvement](#)) the Service will embark on staff training to ensure that all

staff are aware of new processes. We will also look to work with stakeholders (customers and consultees) to identify a site which requires a Masterplan as a “pilot” project. This “pilot” is likely to either coincide with or immediately follow, the adoption of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2022. The Service will then look to have a 6 monthly review of the guidance and advice, making the necessary changes, as part of a review mechanism.

Customer Service Excellence (CSE) – this will remain as an on-going commitment and further to the receipt of the CSE accreditation report as a result of the CSE Audit in March 2022 (see [Case Study 17 – Culture of Continuous Improvement](#)), the Service will undertake actions to address the areas for improvement and partial compliance identified in line with the CSE criteria and within the timescales for scheduled re-certification assessment in March 2023.

Extension of Permitted Development Rights Group – having developed and

implemented new processes to deal with the changes brought forward in permitted development rights in 2020-2021—the established group will respond to further Scottish Government consultations (current and forthcoming) on proposals for further extensions of permitted development rights and develop processes for implementation on new legislation as appropriate. This will include providing up-to-date guidance for staff.

Review Retention/Publication of Documents Policy – this review will remain as an on-going commitment and will take account of GDPR, corporate objectives, and Heads of Planning Guidance.

Continuous Improvement Framework – while the development of the Framework is complete (see [Case Study 17 – Culture of Continuous Improvement](#)), the continuous improvement activities, projects and priorities identified will continue to be actioned. In particular, there will be a focus on the use of the Project Tracker Tool and the

Continuous Improvement Board to monitor and drive forward improvement areas. There will be a particular focus on reviewing how the Service reports and monitors application decision timescales in light of the forthcoming changes to the Scheme of Governance that will be implemented in July 2022 and a change in the use of PPAs for some types of planning application. There will also be a focus on continuing to monitor and develop the Legacy Case Strategy (see [Case Study 15 – Governance](#)) with a view to reducing overall case numbers and preventing new legacy cases occurring, and there will be an emphasis on collaborative working in relation to the outputs from existing and new working groups.

In the Coming Year

Development Management Team

Average timescales targets – Major applications – 35 weeks – maintain

Average timescales targets – Local applications – 11 weeks – maintain

Average timescales targets – Householder applications – 6 weeks – maintain

Average timescales targets – Other applications – 8 weeks – maintain

E:Planning Online Submissions – target 95% – maintain

Percentage timescales within 2 months – all Local Development planning applications – 75% – maintain

Percentage timescales within 2 months – Non-householder applications – 65% – maintain

Percentage timescales within 2 months – Householder applications – 95% – maintain

Developments determined within timescale of Processing Agreement – 100% – adjusted commitment

Legal Agreements – average weeks target – 32 weeks – maintain

Legacy applications – reduce the overall number of legacy case applications and prevent new cases occurring by monitoring and implementing the Legacy Case Strategy which is focussed on the prioritisation and categorisation of applications for developments that are deliverable and in line with social and economic objectives.



Deer Abbey, Old Deer, Buchan

In the Coming Year

Environment / Specialist Services Team

In the coming year we will:

- Progress necessary changes in working arrangements for reshaped service delivery following service reshape.
- Complete F2021 & Vinery heritage projects in Fraserburgh and Banff town centres.
- Progress new heritage scheme in Peterhead and Huntly town centres and review funding opportunities.
- Implement charging scheme for Ranger activities.
- Work with partners to undertake a survey of Aberdeenshire's core paths.
- Agree protocol for inspections, management and maintenance of non-motorised bridges across the path network.
- Implement new record management and document management systems.
- Complete improvement works at the Aikey Brae Stone Circle Scheduled Monument which leads to improved accessibility, interpretation, understanding and biodiversity at the site.
- Deliver at least 2 specialist training/information sessions to Development Management staff and elected members to help raise awareness of the environment and improve decision making.
- Review and prepare Natural Heritage Strategy for period 2022-25.
- Review and prepare Pollinator Action Plan for 2022-2027.
- Introduce new project prioritisation and tracking process for path projects.
- Explore opportunities to introduce a community grant scheme for tree planting and path development.
- Establish a cross-service working group to maximise external funding opportunities to deliver natural heritage projects.



Fordyce Castle

3B. Delivery of our Actions and Improvements Committed in 2020-21

Local Development Plan Team

Committed Improvements and Actions	Complete?
Respond as quickly as possible to any information requests deriving from the Proposed Local Development Plan (PLDP) examination process to furnish the reporter with accurate and relevant information.	Twenty-three formal further information requests were received from the Directorate of Planning and Environmental Appeals. All requests were responded to timeously within the deadlines set. In each case we endeavoured to provide the information requested in an appropriate context.
Review the recommendations arising from the Examination of the PLDP Examination and seek approval from Aberdeenshire Council to adopt the modified Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2022 accordingly.	This action is incomplete. Despite a target published by the Scottish Government in Planning Circular 6/2013 Development planning (Paragraph 115) that Examinations should rarely take more than 9 months the Examination is projected to take at least 14 months to complete. Without receipt of the recommendations no action can be taken to progress the adoption of the Local Development Plan.
Complete the proposed review of Planning Advice in preparation for its adoption with the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2022, including targeted engagement with key stakeholders.	Twenty-five of twenty-six pieces of Planning advice have been prepared and considered by a member officer working group and found to be appropriate. Targeted engagement took place with appropriate stakeholders for each of the planning advice documents. One element of advice has been delayed by unforeseen circumstances.
Review and contribute to responses to be made by Aberdeenshire Council to the National Planning Framework 4 on its publication and passage through the Scottish Parliament.	Aberdeenshire Council submitted responses to the consultation on the Draft National Planning Framework, Draft Development Plan Regulations and Guidance and Draft Open space and Play Space Sufficiency Assessments before the prescribed deadline of 31 March 2022.
Scope the programme for the next Local Development Plan and start developing the process to be used in its preparation starting in 2022.	A Draft Project Plan has been prepared based on the Draft Development Plan Regulations and Guidance, and Stages 1 and 2 of this Plan (Inception and Management, and Evidence Report) are significantly advanced.

Delivery of our Actions and Improvements Committed in 2020-21

Development Management Team

Committed Improvements and Actions	Status
Local and Major Application Pre-application Review	Partial Completion – See Case Study 18 – Culture of Continuous Improvement . During this reporting year, the initial stages of a formal review have been completed and the working group have developed an action plan focussing on elements of the process that have been raised by stakeholders via feedback received. This is to establish if any efficiencies and improvements can be introduced to the process. This review, and its work and actions have been taken forward with an awareness that the process requires to be compatible with any future fee charging structure that may be introduced. Work continues on the Major Development pre-application process review which will, in the most part, follow the principles and processes developed for the Householder and Local Development pre-application process.
Review of Masterplan Process	Complete – See Case Study 19 – Culture of Continuous Improvement . This identifies the work undertaken in the reporting year and, in effect, the work on the project is completed pending the implementation which will follow the adoption of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2022. Significant customer (applicant/agent, elected member and consultee) engagement took place with proportionate revisions to the guidance and process undertaken.
Customer Service Excellence Accreditation (CSE)	Complete – See Case Study 17 – Culture of Continuous Improvement . Having gained accreditation in March 2021, work continued to address the areas of improvement set out in the CSE report. The annual 2-day CSE Audit took place in March 2022 and the Development Management Service gained re-accreditation with a reduced number of partial compliances assessed against the CSE criteria. There were also some Compliance Plus credits awarded.
Scheme of Governance Review	Complete – See Case Study 14 – Governance . Following extensive analysis, evidence gathering and engagement work during the reporting year, the proposal to make changes to the Scheme of Governance (Planning Delegations) was reported to and finally agreed (with some changes to the recommendations) by Aberdeenshire Full Council in April 2022. The revised Scheme of Governance has been submitted to the Scottish Government with the intention to start implementation in July 2022.

Committed Improvements and Actions	Status
Extension of Permitted Development Rights	Complete – Following the changes to the Permitted Development Rights regarding digital infrastructure; agricultural and forestry development; peatland restoration; and active travel development, the Service has continued to monitor and implement the changes in real cases. The PD group remains in order to review current and forthcoming consultations in relation to further extension of permitted development rights proposals.
Continuous Improvement Framework	Complete – See Case Study 17 – Culture of Continuous Improvement . The Framework alongside the establishment of the Project Tracker and Continuous Improvement Board is operational and will continue to guide the improvement activities, projects and priorities going forward.
Average timescales targets – Major applications – 35 weeks	No – 49.4 weeks
Average timescales targets – Local applications – 11 weeks	No – 12.9 weeks
Average timescales targets – Householder applications – 6 weeks	No – 7.8 weeks
Average timescales targets – Other applications – 8 weeks	No – 8.7 weeks
E:Planning Online Submissions – target 95%	No – 94%
Percentage timescales within 2 months – all LD planning applications – 75%	No – 74%
Percentage timescales within 2 months – non-householder applications – 65%	No – 61.9%
Percentage timescales within 2 months – householder applications – 95%	No – 88.2%
Developments Determined Within Timescale of Processing Agreement – 100%	No – 87%
Legal Agreements – average weeks target – 32 weeks	No – 47.3%
Legacy applications – reduce pre-2015 to 0; reduce overall post 2015 cases by 25%; and endeavour to have a minimum of 75% of legacy cases progressing towards determination through the use of project management tools	No – 52 remain (increase of 10 from end of March 2021) – See Case Study 15 – Governance .

Delivery of our Actions and Improvements Committed in 2021-22

Environment/Specialist Services Team

Committed Improvements and Actions	Percentage Complete
Review and prepare new strategies for the following services – Built Heritage and Outdoor Access, for the period 2021-2024, and prepare the related annual Action Plans for 2021/22.	100%
Complete implementation of improved process for management of access cases.	100%
Complete implementation of use of CONFIRM asset management software to improve management and monitoring of Council owned/managed paths, bridges and associated infrastructure.	60% Bridges complete and paths element currently being progressed
Deliver at least 2 specialist training/information sessions to Development Management staff and/or elected members to help raise awareness of the natural and historic environment and access considerations and improve decision making.	100% Understanding Heritage and Mowing for Biodiversity videos which were available on ALDO training database. Archaeology also delivered informal training to DM Staff at Moray Council following a request from them.
Engage Development Management staff in the preparation of a Conservation Area Appraisal or Management Plan.	50% Development Management officer currently on secondment with Environment Planning team is currently progressing Conservation Area appraisal.

Committed Improvements and Actions	Percentage Complete
Provide a training session for staff on new approaches to public and community engagement to maximise use of online/virtual resources and social media platforms.	<p>50%</p> <p>The training event has been finalised although due to delays will not now take place until 22/23 calendar year.</p>



Drum Castle, Drumoak

Delivery of our Actions and Improvements Committed in 2020-21

Enforcement Team

Committed Improvement and Actions	Completed
Enhance tools for gathering evidence	To be continued Site visits continued to be restricted during this reporting period and the sharing of equipment and access to offices has not been permitted due to covid-19. Work on this task by the Working Group will recommence in 2022-23 as Council offices are reopened for staff and restrictions fully lifted.
Develop use of Uniform System for Enforcement Team	Complete The new procedures for the assessment of enforcement cases in Uniform was implemented in Summer 2021 and has enabled a more streamlined approach to screening, logging and processing of cases. This has included the early identification of breaches within the system and enabling easier monitoring of live cases by Senior Planners. The simplified decision reports enable easier case review and Officers can identify open cases to prioritise workload management.
Develop the Planning Enforcement Content on Council's Website	Complete The online "Report a Breach" form has recently been developed with an amendment which went live March 2022. This includes a map pin feature and enables photographs to be uploaded by the complainant at the same time. This has enabled complainants to provide more information at the start of the process thereby allowing investigations to be prioritised sooner, sites more easily identified, and providing investigating officers with more information at the outset.
Monitoring of Conditions on major developments	To be continued Developing a new process for monitoring planning conditions on major developments is on hold until guidance is issued by Scottish Government. Thereafter the Council will implement the requirements in line with Legislation and guidance.
Develop a process for more collaborative working in relation to tackling unauthorised works in Town Centre Conservation Areas.	To be continued The Enforcement Team have been working collaboratively with colleagues in the Environment Team and Development Management to address the proliferation of unauthorised works in Town Centre Conservation Areas. The initial project has a specific focus in relation to advertisements and developments within the Fraserburgh Conservation Area. The working group are reviewing the Conservation area in a phased approach and proactively engaging with property owners to raise awareness and identify unauthorised development that is detrimental to the appearance of the area. Cases are then reviewed by the working group and actions agreed. The project is ongoing in 2022 – 23 and is the subject of Case Study 20 (Culture of Continuous Improvement) in this PPF.

Part 4:

National Headline Indicators (NHI)



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

aberdeenshire.gov.uk



B974, Cairn O'Mount Road

4A. NHI Key Outcomes

Development Planning

Development Planning	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Local and Strategic Development Planning			
Age of local/strategic development plan(s) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i>	2 Years, 11 months	3 Years, 11 Months	5 Years, 1 Month
Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	Yes	Yes	No
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	Yes – the 2019 development plan scheme indicated that the Proposed LDP would be submitted for examination in September 2020. Due to delay in publishing the Report of Examination on the Aberdeen City and Shire Proposed Strategic Development Plan, it was anticipated that submission of the Proposed LDP for examination would have been in December 2020.	Yes – the 2020 development plan scheme indicated submission of the Proposed LDP for examination in December 2020. Due to delay in starting the formal consultation on the Proposed LDP, and the scale of submissions received the plan was not submitted for examination until 12 March 2021.	No. The plan was submitted for examination on 12 March 2021.
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Yes – all commitments were met, however, due to delay in publishing the Report of Examination on the Aberdeen City and Shire Proposed Strategic Development Plan, publication and consultation on the Proposed LDP was delayed and was anticipated to fall into the 2020/21 period.	Yes – all commitments were met.	Yes – all commitments were met.

Key Outcomes	2020-21		2021-22		
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs	AHMA	RHMA	AHMA	RHMA	Notes
Established Housing Land Supply	33,671 units	12,514 units	33,528 units	12,260 units	Note 1
5 Year Effective Housing Land Supply (units)	10,675 units	3,452 units	11,405 units	3,132 units	Note 1
5 Year Effective Land Supply Total Capacity	27,383 units	6,554 units	27,083 units	6,201 units	Note 1
5 Year Housing Supply Target	7,509 units	3,206 units	8,800 units	2,200 units	Note 1
5 Year Effective Land Supply	7.1 years	5.4 years	6.5 years	7.1 years	Note 1
Housing Approvals	930 units		1,852 units		Note 2
Housing Completions in last 5yrs	5,423 units		4,916 units		Note 3
Marketable Employment Land Supply	281 ha		237 ha		Note 4
Employment take-up during reporting year	Unavailable		8.18 ha		Note 4

Note 1

Housing land supply figures are not available for Aberdeenshire, only for Housing Market Areas (HMAs) as required by the Aberdeen City and Shire Strategic Development Plan (SDP) 2020. The Aberdeen HMA includes Aberdeen City. In addition, figures are for all housing tenures only – separate housing tenure figures are not available.

There is currently 6.5 years' worth of effective housing land in the Aberdeen HMA, demonstrating the generous supply provided by allocations in the SDP 2020 and Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017.

In the Rural HMA there is 7.1 years' worth of effective housing land. The extent of the effective supply in the Rural HMA is primarily limited by low demand in parts of the area which affects the number of units and as a result, a more limited amount of the total land available appears in the five-year supply.

The SDP 2020 introduced a change to the proportion of the housing supply target to be met in each HMA, increasing the share of the Aberdeen HMA to 80% and decreasing the Rural HMA to 20%.

Source: Final Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2021. Figures correct as at 1 January 2021.

Note 2

The number of housing approvals for 2021/22 (1,852 units) continued to be affected by on-going Covid-19 pandemic restrictions but is considerably higher (99%) than the previous year (930 units) where the number of housing approvals had declined sharply in the first year of the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic housing approvals had been in the range of 2,200 units and 3,200 units. From March 2020, the pandemic caused restrictions on building, development projects being put on hold and staff in the development industry being placed on furlough, although these restrictions eased over 2021/22. There have been three approvals of major applications above 100 units this year compared to none in 2020/21.

Source: Uniform Housing Approvals April 2021 – March 2022

Note 3

The last 5 year housing completions are for 2016-2020. There were 786 housing completions in Aberdeenshire in 2020, below the five year average, largely due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Over the last 5 years 51% of units built in Aberdeenshire were in the Aberdeen HMA, 48% in the Rural HMA and 1% in the Aberdeenshire part of the Cairngorms National Park.

Source: Final Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2021. Figures correct as at 1 January 2021.

Note 4

The Employment Land Audit 2020/21 shows that the marketable employment land supply of 237 ha in Aberdeenshire remains generous with a wide selection of sites available. The previous figures were carried over from the Employment Land Audit 2018/19. The Employment Land Audit was not carried out for 2019/20 due to staff being redeployed to assist with the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Source: Final Employment Land Audit 2020/21. Figures correct as at 1 April 2021.

4B. NHI Key Outcomes

Development Management

Development Management	2021-22	2020-21
Project Planning		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	245 – 14%	353 – 17%
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	9 – 56%	6 – 86%
Decision Making		
Application approval rate	95.0%	93.9%
Delegation rate	93.9%	91.3%
Validation	23%	24%
Decision-making Timescales (weeks)		
Major Developments	49.4	10.9
Local developments (non-householder)	12.9	10.0
Householder developments	7.8	7.8
Legacy Cases		
Number cleared during reporting period	51*	58
Number remaining	52**	42

*31 had PPAs in place, 28 of these were issued within the required timescale.

**23 of these currently have a PPA in place.

In relation to performance, the reasons, factors and influences of any increase or decrease are largely embodied in the various sections of this PPF document. In particular reference should be made to [Case Studies 1](#) and [2](#) relating to Aberdeenshire Council Performance on Local and Major Developments (Quality of Outcomes).



4C. NHI Key Outcomes

Enforcement Activity

Enforcement Activity	2021-22	2020-21
Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed <i>Requirement: review every 2 years</i>	July 2021 (current)	N/A
Complaints lodged and investigated	420	342
Breaches identified	149	238
Cases closed	359	258
Notices served	23	15
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

The number of complaints lodged has increased by 19% in the current period as compared to the number reported in 2020-2021. This increment in cases lodged is attributable to a number of factors which include:

- the easing of restrictions associated with Covid-19 having previously delayed developments coming forward.
- all cases received via the Councils reporting function are logged via a central Admin function. However, a small proportion of these are not planning considerations, but are still counted.

- since working from home has become the norm for many this has resulted in more garden project related complaints within residential areas.

More significantly is the decline in the proportion of breaches identified as compared to previous years wherein this reporting period only 35% of cases were identified to be in breach of planning control as compared to 2020/2021 figure of 70% and 60% in 2019/2020.

These figures reflect, in part, a large proportion of cases reported relating to domestic and garden projects – many of which are permitted developments and low-key business ventures operating from residential properties which (due to their nature and scale) do not warrant the requirement for formal planning permission. These types of complaints did not identify a breach of control and therefore contributed, in part, to the higher % of non breaches being recorded. Another possible contributor may relate to the fact that Planning Authorities are still exercising discretion to allow for temporary breaches of planning control that are reasonable to allow businesses to operate and enable services to be provided as safely as possible as per Scottish Government guidance. Given the current relaxations, such cases have been temporarily closed off as having no breach in occurrence at the present time. This may have impacted the number of breaches recorded. It is expected that once the relaxations are lifted at the end of September 2022, this figure will increase during the next reporting period.

The continued application of more effective screening processes at the start of the complaints process, and the onus now placed on complainants to provide more accurate information in their initial submission including submission of photos and site locations, has resulted in cases being handled more effectively and efficiently. The outcome being that cases are being processed and closed more quickly. This is evidenced by the rise in the number of cases closed this year (359) as compared to last year (258) which accounts for a 28% increase.

In terms of formal action, this reporting period has seen a 37% rise in the number of Notices served as compared to the previous period. Notwithstanding the percentage rise, the figure remains low at 23. This is a result of cases being remedied successfully by less formal means.

As per previous reporting periods, the number of enforcement cases received continues to be higher than the number of cases closed in the same period which indicates the team continue to be busy with enforcement work. In comparison to the previous reporting period, 10% more cases have been closed in comparison to cases lodged.

No prosecutions were progressed, nor Direct Action carried out, since there were no cases that warranted such activity. No cases were reported to the Procurator Fiscal. However, there was one case that involved intervention by the Courts in the serving of an Interim Interdict to prevent further harm to a listed building.



Alford Community Campus

Part 5:

Scottish Government Official Statistics

Aden Country Park, Mintlaw



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

aberdeenshire.gov.uk

5A. Official Statistics

Decision-making timescales

Timescales	2021-2022	2021-2022	2020-21
Overall			
Major developments	7	49.4 weeks	10.9 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	744	12.9 weeks	10.0 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	61.9%	7.4 weeks	7.5 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	38.1%	21.7 weeks	16.8 weeks
Householder developments	705	7.8 weeks	7.8 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	88.2%	7.1 weeks	7.2 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	11.8%	12.8 weeks	13.9 weeks
Housing Developments			
Major	1	38.4 weeks	–
Local housing developments	331	15.5 weeks	10.7 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	51.1%	7.5 weeks	7.5 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	48.9%	23.8 weeks	17.3 weeks
Business and Industry			
Major	3	26.1 weeks	10.9 weeks
Local business and industry developments	117	11.4 weeks	8.6 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	68.4%	7.3 weeks	7.2 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	31.6%	20.1 weeks	14.6 weeks
EIA Developments	–	–	–
Other Consents	151	8.7 weeks	7.6 weeks
• Listed Building/Conservation Area Consents	62	10.2 weeks	7.7 weeks
• Advertisements	48	7.3 weeks	7.0 weeks
• Hazardous Substances Consents	0	–	–
• Other Consents and Certificates	41	8.0 weeks	7.7 weeks
Planning/legal agreements	27	47.3 weeks	14.5 weeks
• Major: average time	1	177.7 weeks	32.6 weeks
• Local: average time	26	42.2 weeks	14.1 weeks



Castle Fraser

5B. Official Statistics

Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2021-22		2020-21	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	26	22	84.6%	21	84%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	16	7	43.8%	7	33.3%



Haddo House

5C. Official Statistics

Context

In relation to decision-making figures and performance generally, the reasons, factors and influences are embodied throughout this PPF document. In particular reference should be made to Case Studies 1 and 2 which outline the performance levels achieved this year in relation to Development Management Local and Major Development planning applications. There remained challenges in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on operational working but a satisfactory level of performance has been achieved.

Another factor that has influenced performance has been vacancies that have arisen across the Development Management teams and challenges in being able to recruit satisfactorily and quickly in what is a difficult market. There has also been a welcome but significant increase in the number of planning applications received and made valid (281 more than in 2020-21) which coupled with the recruitment situation has had an influence. Notwithstanding, the number of planning application decisions that have been made has increased by 293 compared to 2020-21.

Specifically in relation to Major Developments there has been an increase in activity. However, the slower overall performance beyond target is really only reflected by the determination of one complex planning application that was a long running legacy case where agreement could not be reached with the applicant on the use of a PPA project management tool.

While there has been an increase in the number of applications received and determined, the same increase in the number of Local Review Body (LRB) and Scottish Government appeals and decisions has not been significantly affected. Indeed, there has only been one more LRB appeal decision compared to 2020-21 and 5 less Scottish Government appeal decisions compared to 2020-21. The percentage of appeals where the original decision was upheld has remained constant for LRB decisions (approx.84%) but has increased from 33% to almost 44% for Scottish Government decisions.

It has remained the case that all Committees (including the LRB) of the Council that consider and determine planning applications or appeals have remained fully functional.



Part 6:

Workforce Information



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Scotland's Lighthouse Museum, Fraserburgh

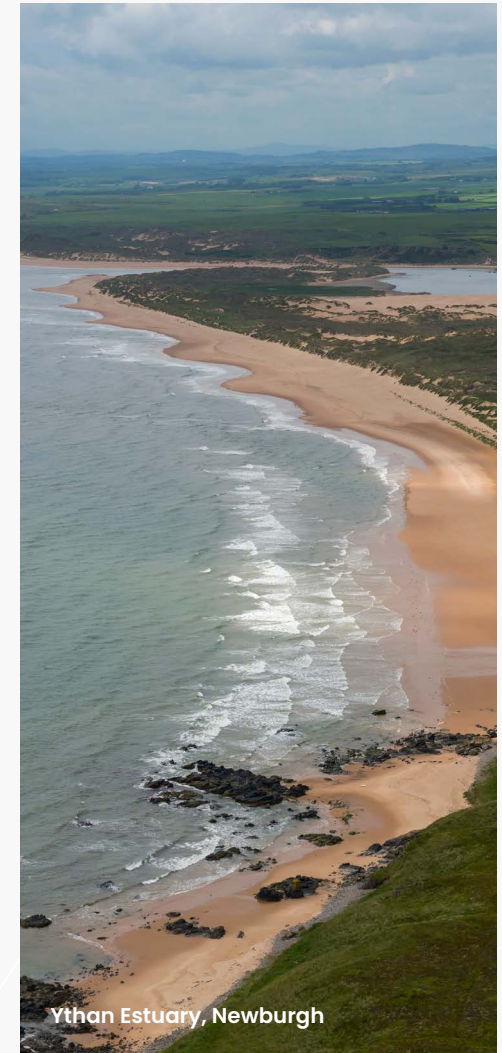
Workforce Information

	Tier 1 Chief Executive	Tier 2 Director	Tier 3 Head of Service	Tier 4 Manager
Relating to the Planning Service (within Planning and Economy Service) which sits within the Environment & Infrastructure Services Directorate	1	1	1	12 (Planning Managers/Team Managers and Team Leaders)

Staff Age Profile	Headcount
Under 30	10
30-39	36
40-49	39
50 and over	66

RTPI Chartered Staff	Headcount
Chartered staff	43

NB. Collated information relates to the entire Planning Service (within the Planning and Economy Service) which also includes the E:Planning and Embedded Administration Teams.

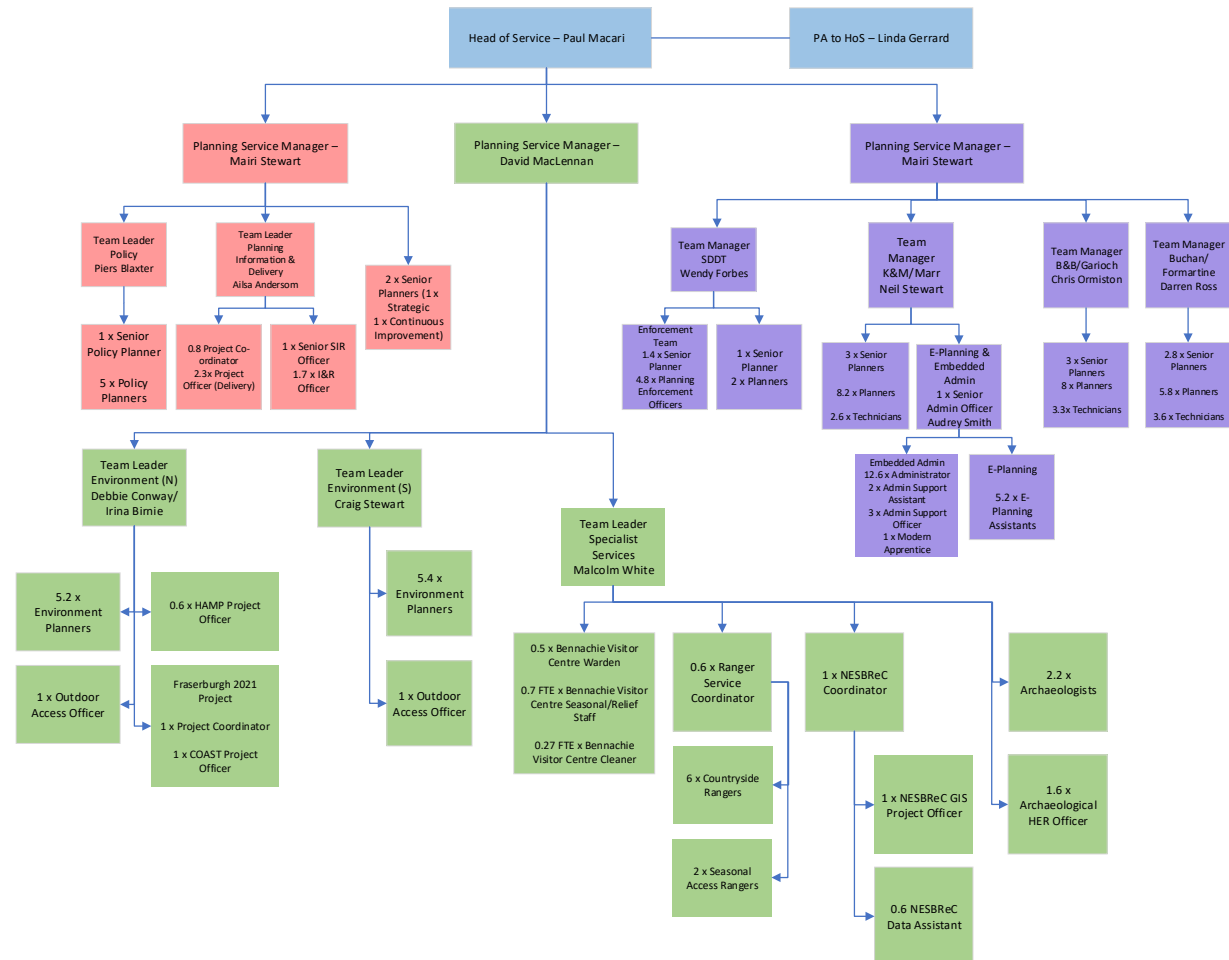


Ythan Estuary, Newburgh

Organograms

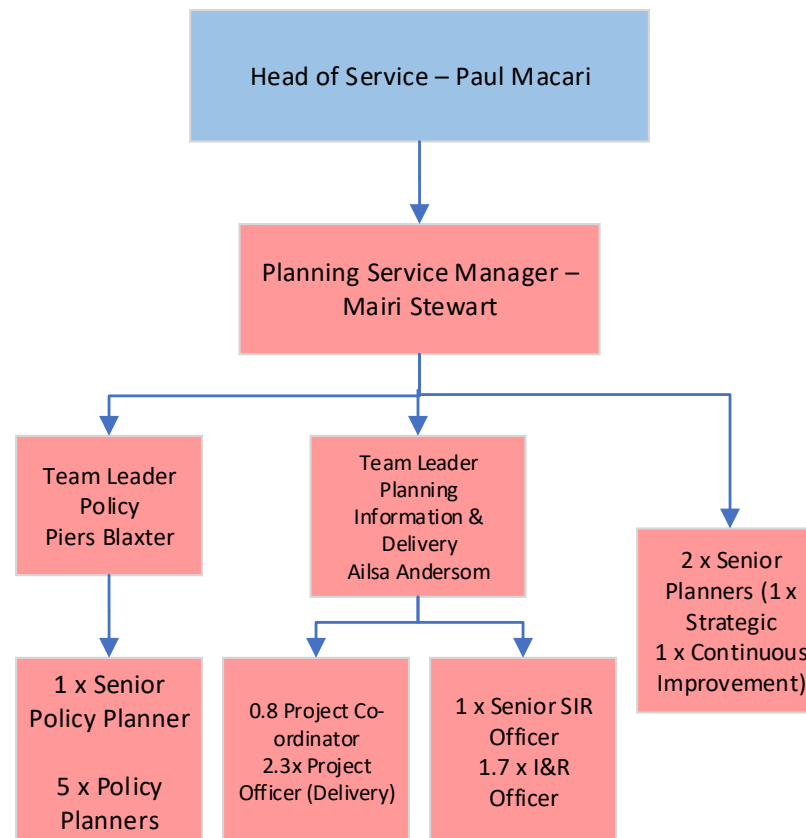
Overall Planning Service

The staffing structure is as per the Organograms. This covers the Planning part of the Planning and Economy Service and all its constituent parts at the end of the PPF reporting year working under the Director of Environment and Infrastructure Services and the Head of Planning and Economy.



Organograms

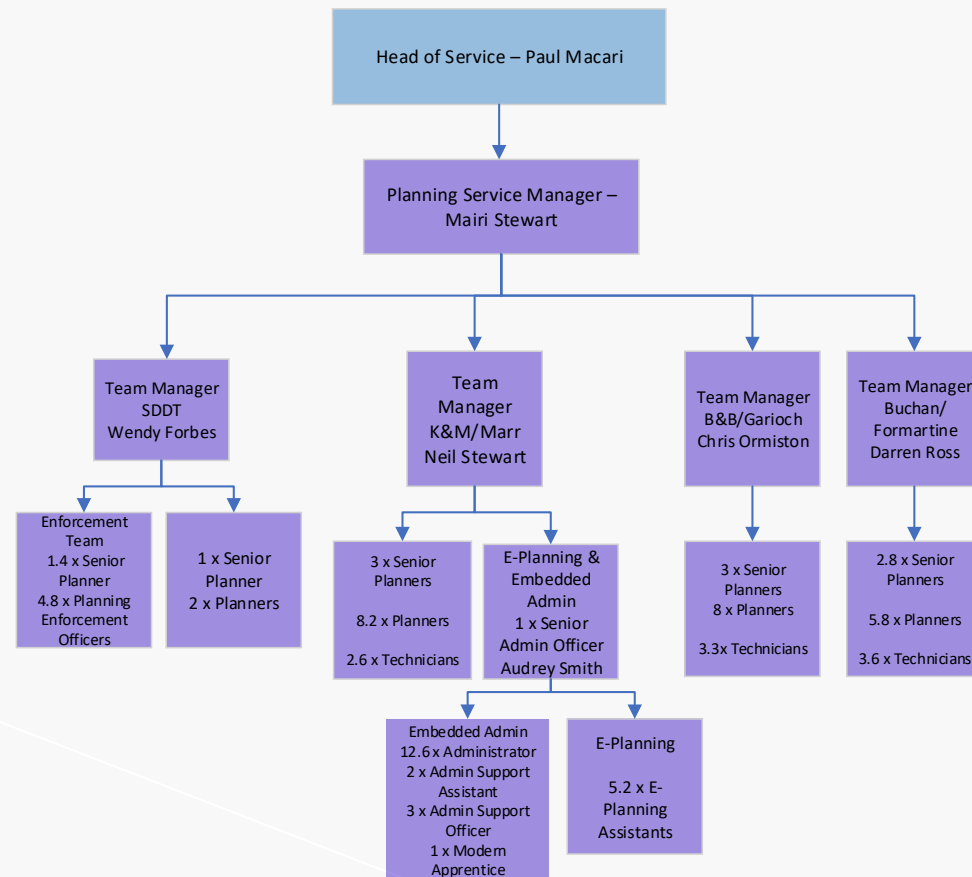
Planning Policy – Planning Information and Delivery Teams



Organograms

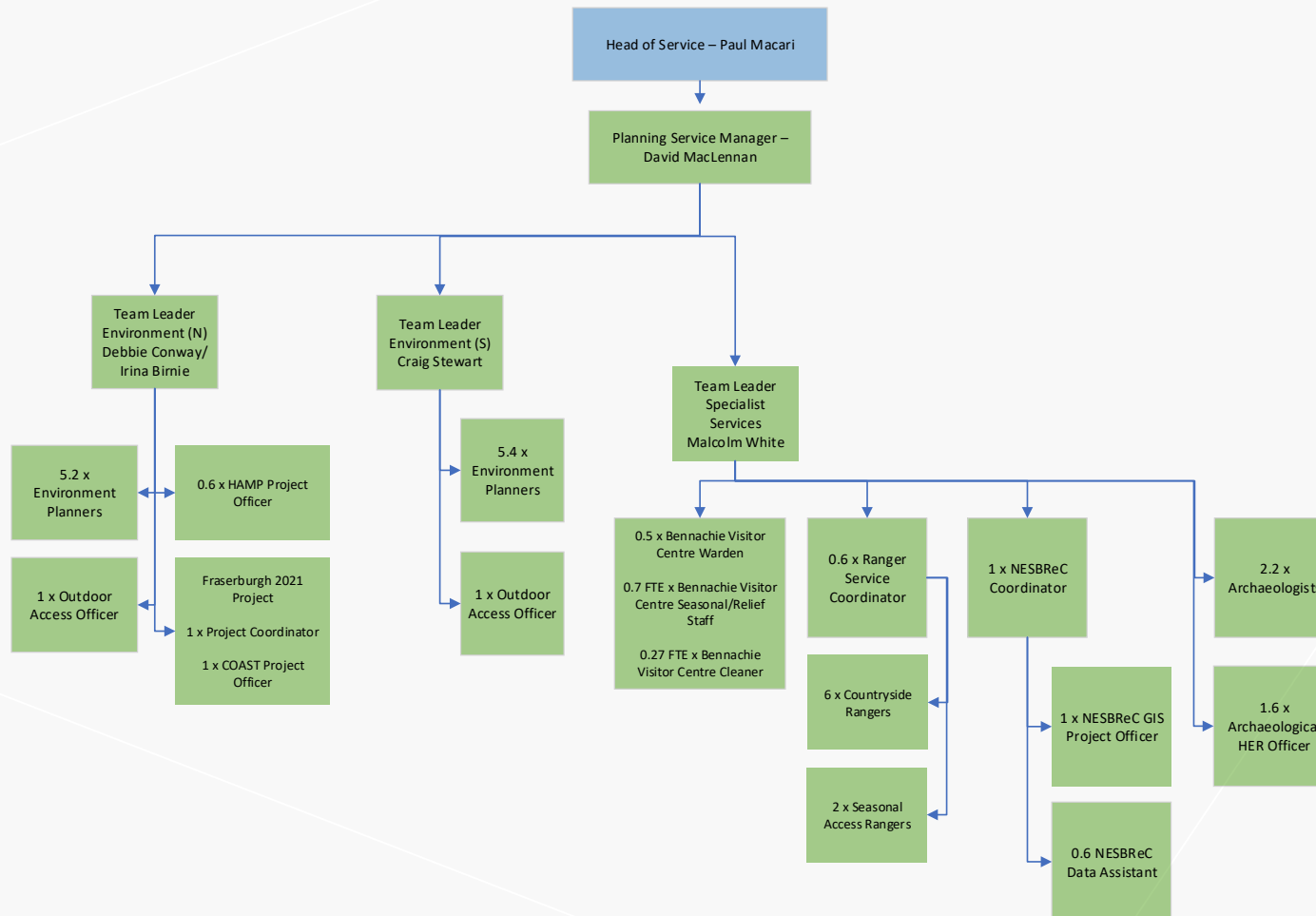
Development Management – Strategic

Development and Delivery – Enforcement Teams



Organograms

Environment – Specialist Services Teams



Part 7:

Planning Committee Information



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Tullich Church, Bällater

Planning Committee Information

Committee & Site Visits	Number per Year
Full Council Meetings*	7
Infrastructure Services Committee**	7
Area Committees***	79
Committee Site Visits****	9
Pre-Determination Hearings (PDH)	0
Local Review Body (LRB)*****	9
LRB Site Visits	4

*Aberdeenshire's Full Council considers a limited number of planning applications in line with its Scheme of Governance. In the reporting year 3 planning applications were reported to and decided by Full Council..

**Aberdeenshire Council have an Infrastructure Services Committee which deals with matters of policy. Some planning applications under the Scheme of Governance are considered at this Committee. In the reporting year 7 planning applications were reported to and decided by this Committee.

***Aberdeenshire Council has 6 Area Committees. These deal with area business, including the majority of planning applications that are required to be reported to Committee under the Scheme of Governance.

****Site visits include visits associated with Committee planning applications and Pre-Determination Hearing site visits by Area Committees.

*****This relates to the number of meetings of the LRB. The number of Appeals for Review that were reported to the LRB during the reporting year was 28.



Buchanan School, Peterhead

Part 8:

Feedback from Customers



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Drum Castle, Drumoak

Feedback from Customers

Complaints & Service Requests

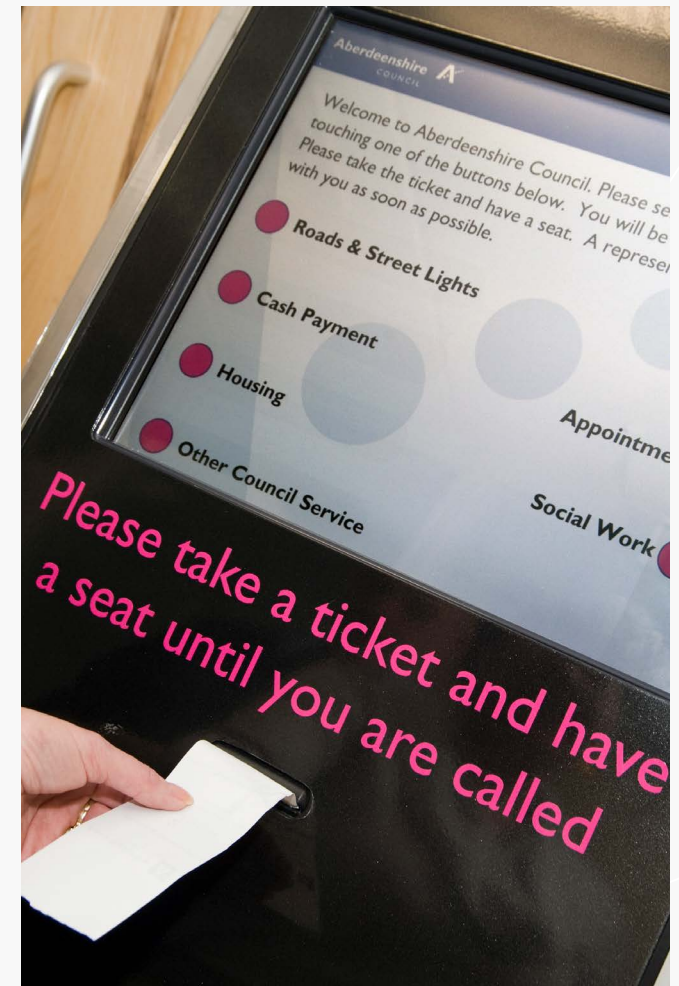
This additional section provides information about the number and type of feedback requests the Planning Service section of Planning and Economy has received over the reporting year. It also provides information about timescales for responding with the majority responded to within the original prescribed periods of 20 days. The number of frontline complaints (44) increased marginally from 2020-2021 (41). The number of Service Requests has though significantly decreased (239) from 2020-21 (342). Service Requests are though not considered to be formal complaints. The number of compliments recorded has risen by 14.

	2021-22	2020-21
Complaints	44	41
Service Request	239	342
Compliments	44	30

Complaint Response Times	Responded to Within 20 Days	Responded to Outwith 20 Days
2021-22	39 (89%)	5 (11%)
2020-21	32 (78%)	9 (22%)

In addition, during the reporting period there were 9 complainants who took their cases to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). 7 of these were informed that their cases would not be taken forward by the SPSO with 1 being upheld and 1 where the decision is still awaited at the time of reporting.

It is considered that on the basis of the number of planning applications dealt with and the number of workstreams and projects delivered by the Planning Service, and with the continuing challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and staff capacity, the information provided continues to demonstrate a high level of service to our customers.



Feedback from Customers

Selection of Compliments

"Many thanks for providing the decision notice yesterday. It was much appreciated and for us it is great to strike this milestone. Thanks also for your continual courteousness, engagement and professionalism throughout the planning process to date."

"Just a brief note to compliment the services of the Archaeological HER officer. Having first contacted him last year, he has always responded quickly, and professionally in respect of receiving information / queries. He has shown an interest in my efforts to provide relevant information and acted upon information received. He has tendered advice and information."

The HER is in my opinion a very interesting tool, and may I suggest, that it would be of benefit to promote this aspect of Council services, since, although I am aware of others who share a basic interest in the local area, in terms of local history, it seems to me (and I may be wrong!), that the existence of this facility is perhaps not as well-known as it should be."

In relation to workshops carried out for elected members on the Draft NPF4 Consultation - a response from an elected member:

"I know you're not seeking feedback on them – but I thought your workshops were excellent. Thanks to all involved."

Following the provision of data and advice to a member of the public in aiding them in their research, the Archaeology Service team received the following emailed compliment:

"Thanks for passing on the Kirkdale report which was very useful and I wouldn't have found otherwise. Pass on my thanks to the team. Their work on the Historic Environment Record is really good and important, and not given enough credit."

Part 9: Summary



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Dunnottar Castle, Stonehaven

Summary

Key Performance Markers 2021-22

No.	Performance Marker	Evidence
Driving Improved performance		
1	Decision – making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types.	<p>Statistics and data on timescales for decision-making on planning applications and other related planning application information are provided in Part 4B. NHI Key Outcomes – Development Management and Part 5A. Official Statistics – Decision-Making timescales of the PPF.</p> <p>Case Studies 1 and 2 of the PPF provide more detailed analysis of decision-making in relation to Local and Major Development planning applications.</p> <p>Other general evidence of processes related to decision-making over the reporting year can be found in PPF Case Studies 7, 14, and 15.</p>
2	Processing agreements: offer of processing agreements (or other project plan) made to prospective applicants in advance of all major applications and availability publicised on planning authority website.	<p>General evidence of use of Processing Agreements can be found in PPF Case Studies 1 and 2 and also reference is made in Part 3A. Service Improvements – In the coming year (Development Management Team) and Part 3B Delivery of our Actions and Improvements Committed in 2020-21 (Development Management Team); and Part 4B. NHI Key Outcomes – Development Management.</p> <p>PPAs are offered to all prospective applicants for national and major developments and for many local developments but are not always agreed. The use of PPAs is being reviewed with alternative tools such as formally agreed Extension of Time letters being encouraged to project manage timescales for certain types of applications.</p> <p>Information on Processing Agreements and encouragement for their use for National and Major applications is published on the website.</p>

No.	Performance Marker	Evidence
3	Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications: <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. 	<p>General evidence of early and successful collaboration can be found in PPF Case Study 7.</p> <p>In particular – Case Study 18 of the PPF provides an update on the work in relation to the Pre-application process implementation and monitoring.</p> <p>Part 4B. NHI Key Outcomes – Development Management indicates the number of applications that were the subject of Pre-application advice during 2021-22 (245).</p>
4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications within 6 months of ‘resolving to grant’: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from same time as last year). 	<p>Statistics on the number of legal agreements and timescales are provided in Part 5A – Official Statistics – Decision-Making Timescales of the PPF. These show that there has been an increase in the average timescales taken during 2021-22 for applications that have been the subject of a legal agreement. It should be noted that in 2020-21 the figure was lower due to the fact that there were a lower number applications that were the subject of legal agreements but also no major applications determined subject to legal agreements determined in 2020-21. The other main reason for the increase is the impact of the determination of one complex legacy case application. This legacy case is covered in Case Study 2.</p> <p>The Development Management and Legal Services continue to collaborate to monitor and improve working arrangements in relation to the early instructing and efficient progression of legal agreements. Case Study 15 relates to the Legacy Case Strategy Group work to try and prevent and minimise the number of applications and reduce their timescales for conclusion, including those on legal agreements.</p> <p>There remains in place a process in the Scheme of Governance that allows for delegation of refusals to Officers of applications where there is clear evidence that a legal agreement is not being progressed for reasons out with the control of the Council. Timescales set out are 4 months for Local Developments and 6 months for Major Developments from the point of determination.</p>
5	Enforcement charter: updated/re-published – within last 2 years.	<p>Part 4C. NHI Key Outcomes – Enforcement Activity of the PPF identifies that the Council’s Enforcement Charter was updated in July 2021 and as such by the end of the reporting year (March 2022) it remains less than two years old. It is publicly available on the website.</p>
6	Continuous improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through the PPF report – progress on all commitments. 	<p>Information on delivery of Continuous Improvement through Improvement Commitments across all aspects of the Planning Service are found in Part 3B. – Delivery of our Actions and Improvements Committed in 2020-21. Commitments for the coming year are outlined in Part 3A. – Service Improvements – In the coming year.</p> <p>A key commitment for 2022-23 is the continuation of the implementation and operation of the Continuous Improvement Framework. In this respect evidence of work undertaken in 2021-22 is found specifically in Case Study 17. Also there are the improvement projects outlined in Case Studies 16, 18, 19, and 20.</p>

No.	Performance Marker	Evidence
Promoting the plan -led system		
7	LDP (or LP): less than 5 years since adoption.	<p>The Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan was adopted in 2017. Due to delays by the DPEA in the Examination of the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2022, the current LDP is now "out-of-date". Part 4A: NHI Key Outcomes for Development Planning provides the relevant information and clarification that the Proposed LDP was submitted for Examination in March 2021 and that all commitments in terms of the Development Plan Scheme were met. The Examination report is now expected in June 2022 with formal adoption now envisaged August/September 2022. The delays here have been out with the control of the Council.</p> <p>Specifically, Case Study 13 relates to the proactive, collaborative and efficient way the Council has responded to requests from the DPEA for further information in relation to the Examination.</p> <p>Part 3B.- Delivery of our Actions and Improvements Committed in 2020-21 – Local Development Plan Team also outlines how the Council has endeavoured to aid the progress of the Examination.</p>
8	Development plan scheme demonstrates next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on course for adoption within 5-year cycle; • project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale. 	See Key Performance Marker 7 above.
9	Stakeholders including Elected Members, industry, agencies, the public and Scottish Government engaged appropriately through all key stages of development plan preparation.	<p>See Key Performance Marker 7 above. All stakeholders were engaged fully through all key stages of the development plan preparation.</p> <p>Part 3B.- Delivery of our Actions and Improvements Committed in 2020-21 – Local Development Plan Team indicates the engagement undertaken with stakeholders in the review of Planning Advice in preparation for the adoption of the Proposed LDP. Case Study 9 also provides the evidence of this activity.</p>
10	No longer applicable – gap kept for data continuity	
11	Production of relevant and up to date policy advice.	<p>Regular and proportionate policy advice continues to be given through the Pre-application process with responses given in terms of upfront advice and requirements for submissions. See Case Study 18 of the PPF in relation to Pre-application process update.</p> <p>Detailed information on the Pre-application process is publicly available on the website.</p> <p>Other evidence of advice being offered can be found in Case Studies 7 and 10 of the PPF.</p> <p>A wide range of Planning Advice continues to be publicly available on the website and as outlined in Case Study 9 the Planning Advice has been reviewed (although not publicly available yet) during the reporting year in preparation for the adoption of the Proposed LDP.</p>

No.	Performance Marker	Evidence
Simplifying and streamlining		
12	Corporate working across services: to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact; joint pre-application advice).	Evidence of corporate working across services can be found throughout the PPF and is evidenced as Key Areas of Work in 16 out of the 20 Case Studies presented (Collaborative Working). These Case Studies are 1 , 2 , 3 , 4 , 5 , 6 , 7 , 8 , 9 , 12 , 13 , 15 , 16 , 18 , 19 , and 20 .
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities.	Evidence of sharing good practice, skills and knowledge both internally and externally can be found in PPF Case Studies 10 and 16 .
Delivering development		
14	Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion/ withdrawal of planning applications more than one-year old. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing number of applications more than one-year old (from same time last year). 	<p>Information on numbers of legacy cases can be found at Part 4B. NHI Key Outcomes – Development Management of the PPF.</p> <p>There has been an increase in the number of legacy cases remaining at the end of the reporting period compared to the same time last year. Case Study 15 though sets out the work to re-focus the Legacy Case Strategy in order to try and prevent legacy cases being created and reducing the overall number of legacy cases by prioritising and categorising applications that are deliverable and meet social and economic benefits.</p> <p>In addition, Part 3A. – In the coming year – Development Management Team of the PPF there remains a commitment to focus on Legacy Case prevention and reduction.</p>
15	Developer contributions: clear expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); in pre-application discussions 	<p>Policy RD2 Developers' Obligations of the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 – Pages 78 to 80 – sets out the requirements for contributions to the provision of necessary infrastructure.</p> <p>Section 14 – The Responsibilities of Developers of The Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2020 also has Policy RD2 Developer Obligations – Page 92.</p> <p>There is detailed information, including FAQs, YouTube video, customer charter, information bulletins and contact details, all publicly available on the website on Developer Obligations.</p> <p>There is also Supplementary Guidance “Developer Obligations: Methods of Calculation to show how exact levels of obligations are worked out.</p> <p>Levels of developer contributions can be discussed at the Pre-application stage and the Developer Obligations Team are consulted on Pre-application submissions where appropriate.</p>

Aberdeenshire

COUNCIL



From mountain to sea