

Planning Performance Framework

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022







11th Planning Performance Framework Report 2021-2022

COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

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Outer Hebrides Planning Context

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is pleased to present its eleventh Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report covering the reporting period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The service has continued to achieve good outcomes delivering against increasing economic cutbacks; recruitment challenges; diminishing staff resources; and the uncertainties arising from Brexit and the Pandemic but has struggled to maintain performance on development management decisions within timescale.

Delivering development in the Outer Hebrides is distinct from that in other areas, with unique challenges and opportunities: an extensive geography and coastline; dispersed settlements; high scenic value and natural heritage reflected in high levels of environmental designation and attendant workload emanating from EIA and Habitats Regulations.

Transportation and logistics contribute to significantly higher on-costs for construction, building materials, fuel and energy throughout the islands and these costs have escalated dramatically in the reporting period. There is a distinct private sector economy, with a high incidence of self-build and limited volume house building other than public sector-led development. There has been a notable increase in applications for single house development and householder developments in the reporting period.

In the 2021/2022 reporting period, the Planning Service continued to function well despite ongoing resource pressures and staff largely still home based. Demands for the service remained high with local planning applications numbers increasing from 298 to 386, (an increase of 88 cases from the previous year) with no increased staff resource; this coupled with a parallel increase in demand for pre-application advice.

The Service continued to respond to work emanating from the new Planning Act with a view to ensuring our voice is listened to at National level and helping to make the new system fit the needs of the Outer Hebrides and its communities.

Due to the dispersed geography of the Island chain, working remotely was already occurring pre-pandemic and the Planning Service has successfully adapted to the change from mainly office-based to home and hybrid working, deploying interactive communications technology such as Microsoft Teams and social media channels to continue to work collaboratively with colleagues, other sections within our Local Authority and with partner organisations such as the Improvement Service (IS). Staff continue to demonstrate their flexibility, resilience and reliability, interacting with external partners engaging with stakeholders; the community; key agencies and developers on a range of plans, programmes, and projects to collaborate for better planning outcomes for the Outer Hebrides.

Planning Teams have participated in workshops and provided comprehensive responses to consultations on draft versions of NPF4; Local Development Planning Regulations & Guidance; Open Space Strategies and Play Sufficiency Assessments with a view to ensuring that new policy is fit for purpose and does not disadvantage Island areas. The principle of island proofing enshrined in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 is to remove disadvantage. Officers are conscious of this imperative in their responses to national consultations. The Planning Service continues to hold Government and other stakeholders to account in any engagement it participates in or contributes to, including work emanating from the Planning Act, specifically Island Community Impact Assessments.

Part 1: Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies

The following Case Studies illustrate how the Planning Service has achieved its performance standards, as tested through the Performance Markers.

Case Study 1: Progress at Care Centre and Sinclair Avenue, Stornoway

Location and Dates:

OHLDP Proposal Site Goathill Farm West, Lewis (April 2021 – March 2022)

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

- Quality of Service and Engagement
- Governance

Meeting Key Markers:

Key Marker 2: offering processing agreements; **Key Marker 3:** early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications: availability and promotion of preapplication discussions for all prospective applications; and clear and proportionate requests for supporting information; **Key Marker 12:** corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (e.g. protocols; joined-up services; single contact; joint pre-application advice), **Key Marker 15:** Developer contributions: clear expectations: set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan,) and in preapplication discussions.

Key Areas of Work:

- Project Management
- Community Engagement

Stakeholders Involved

- Western Isles Health and Social Care Partnership (NHS Western Isles and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (CnES));
- Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP);

- Scottish Government
- Social care clients

Overview:



Care Home, Housing with Extra Care and General Housing, Goathill - aerial view

The overall cost for this development, including the 74 housing units being delivered by HHP, is circa £45m. Of this, the current overall development cost for the Care Home, Housing with Extra Care (HWEC) and related site infrastructure is circa £35m. The Goathill flagship project aims to develop intergenerational housing within an eight-hectare site, partially within a Local Development Plan proposal site allocation. It will deliver a mixed development of 74 affordable houses, a 52-bed care unit and 50 housing with extra care units, and associated access, services, landscaping, and recreation provision. The project is being delivered by a unique partnership between the Comhairle, the local Integrated Joint Board (including the NHS Western Isles), and Hebridean Housing Partnership (HHP) the only registered social landlord (RSL) and volume house builder in the Outer Hebrides.

Work started on the site in July 2019, and despite delays due to unprecedented rainfall, the lost time had been made up by March 2020 before work stopped on the site due to Covid-19, in March 2020. It resumed in Summer 2020 and has been subject to supply chain and contract workers having to travel from the mainland to support delivery of the project. The initial project (total) handover of April 2022 has inevitably slipped due to weather conditions, covid, supply chain and logically problems of delivery such a major

capital project on a Scottish Island. A revised handover of autumn 2022 is planned though interim phases of the affordable housing have already been completed and occupied.

Goals:

This project will deliver a multi-generational partnership project on an LDP Plan allocation site. It aims to address the affordable housing need in and around Stornoway and help deliver the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and Strategic Local Programme (SLP), in relation to elderly housing need and supported living, and general housing need.

Outcomes:

After receiving planning consent in December 2018 construction started on the site in summer 2019 with the turf cutting ceremony attended by Kevin Stewart MSP then Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning, taking place on the 18 July 2019. Weather conditions caused delay in the construction work as the Outer Hebrides experienced exceptional levels of rainfall during the autumn and winter of 2019. However, by March 2020 the lost time had been made up by the contractor undertaking the Phase 1, enabling works package. However as with many major construction projects 2020-21 has been significantly impacted the Covid pandemic.

The project consists of three distinct construction phases: One — preliminary civil engineering works across the entire site, this involves the enabling work, site servicing and the layout and construction of the roads. This work will continue throughout the development of the site. Construction phases two and three have been running concurrently and these comprise the construction of the care home, extra care housing and the 74 houses by different contractors and programmes. Work on construction phases two and three commenced in Autumn/Winter 2019. This involved advanced discussions to ensure the multi-contractor, overlapping phases of the development could work together within the site — this has been achieved and operation has been successful. Before Covid lockdown protocols and working practices had ensured an effective site and project delivery.

During 2020-21, the year of Covid, both the contractors, multi-agency clients, programme agents and project leaders, and the Comhairle as planning authority (and client) had to make adjustments and adaptations to bring this complex project back on track, with a staggered work programme only recommencing in Summer 2020. The protracted start and need for Covid compliance were further compounded by the fact that many construction workers on the site were not locally based and had been commuting into the island to work on the project. Island travel restrictions and a fortunate lack of Covid cases locally created a serious concern locally about work restarting, and the potential importation of Covid. These parameters and constraints continued into 2021-22.

As with many other construction projects, materials supplies were disrupted by both Covid and Brexit, and the logistical issues that created. Completion and occupancy of the

first phase of housing to be released was delayed by a national shortage of domestic heat pumps, for example.

Once work had fully re-established onsite and social distancing measures relaxed the community aspects of the project recommenced and continues into 2021-22. This has included support of direct and indirect apprenticeships in both construction and project delivery, and in health and social care. Given recruitment and skills issues in both these sectors, locally and nationally, this was a long held legacy objective for this transformational project.

Another community benefit of the project and pre-occupancy condition is the refurbishment of a neighbouring play park. Planners worked with contractors, councillors, and the local community to discharge this condition, with the contractors in fact exceeding the refurbishment brief and providing additional new equipment and enhanced finishes.



Columbia Place Play Park

An unforeseen involvement of the Planning Service in the ongoing project has been in a project sub-group charged with assessing applications for some of the 40,000 tonnes of excavated topsoil from this former farmland. In collaboration with SEPA, who regulate movement of topsoil, a quasi-SEPA application form hosted by the Comhairle has enabled community groups, individual householders, and some commercial business to legitimately apply for batches of the topsoil, whilst still complying with SEPA regulations.

Thus far this sub-project has distributed around 19,000 tonnes of good quality topsoil, resultant from this former farmland.

As the project moved in its third year (2021-22), completion of the first phase of social housing, 50 homes for social rent and shared equity, were completed for occupancy in July 2021. These much-needed homes included 8 adapted units. The completion of these homes required arrangements to permit residential occupancy adjacent to an active construction site and involved the discharge of a number of Planning conditions. Some of these conditions, related to pre-occupancy, involved negotiation between the Planning Service and the client, and were ultimately resolved, balancing liveability and Place alongside an active construction site.



Sinclair Avenue, Phase 1 of Housing

As work on the interior of the care and extra care provision progressed the Health and Social Care Partnership, as directed by the Care Commission, advised of the potential need for post-Covid adaptations of accommodation and space. The implications of this for both consented Planning and Warrant applications were reviewed and dealt with, with some variations through Building Standards. Planning has dealt with some wider non-material variations to the Planning consent though these have been minimal and were dealt with through constructive relationships and communication between the Planning Service and project agents.







Care Home and Housing with Extra Care Housing

Post consent planning staff remain in contact with project agents and contractors regularly on this major development and an officer sits on the project delivery board: this continues to prove to be an effective approach with the officer ensuring that problems and opportunities are addressed on an ongoing basis. We will continue to report in next year's annual report, for which we hope will conclude this transformational project.

Key Officers

Helen MacDonald (DM), Hannah Morrison and Mairi Maciver (DP & MP)

Case Study 2: Outer Hebrides Housing Land Audit 2021

Location and Dates:

Outer Hebrides – published July 2021

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

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

Key marker 12: Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (e.g., protocols; joined-up services; single contact).

Key Areas of Work:

Housing Supply

Affordable Housing

Stakeholders Involved;			
Local Developers	Key Agencies		
Overview:			



Mackenzie Park, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis

Scottish Planning Policy states that housing land requirements should be met by an effective, rolling five-year land supply. The planning system should: "identify a generous supply of land for each housing market area within the plan area to support the achievement of the housing land requirement across all tenures, maintaining at least a 5-year supply of effective housing land at all times".

The Outer Hebrides Housing Land Audit (OHHLA) is normally carried out on a biennial basis as SPP allows for the method and frequency to be adapted for local circumstances in rural areas. Consultation for the current OHHLA was carried out with key stakeholders regarding housing proposal sites. Some of the sites in the Housing Land Audit were identified through the Development Plan process and others were identified in the Comhairle's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), and further sites identified through a 'call for sites' process reflective of the development climate in the islands. The OHHLA has identified sufficient supply for the identified demand. However, the Comhairle continues to engage with agencies and landlords in the process of identifying land for housing.

The OHHLA also identifies the number of housing completions and the OHHLA continues to identify a reduction in the number of housing completions over recent - years. This is largely due to a decrease in the number of private house builds, while the number of

affordable housing provision has increased. A decade ago, private house build provided approximately 72% of house build, but this has now reduced to 55%.

Goals:

In accordance with Scottish Planning Policy and as part of the Local Development Plan (LDP) and Local Housing Strategy (LHS) process the Comhairle produced and published a new OHHLA in July 2021. During the preparation of the OHHLA the Planning Service contacted key stakeholders including landowners, developers, and agents with a view to preparing a Housing Land Audit to ensure a sufficient land supply suitable for the construction of housing. Collaboration with housing colleagues was also essential in the process, both in identifying suitable land, but especially in identifying the programming of housing, as per the Comhairle's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). The "Call for Sites" issued to stakeholders in December 2020 also identified a number of sites. The Comhairle issued a press release at the same time to engage further with any landowners to identify potential land or sites available for both private and affordable housing in all areas, but particularly in rural areas. In addition, the Chair of the Communities and Housing Committee, Cllr Kenny John MacLeod, wrote to Grazings Committees in the Outer Hebrides seeking the availability of crofting land for housing, which also proved to be a successful process. This need to encourage wider 'developers' reflects the lack of a private sector-led development in the Outer Hebrides with very limited speculative private sector build.

Outcomes:

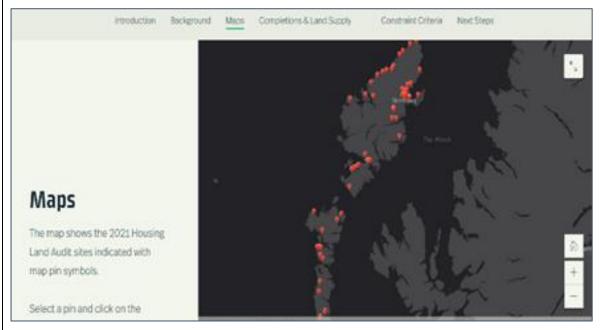
The Comhairle has received a total Resource Planning Assumption of £43.302 million for the five-year period 2022/23 – 2026/27. The Comhairle works in close partnership with Hebridean Housing Partnership, the only large Registered Social Landlord, to deliver the affordable housing programme. The Comhairle's draft SHIP for the 2022/23 – 2026/27 period sets out proposals for the development of new affordable houses, providing a mix of tenure and a geographical spread throughout the islands.

The increase in funding has presented challenges to the Comhairle and its partners, and the work of the OHHLA is part of the essential process in the identification of suitable land for housing purposes. Work is ongoing as part of the LDP/SHIP process to identify future sites, particularly, in rural areas. This has included engagement with the network of Community Landowners and other community and land interest organisations to assist with the identification of potential sites. Also, as agreed by the Comhairle previously, feasibility work continues to be carried out on sites by HHP in conjunction with *Tighean Innse Gall* to assess their suitability and ensure a continuing land supply. This work has increased to ensure additional sites are acquired to support the extra house build, in response to the increased funding being provided by the Scottish Government.

The "Call for Sites" issued to planning stakeholders including developers, agents and other landowners, in December 2021 resulted in several additional sites being identified for the HLA and SHIP process, demonstrating the value of the engagement process. The response

to the letter sent to all Grazings Committees was equally successful. The team received a total of 42 respondents from the total of 176 Grazings Committees, with 28 requesting further discussion, and we anticipate further sites coming forward due to the consultation process. Our Housing colleagues continue to engage with Grazings Committees in further identifying suitable sites.

The Comhairle endeavours to make the OHHLA a straightforward, accessible and engaging process for the public. Landowners were able to access forms online in order to send to the Planning team. The OHHLA was published online in July 2021. Further training accessed by Comhairle staff has resulted in the most recent OHHLA being published with new software called ArcGIS StoryMap. This is a story authoring web-based application that enables the sharing of maps in the context of narrative text and other multimedia content. All OHHLA sites are represented on the map, users can zoom in on sites, each provided with a pop-up template detailing information as illustrated below. Also, shown below an image of one of the most recently developed OHHLA sites at Melbost. Further, more detailed information on all sites in the Outer Hebrides is also available in a web link.



Screenshot of Interactive Housing Land Audit presented ArcGIS StoryMap platform

Name of key officers

Kathleen Shirkie, Mairi Maciver (DP & MP)

Case Study 3: Grinneabhat Community Hub

Location and Dates:

Period 2021-2022: Outer Hebrides

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

Quality of outcomes

Key Markers:

Key Marker 11: 3: Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications:

- availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications
- clear and proportionate requests for supporting information

Key Marker 12 Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (e.g., protocols; joined-up services; single contact; joint pre-application advice)

Key Areas of Work

- Economic Development
- Rural development

- Placemaking
- Regeneration

Stakeholders Involved:

- Bragar and Arnol Community Trust
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise
- Authority Planning Staff (DM)
- Scottish Government (Regeneration Capital Grant Fund with support from CnES)

Overview:

When the redundant school building was offered for sale by the Comhairle, the local community established *Urras Coimhearsnachd Bhradhagair agus Arnoil - UCBA* the Bragar and Arnol Community Trust, started fund raising to purchase the building and transform it into a vibrant community hub including café and hostel facilities.



Grinneabhat Centre, Bragar, Isle of Lewis

A trend for 'staycation' holidays and 'the accessible wild' is driving tourism into the more remote fringes of Scotland, including the Highlands and Islands. While the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily shut down the travel industry, the newly opened Grinneabhat Centre quickly became a lifeline for the community, providing takeaway meals during lockdown and supporting isolated people through social media news and updates.

Tourism is a key growth sector in the Outer Hebrides accounting for around 10% of the local economy. Income from the sector has grown from £53 million in 2014 to £65 million in 2017 and was on track to reach £74 million by 2020 prior to the onset of COVID-19. A key advantage of hostel accommodation is that it does not remove existing properties from the local housing market. Additionally, the centre provides job opportunities allowing locals to stay in our more remote villages and it provides a quality visitor facility which spreads tourism spend in the locality.

The project involved three planning applications over several years. Following pre-app in response to planning's clear and proportionate request for information the Trust submitted a comprehensive feasibility study that detailed the development phases, including design objectives providing planners with sufficient information to assist in a prompt assessment and determination in accordance with the LDP. A change of use from a school (Class 10) to include a community hub (still Class 10), a cafe (Class 3) and a hostel (Class 7). The development also included a small scale extension and renovation of the building, and the layout and provision of a car park on the former playground site. A further application to site two Polycrubs© within the curtilage of the community hub. The design of the Polycrubs© are suitably appropriate to the rural character, distinctiveness and settlement pattern of the local area. A further application for Advertisement Consent was approved and the resultant Gaelic signage relates to the facilities within the building incorporating pictograms to indicate the meaning of the words.

Goals:



Ceramic tiles celebrating local families who helped raise £25,000 private funding for the project

To find a sustainable use for an old building

When the school closed in 2012, the community acquired it with a view to redeveloping it as there was no community hub in the area. The process of fund raising, design stages and resultant development has strengthened community bonds and planning have been able to assist with the project at pre-application and through the planning process to realisation on the ground. As the village primary school, it had been at the heart of the community and was considered an important building to preserve and find a sustainable use for.

To provide a cultural venue

Exhibitions are now held to share the area's history and culture and to preserve our heritage.

To support the Gaelic Language

Signage is in the native Gaelic and pictograms are used to indicate the meaning of the words. Many people speak Gaelic every day in the community and the centre provides a place to gather, where it is natural to speak the language.

To regenerate the community

Providing a source of local employment, a facility that may be used by the community and visitors.

To Provide a tourism facility and economic opportunity

Tourism is growing in the Outer Hebrides and there is a greater need for more amenities to cater for passing visitors. The café provides lunches and delicious baking for visitors and locals. The high quality hostel accommodation provides accommodation and does not displace housing in the village.

To provide allotments

Including a community polytunnel to supply the café and the wider community with locally grown produce.

Outcomes:

A sustainable future for the townships of Bragar and Arnol:

Planning now has a defined statutory purpose: to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest and this includes 'anything which contributes to sustainable development'. This case study demonstrates how important it is for planners to collaborate with the community and partners to contribute to sustainable development and placemaking, enabling people to create social enterprise in their locality; celebrate their cultural heritage whilst providing a public space that meets the needs of locals and visitors.

By sensitively extending and renovating this non-listed Victorian building, a new community heart has been created. This project aligns well with our development strategy, where the principal policy objective is to accommodate development to meet sustainable growth for local needs, particularly for tourism and service activities. A vibrant community hub has been hewn out of a building that would otherwise be redundant. Rather than opting for a newbuild project, this is a good example of the sustainable use of materials, recycling and renewal of an old building which continues to be a cherished part of the community.



Grinneabhat Community Centre

This study is a good example of placemaking, community building and social inclusion as it aids many other activities — it is a public place for the community and visitors from other parts of the Islands and beyond to get together, attend cultural events; ceilidhs; workshops and classes. It contributes to health and wellbeing and provides a focus for people, including the ageing population, assuaging loneliness in a rural area.

The project supports Gaelic, providing a gathering place where people can speak their native language, offers Gaelic classes and encourages people who have moved to the area to join in, and attend cultural events. The extension includes a new gallery space for a programme of art exhibitions and meetings.

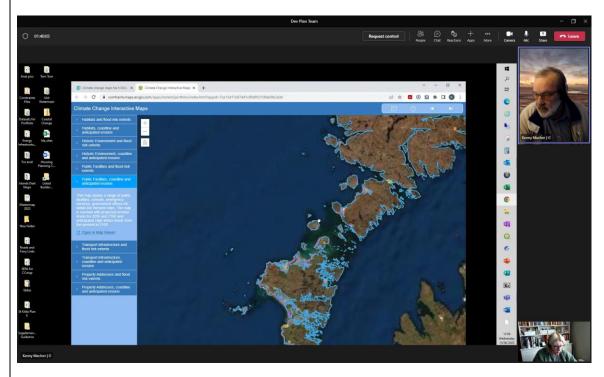
The new facility supports the local economy by providing opportunities for work and leisure in a rural area thereby sustaining the population in that area. As there was latent demand for visitor accommodation in the area, planners encouraged the development of hostel facilities as the building is on the route of the Hebridean Way long distance cycle trail.

Early engagement with the local authority and key agencies enabled the project to benefit from public money including Scottish Government and Highlands and Islands Enterprise Funding. Aspects of this case study highlight the changing needs of society, from people preferring to live near their place of work without the need for transport to main centres; to celebrating their heritage, culture and language; to being less reliant on imported produce to a return to a more community-orientated self-reliant approach to food growing; demonstrating the value of pre-application engagement with the planning service and, through it, with other Comhairle Services and key Agencies.

Name of key officers

Helen Macdonald and Iain Macleod (DM)

Case Study 4: Climate Change Adaptation in the Outer Hebrides



Climate Change Intetractive Maps

"Kenny has been doing a great job of pulling the data together for us. The aim is for it to be accessible to all, and to be useful for planning ahead and thinking about adaptation priorities for the future – particularly with regard to coastal change, rising sea levels and flooding risks."

David Maclennan
Chair of the CCWG
Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership

Location and Dates:

Outer Hebrides (2020-2021)

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

- Quality of service and engagement
- Culture of Improvement

Meeting Key Markers

Key Marker 6: continuous improvements: progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report

Key Marker 13: Sharing good practice, skills, and knowledge between authorities

Key Areas of Work

- Environment
- Climate Change
- Collaborative working

Stakeholders Involved

- Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (Climate Change Working Group includes CnES; NatureScot; NHS Western Isles; SEPA; UHI; Members of Scottish Youth Parliament; Tighean Innse Gall; Hebridean Housing Partnership; Community Land Sector; Third Sector Interface; Western Isles Emergency Planning Group)
- Authority Planning Staff

Overview:

"The extent and rate of coastal erosion, and the risk to coastal assets, is expected to increase under all emissions scenarios. Under a High Emissions Scenario, 75% of soft coasts are expected to be eroding by 2050. Under a Low Emissions Scenario erosion extent, rates and risk are lower, but they remain significant."

Dynamic Coast Research Summary (2021)

CREW (Centre of Expertise for Waters)

On the edge of Europe, the Outer Hebrides are already experiencing the impacts of climate change with vulnerable parts of the west coast of the Southern Isles already experiencing the effects of coastal erosion. The Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership (OHCPP) established the Climate Change Working Group (CCWG) to tackle this emergency at a local level.

The CCWG are developing a Climate Rationale, and Case for Action – pulling together information collected from interviews, scientific data sets, and community engagement to set the context for the climate change challenges that lie ahead and how we need to plan to reduce our impacts and adapt to change.

Comhairle Planning staff are actively contributing to this work by developing an interactive mapping tool that everyone can access. During the initial stages James Armour pulled together

GIS data on coastal change (dynamic coast), coastal flooding (SEPA), infrastructure (CnES) and habitats (NatureScot Habitat Map of Scotland), and Kenny Maciver has been working with Adaptation Scotland, SNIFFER and the Climate Change Working Group to produce the ArcGIS StoryMaps which will be published soon.

Goals:

To raise awareness of coastal change: the aim is for the interactive mapping it to be accessible to all, and to be useful for planning ahead and thinking about adaptation priorities for the future - particularly regarding coastal change, rising sea levels and flooding risks.

To extract the Outer Hebrides Data: as many of the required datasets are created for the whole of Scotland, Kenny's work included extracting the data specific to the Outer Hebrides and inputting the data and accompanying narrative into the StoryMap platform.

To make the tool user friendly: feedback from test stages indicated the interactive device was complicated as there are many layers of scientific, infrastructure-related and environmental data included in the mapping tool. Kenny incorporated user guides to assist viewers experience of the tool, making it easier to use and accessible.

Outcomes:

Coastal erosion is a cross cutting issue affecting many interests and a coordinated approach to align effort across sectors is essential. This case study highlights how the Planning Service is sharing its skills and working in partnership to address the climate change emergency at area level, work done now will prove useful for strategic planning of settlement and infrastructure in the next decades. Modelling to include future sea level rise contingent upon climate change and greenhouse gas emissions is ongoing and the interactive tool will be updated on a regular basis to reflect change. Our Planning Technician played a key part in developing the online interactive map tool which will be available to all.



Western Isles Climate Change Working Group (WICCWG)

Name of Key Officers:

Kenny Maciver, Planning Technician (DP & MP Team)

1. Quality of Outcomes

High quality development on the ground

Post pandemic we are entering a new normality; preparing for the new style of Local Development Plan; ensuring that our representations on the new National Planning Framework are incorporated and the new policy framework will be effective/workable/appropriate and fit for purpose for our Island context which has unique challenges and opportunities.

This reporting year the momentum has continued, the last year has highlighted the pressures faced within the DM team with planning application numbers increasing by 88 in number to 386 cases, with related cases (EIA Screening, HRA Appropriate Assessment, and a large increase in the number of Prior Notifications and Prior Approvals (particularly agricultural developments and marine fish farming). This compounded the pressures on a small team still wrestling with a backlog arising from planning officer staff vacancy during the pandemic.

There required to be a change in focus, with less negotiation on design of single houses, to release staff time to focus on group housing applications and pre-and post-consent processes. The difficulty in sourcing consented materials, rapid price increase in steel and profile sheeting in particular has led to many requests for change to specification and colour and guidance on what can be accommodated as a non-material changes. Field visits continue as pre-pandemic. The pre-application service has remained free at point of delivery but with up to a 3 week delay to respond on account of the need to prioritise statutory cases. Some officers have returned to work from the Council Offices in Stornoway and Balivanich, with some hybrid and others still working mainly from home.

The Development Management and Development Plan & Marine Planning Team work together to deliver integrated outcomes. Here we present a small selection of high-quality developments creating successful environments as case studies including an update on Progress at Care Centre and Sinclair Avenue, Stornoway (Case Study 1), addressing a range of housing needs in the community. Providing people with affordable, good quality homes is a key issue in our LDP and we report on progress in the biennial Outer Hebrides Housing Land Audit (Case Study 2) which has been published in a new interactive format in July 2021. Grinneabhat Community Hub (Case Study 3) focuses on a redundant old school building that has been sensitively re-purposed for community and tourism use whilst retaining its charming Victorian character. On the western seaboard of Europe, the Outer Hebrides are vulnerable to rapidly changing weather patterns, Climate Change Adaptation in the Outer Hebrides (Case Study 4) demonstrates how planning staff have been working in partnership with local and national organisations to develop interactive tools to demonstrate and predict the potential impacts of the changing climate and sea level on the Islands.

2. Quality of Service and Engagement

a) Open for business

2.1 Our Planning Service has an important role in shaping better places across the Outer Hebrides, protecting, and enhancing our built and natural environments, encouraging the community to have their say on development proposals, and working with developers, stakeholders, and agencies to deliver new development to meet the needs of the Islands' communities and to support the economy of the Outer Hebrides. Despite the pandemic, the service had the required technology and adaptability and was able to continue to remain 'open for business'.

Adaptation and Relocation Advice

2.2 The service has experienced a sharp increase in demand for Planning Advice from Householders looking to carry out changes to accommodate home working; to accommodate family returning home to live and those with money to spend on plans developed during COVID-19; we have also noted a sharp rise in enquiries in tourism related developments and from people looking to acquire land or houses seeking to relocate from cities to live and work in the Outer Hebrides, this enabled by high speed broadband.

Housing Feasibility Studies

- **2.3** This section relates to **Key Marker 13** Sharing good practice, skills, and knowledge between authorities. Due to the lack of speculative developers and availability of suitable building land on the islands, the chairman of the Housing and Communities committee wrote to island Grazings Committees asking them to come forward with suitable land for affordable housing. The Planning Service; Housing Service and Building Projects, Property and Infrastructure Service then worked in partnership to ascertain if these sites were in the right places for housing. The Building Projects Team carried out technical appraisals of each site to determine suitability for potential housing development. This Stage 1 Feasibility report, wholly based on a desktop exercise, provided technical guidance on the sites suitability for development. The report considered the following factors:
 - site and location;
 - site details;
 - adjacency to roads and site access;
 - flood risk;
 - sites of special scientific interest or similar;
 - archaeology risk;
 - contamination and environmental factors;

- planning restrictions and statutory consents;
- locality and transportation links;
- utilities and digital lifestyle providers.

The feasibility report was then submitted to Planning for consideration relation to the provisions of the LDP and providing there were no significant constraints that cannot be mitigated it was submitted for Stage 2 consideration which included a site walkover, scope, site investigation, external consultations, layout options and project costs. This is a good example of cross-service collaboration to provide viable sites for affordable housing in the rural housing market.



Potential housing site, South Lochs

Reaffirmation of the value of Amenity Greenspace

2.4 The impact of the pandemic highlighted the need for people and families to have access to good quality open space. Access to nature and space has become increasingly important, planners responded by factoring this need into development planning consultations on new housing projects, for example, we have recommended that the developer reduce the number of units and increase the amount of amenity space and the size of garden plots at the Melbost West affordable housing site and at Blackwater which was identified by the Council Blackwater as one of our priority sites for housing development in Stornoway where 74 new homes are planned.

The council's <u>Planning Brief for Blackwater</u> requires that "Consideration should be given to the plot layout so that the gardens are either back to back or spaced out sufficiently to create functional open space.

Grow your Own Areas or allotment gardening offers many health and social benefits and should be incorporated as part of the provision of additional open space facilities. All recreational and open space provision should be detailed in the Landscaping Strategy and submitted as part of all planning applications."

Following the affirmation of the need for access to good quality open space in localities we will be creating an evidence base and carrying out community engagement on formulation of a new Open Space Strategy and Play Sufficiency Assessment for the Outer Hebrides.

During this reporting year the Development Plans Team started formulating our approach to consulting the community as part of the evidence report. People should be able to provide their feedback through different formats and forums. We are aware that there is a risk of raising expectations of what outcomes planning can realistically achieve and that individuals and groups within the community will share different views. Understanding and actioning these views is likely to be an intricate process. Participation processes should engage everyone and should focus on capturing the views of seldom heard groups, including disabled people, children and young people; people who are digitally excluded, people who don't have English as a first language; unpaid carers; people in deprived areas; older people. Reaching these groups will require active outreach and support from individuals and organisations who have established relationships and direct contact, including Hebridean Housing Partnership, Disabled People's Organisations, and Third Sector Hebrides.

We hope consultation will be an iterative conversation and will link to placemaking and 20 minute neighbourhoods and direct how these concepts will be rolled out in the island context.

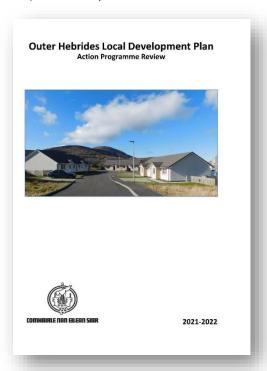
National Consultations arising from the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019

2.5 We have been working to influence the shape and content of the fourth National Planning Framework and have been engaged in consultation on new guidance and regulations needed to deliver the 2019 Planning Act which includes new duties on Chief Planning Officers and a new National Planning Improvement Coordinator. Planning Teams have participated in Scottish Government workshops and provided comprehensive responses to consultations on NPF4; Draft Development Plan Regulations; Open Space Strategies and Play Sufficiency Assessments all with a view to ensuring that new policy is fit for purpose and does not disadvantage Island areas.

Island Proofing

2.6 The principle of island proofing enshrined in the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018 is to remove disadvantage and officers are mindful of this imperative in their responses to national consultations. Planning officers and cross-service colleagues have contributed to several National Consultations in the last reporting year, these include

b) Certainty



LDP Action Programme Review 2021-2022

The Action programme has been updated to reflect progress on the LDP

2.7 We have reported in previous PPF Reports on the certainty provided through the development of masterplans and LDP allocations. Recent years have seen development including affordable housing, mostly led by Hebridean Housing Partnership, delivered within masterplan/LDP allocations in Corran Cismaol, Barra; Cleascro, Crowlista, and Goathill Farm West in Lewis. Masterplans are in place for Blackwater and being developed for Melbost Farm West in Lewis.

Outer Hebrides Development Plan Scheme

2.8 The DPS 2022 has been published and we are on track to deliver the next plan in line with the requirements of the pending LDP Regulations, though this will exceed the 5 year targets aligned with the older regulations.

Our DPS demonstrates how the Service will continue to liaise with the Scottish Government on the timeline for a new LDP; progress supporting policy guidance under the existing LDP; expand the monitoring framework; and progress collation of data for the evidence report. The DP & MP team will work on adoption of updated and new Guidance for Minerals, and for the Conservation Areas. This work and the engagement processes proposed are detailed in the DPS at: https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/media/17789/development-plan-scheme.pdf

This document includes a Development Plan Programme with timescales for the proposed work.



Development Plan Scheme 2022

Our Development Plan has an important role in influencing and providing a positive framework for investment decisions and should provide clarity on the long-term spatial vision we want to achieve and what is required to deliver this vision in a sustainable way.

Engagement on the New Local Development Plan

2.9 The current LDP was adopted in November 2018, and under the 2006 Act would have been subject to revision and renewal every 5 years. As a result of the new 2019 Planning Act however, we will be moving to a different format of Local Development Plan. Whilst awaiting the concluded Development Planning regulations we have initiated work on the Evidence Report stage and other informative audit and assessment work, before setting out a definitive timeline for a new Outer Hebrides LDP.

As part of the new Planning Act there is a requirement for planning authorities to prepare Open Space Strategies and Play Sufficiency Assessments as part of the Development Plan. We are currently formulating our approach to this aspect of the new system.

This is still evolving but is more progressed than other aspects of the Development Planning requirement from the Act, although the final regulations on this process haven't yet been released, we will be engaging with the community, stakeholders, organisations on the Open Space Strategy and the provision for play throughout our localities. Councillors have been briefed regarding the pending regulations and will be fully engaged in the LDP planning process in due course.

Review of Supplementary Guidance on Wind Energy Development

2.10 Supplementary Guidance continues to provide an important source of additional policy and guidance for developers, the community and planners. This reporting year we carried out a review and public engagement on our SG on Wind Energy Development to ensure that it is compliant with the latest Scottish Government policy on climate change and meets the UK Government's online accessibility standards. We made sure that all links were active and directed people to the latest policy advice and guidance on planning for wind energy development. During the reporting period, we were aware of pending legislation on National Planning Framework 4, however, we considered it was necessary to undertake a refresh and further reviews will be forthcoming to reflect and align with any national policy changes in due course.

Review of Supplementary Guidance on Caravans, Huts and Temporary Buildings

2.11 We also drafted new supplementary guidance on Caravans, Huts, and Temporary Buildings setting out policies for leisure accommodation including huts for the first time. This went to public consultation and was published in November 2021, it contains new policy on Recreational Huts and Non-Residential Huts, and although tailored for the Outer Hebridean planning context, this reflects Scottish Government planning policy for huts created in 2014 which was designed to increase recreational hutting across Scotland.

c) Communications, engagement, and customer service

Remote Working

2.12 As the economy moves to recover from the impacts of Covid-19, the Planning Service continues to keep communication channels open with its customers, using email, Microsoft Teams and telephone. Voicemail messages to the main office numbers are saved as MP4 files and admin staff email these to the appropriate officers who in turn return calls to customers. While email has been promoted as the preferred means of communication, we still obtained a high number of voice calls including customers seeking advice about Building Conservation Grants, permitted development rights, pre-application queries as well as engagement on 'live'

applications and seeking variations to post consented proposals. The lack of a telephony system has been a challenge and some staff have now had soft phone systems installed to improve accessibility for customers as the Comhairle wishes to facilitate staff who wish hybrid working.

Engaging with Stakeholders

2.13 We continue to connect with our customers through media for engagement and to provide regular updates to our stakeholders which are posted on the Comhairle website at: https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planning-and-building/stakeholder-update/

Processing Agreements

2.14 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar encourages the use of processing agreements for all major and substantial or complex local developments. A template is provided to aid the process. We offer processing agreements on the Comhairle website, and a template may be downloaded from the site:

https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-service/other-planning-information/major-and-national-developments/

To assist Developers, we also added a link to guidance produced by the Scottish Government Planning & Architecture Division on the 'Benefits of using Processing Agreements'. Despite our promotion of the benefits of this tool throughout the planning process, we find that few developers choose to use this tool.

Engaging with small and medium size Businesses

2.15 We have collaborated with Business Gateway to publish a useful guide to planning for businesses considering development or a change of use. The guide providing advice and guidance may be accessed on our website at:

https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/media/2405/guide-for-small-businesses.pdf

Customer Satisfaction Survey

2.16 To find out what our customers think of the service and to help us improve the service we provide we have a survey on the Comhairle website, and we also direct customers to fill it in when we send emails to them.

https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-service/customer-satisfaction-survey/

3 Governance

3.1 The Comhairle has in place a 'Scheme of Administration' which details the membership, quorum, purpose, and functions of the Comhairle and its Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Joint Consultative Committees. It also regulates certain aspects of procedure. Development Management items are reported to the Planning Applications Board which can meet with appropriate notice, according to the needs of the Service. A high percentage of applications (98.7%) are delegated to the appointed officer. Each member of the Board must have undertaken relevant training before being permitted to take part in Board meetings. The Planning Applications Board convenes for site visits and pre-determination hearings as required. Pending Local Government elections in May 2022, the Planning Managers designed a new training programme to prepare all members for committee service. The planning training will commence in advance of the next meeting of the Planning Applications Board.

Remote Hosting

3.2 In March 2020 the Comhairle quickly moved to online meetings with the first series of Council meetings held as a single agenda for non-regulatory business and Planning Applications Board moved to remote hosting.

During the 2021/22 reporting period the Planning Applications Board (PAB) met virtually using online video platforms, on three occasions, and the Local Review Body (LRB) twice. The last two meetings of the PAB in September 2021 and March 2022 have been held in the Council Chamber, with some Members and officers present and other joining in remotely through the Teams platform. Some of the PAB meetings determined cases wholly delegated to the PAB, whilst others made recommendation for full Comhairle determination. While there were some technical challenges on occasion, overall, the remote hosting of meetings worked well, however, the return to live meetings, personal interaction and debate in the Chamber is welcomed.

State of the art Conferencing Systems

3.3 In April 2021 communications were improved to and from council buildings across the islands, in the Council headquarters on Sandwick Road, the Chamber has had state-of-the art IT systems installed. This is part of wider improvements to conferencing facilities for any CnES site that had meeting rooms which consisted of a display, video conferencing kit and laptop. The new system allows for the live broadcasting of committee meetings over the public internet. The within-budget works comprised replacement of the furniture and IT equipment, as well as redecoration. The new furnishings incorporate the commemorative lolaire Tweed into the design, providing a legacy to the 1919 maritime disaster.

New LED screens, coupled to enhanced IT facilities will improve the presentation experience and an upgrade of video conferencing facilities, in the Chamber and at other Comhairle sites. This will allow for an enhanced remote attendance experience, which in turn will reduce travel requirements and save emissions. The décor has been freshened to complete the refurbishment. This represents a significant upgrade from the previous furniture in the Chamber which dated back to when the building was built in the late 1970s. The seating was tattered and insecure, and the desking unsuitable for modern working methods.

The chamber was not built for modern working methods, and the addition of projection equipment and video conferencing facilities over past years did not provide confidence in being able to provide an effective experience for those wishing to attend remotely. Indeed, even for those present in the Chamber, the presentation experience was not always successful. The refurbishment and upgrade involved several local and mainland contractors and suppliers who have worked on the enhancements which will improve communications across the Islands and aid in effective representation and local democracy.



Refurbished Council Chamber, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Local Review Body

3.4 The Comhairle has a Local Review Body (LRB) which has meetings that are advised by officers of the Comhairle as may be determined by the Chief Executive. Each member of the LRB must have undertaken both planning training and specific training on Local Review Bodies before being permitted to participate in a decision-making role on the LRB. There has been two meetings (April 2021, and February 2022) of the LRB during this reporting period.

Scheme of Delegation

3.5 Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's 'Scheme of Delegation' to Officers operates effectively with 98.7% of decisions being made under delegated powers in 2021/22. During the reporting year 99.3% of applications were approved evidencing the effectiveness of the Plan-led system; using flexible pro-development policies which are aligned to the Comhairle's priority

of encouraging and facilitating sustainable economic growth, whilst protecting the special environment and ensuring that development contributes to the creation of well-designed attractive places that people want to live, work, and play in.

Sustainable Development Committee

3.6 Development Planning and Marine Planning Policy items report to the Sustainable Development Committee which generally meets 5 times per year.

Building Conservation Grants

3.7 The Planning Service continues to face significant budget pressures due to the requirement for delivery of savings across all Council Services. Last year this significantly affected the Comhairle's Building Conservation Grant Schemes, with the budget being cut by £12,000 following a corporate budget cutting exercise in December 2020. However, to address this challenge the Economic Development Service presented a report to the Sustainable Development Committee requesting that the Town Centre Legacy Fund (rent income from a Town Centre property in the ownership of CnES) be used to provide top up funding for these schemes for which there is high demand from property owners in the Island's Conservation Areas. The Comhairle's Building Conservation Grants continue to assist property owners to maintain and repair their historic properties in the Conservation Areas of which there are five throughout the Islands.

During 2021, to focus the available budget resources on residential properties, planners collaborated with Business Gateway to promote the Comhairle's Covid-19 Economic Recovery Grant Scheme (CERGS) to access funding for improvements to their property designed to help the local economy recover from COVID by supporting businesses and social enterprises with grant funding to aid recovery, build resilience and encourage development.

https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/business/economic-development-and-business-support/business-gateway/assistance-available/cergs/

Legacy Cases

3.8 Legacy cases to be reported are applications which are more than one-year-old cleared during the reporting period and the number remaining (as at 31 March).

These cases are reviewed regularly as part of caseload management. During 2021/22 we had six legacy cases.

We had applicants withdraw one of the two windfarm cases classed as 'Legacy cases' the previous reporting year (due to insufficient information to determine), and also an application for a Spaceport (awaiting submission of an EIA Report).

Two further cases in exceedance of one year (awaiting information) were refused and two cases of over one year were determined (following a long wait for information).

At the end of the reporting year, we had four legacy cases remaining to be determined:

- A windfarm where a full Council decision was taken on 31 March 2021 but is awaiting conclusion of the S75 Agreement, ahead of the decision notice being issued;
- A caravan site where a change of siting and type of caravan was requested on account of impact on heritage assets (plans awaited);
- A bottling plant (stalled at the request of the landowner due to land acquisition negotiations);
- A food trailer site (retrospective application awaiting plans to satisfy roads requirements).

Legacy cases will continue to be subject to quarterly review by the Planning Manager (Development Management).

Enforcement

3.9 The biennial review of the Enforcement Charter setting out customer expectations for the Service was completed in February 2022.

https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-service/enforcement-of-planning/planning-enforcement-charter/

Breaches of Planning are recorded by the Enforcement and Planning Systems Support Officer on a Complaints case management system with investigation dealt with by planning officers.

Complaints are generally followed up quickly by phone and parties advised of the actions required to resolve these. This approach works well in most instances without the need to resort to formal action.

4 Culture of Continuous Improvement

Service Improvements

4.1 Despite ongoing challenges, including those caused by long Covid, this reporting year the Planning Service delivered on a range of Improvement Actions identified in PPF 2020/21. An overview of progress is provided in **Part 3** of this Report.

Continual Professional Development

4.2 Staff have taken part in a wide range of CPD attending webinars and contributing to workshops on a wide range of subjects including:

Making NPF4 Work for Scotland's Diverse Regions (RTPI);

One Minute to midnight. Can cities adapt to climate change? (RTPI);

Production of Planning Performance Framework Reports (HOPS Improvement Service);

Peatland Restoration (SEPA);

Offshore Wind (RTPI);

Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings (HES/Engine Shed);

Land and Soils in EIA (IEMA);

Ulpan (Gaelic Language) course.

DM Planning Officer, Michael Scott attends the **Conservation Officers Group** virtual meetings since he started with the Comhairle from August 2021. This group is administered by Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) and is a useful forum for learning about aspects of the built environment, and sharing heritage related work undertaken by planning authorities, Development Management and Policy work.

https://www.befs.org.uk/policy-topics/conservation-officers-group/

Enforcement and Planning Systems Support Officer, Anne Mackenzie, attended a meeting of the **Development Management Uniform Users Group** which met via Microsoft Teams on 30 September 2021. She also attended a HOPS validation workshop in July 2021. Anne regularly attends various e-Development meetings/workshops (Microsoft Teams) throughout the year which are held to keep local authorities updated on various projects.

Maintaining Team Support during Covid-19

4.3 During Covid, whilst it was not possible for physical human interaction, both the DM and the DP & MP teams became proficient in the use of MS Teams and met regularly for update meetings, for informal catch ups to maintain continuity, moral and camaraderie through these strange times. These communications were important for disseminating information regarding work practices; security; safety in the workplace; budgeting; corporate issues as these arose during the pandemic. Separate meetings were also held to discuss workloads and projects as required. Sadly, we are one planning officer down, as one colleague contracted Covid and unfortunately this has become long Covid. Hopefully they are on the road to recovery. Unsurprisingly, this has had a major impact on our small Planning Service.

Succession Planning

4.4 In August 2021, an experienced planning officer was appointed to the post of planning Officer (Development Management), vacant since the previous officer retired one year earlier. Lee Harkness, a graduate of the Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA) is working towards his RTPI Chartered membership and is being mentored by DM Planner Anne Napier.

Sharing Good Practice and Engagement with other Planning Authorities and Agencies

4.5 Planning Service representatives regularly attend meetings of Heads of Planning Scotland (including DM and DP sub-groups); DP Manager Mairi Maciver attends meetings of the North of Scotland Development Plans Forum period. The DM Planning Manager attended a joint Planning Authority Annual meeting (5 councils with fish farm interests) online again, rather than face to face during the reporting year due to the Covid situation. During 2021-22 officers participated in a series of workshops on NPF4 run by the Scottish Government. These engagements facilitate sharing of knowledge, approaches to policy formulation; good practice, exchange of ideas and often include skills sharing to progress specific pieces of work/projects. This reporting year DM Officer Anne Napier prepared and delivered a Planning lecture on Life in DM to Scotland's Rural College (SRUC). DM Manager and Officers, the Planning technician and on occasion the DP manager attend monthly liaison meetings with SEPA.

Sharing Skills: Planning Technician Activities

4.6 Our planning technician co-ordinates data collection, collates spatial datasets from council departments regarding assets, infrastructure, services, and provides this data to the Improvement Service Spatial Hub and has liaised with other authorities before taking on new applications/tools e.g., the ArcGIS StoryMaps platform to present the latest Outer Hebrides Housing Land Audit. Case Study 4 reflects the work of our planning technician which includes supporting the mapping requirements of the DP Team and collaborating with internal and external organisations on partnership projects such as developing an interactive mapping tool

that everyone can access (see Case Study 4: Climate Change Adaptation in the Outer Hebrides).

Sharing Good Practice - Contribution to the Scottish Planner December 2021

4.7 Following recognition of the great performance of Stornoway's Lady Matheson's Seminary in the RTPI's awards for planning excellence in the category for heritage and culture, the Planning Service was invited to contribute an article to the RTPI's award winning quarterly journal, the Scottish Planner. It is distributed to all 2,100 RTPI Members in Scotland as well to over 300 national bodies, media organisations, MSPs and local authority Planning Committees. The Winter 2021 edition was themed around the future of rural Scotland. Planning Officer Susan Rabé contributed a piece to the journal.

Article:

Restoring Sgoil na Ladies -The Former Industrial Female School

Susan Rabé, Planning Officer at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, discusses is historic rehabilitation project has restored Category-B Listed Lady Matheson's Seminary to its former splendour, providing affordable housing in the heart of Stornoway Conservation Area.

This project was nominated for the 'RTPI Excellence in Planning for Heritage and Culture' category alongside 5 other finalists including Liverpool's Liver Building, the development, whilst not ultimately winner of the category, has created 6 affordable home for rent and brought a key historic building back into use.

The Industrial Female School was originally built by Sir James and Lady Matheson in 1848 for the sum of £2,000, boosting the local economy and trades then. The current renovation led by developer Lewis Builders, cost approximately £1 million. funded by the Scottish Government through Hebridean Housing Partnership and the Comhairle, has deployed contemporary and traditional building skills. The development of this 'difficult to treat' building with planning intervention and support has created one and two-bedroom homes in the town-centre. There had been a long-term dialogue

endeavouring to find a sustainable use for the property, with people raising concerns over the poor state of the vacant building in the town-centre. The restoration of the building had been identified as a project during public engagement as part of a previous Townscape Heritage Initiative. Due to funding difficulties, this had failed, and no restoration scheme had materialised under the ownership of community landlord, the Stornoway Trust. Fortunately, a restoring purchaser was found, being reduced by competing markets however, feasibility studies indicated that private housing development was unviable due to the low market value of property versus the high cost of construction on the

Islands. Subsequently Planning and Housing Services engaged with the developer to find an innovative funding solution with a positive outcome for the community and the historic environment.

A 'difficult to treat' building The property was in significant disrepair due to neglect, consequently the building had to be taken back to its original stonework, little of the internal fabric could be preserved. Throughout the project Lewis Builders worked closely with Planning and Historic Environment Scotland to ensure that its exterior historic character was secured.

The ultimate scheme included complete removal and replacement of interior fittings to meet modern housing standards, including a new stair and entrance enclosure in the real courtyard. Salvageable interior features such as doors, architraves, panelling, children's graffiti, window bay panelling and flagstones were retained and re-used where possible.

This project aims to reduce inequality by enabling social tenants to live in high-quality accommodation available at an affordable rent. Communities in the Outer Hebrides are becoming increasingly disadvantaged as house prices rise and opportunities for quality, affordable rented accommodation are

The project challenges the perception of affordable housing as lacking in quality and imagination. Good design should be available for all and should be independent of tenure.

Susan Rabé MRTPI, Planning Officer in Development Plans & Marine Planning at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

By reversing the decline of this Listed Building and repurposing it as affordable housing, this project attempts to redress the fact that the Outer Hebrides has the second-highest percentage of houses failing Scottish Housing Quality Standard at 54%.

The project delivers tangible benefits for communities by providing inclusive design and affordable accommodation facilities in the town-centre. The superb architecture of the restored building can be enjoyed by the wider community.

Opportunities for apprenticeships in traditional building skills have arisen, and hopefully more restoration projects will benefit from these embedded skills. Now renamed Lady Matheson Court, Sgoil na Ladies has become a flagship project that communities can relate to as a symbol of regeneration in these challenging times.



14 Scottish Planner www.rtpi.org.uk/scotland

Part 2: Supporting Evidence

- Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan (Adopted November 2018)
- Outer Hebrides Monitoring Statement 2015
- OHLDP Development Plan Scheme
- Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan Action Programme Review 2021-2022
- Planning Service Charter Revised February 2019
- Planning Enforcement Charter February 2022
- Customer Satisfaction Survey Results
- Stakeholder Updates
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Housing Land Audit for 2021
- Outer Hebrides Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022
- Service Business Plans (Progress Reports) 2021/22
- Action and KPI Progress Report April 2021 December 2021 (Communities)
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Planning Performance Framework Reports and Feedback
- Socio-Economic Updates
- Outer Hebrides Fact File
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Public Performance Reports
- Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership
- Outer Hebrides Local Outcome Improvement Plan
- Locality Plan Benbecula and North Uist
- Scottish Planner Winter Issue (2021)
- Uniform Data Management System
- Development Department Management Structure 2021-22

Checklist for Part 2: Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies

Case Study Topics	Issue covered by case study (page no.)	Case Study Topics	Issue covered by case study (page no.)
Design		Interdisciplinary Working	
Conservation		Collaborative Working	Case Study 4, page 17
Regeneration	Case Study 3, page 12	Community Engagement	
Environment	Case Study 4, page 17	Placemaking	Case Study 3, page 12
Greenspace		Charrettes	
Town Centres		Place Standard	
Masterplanning		Performance Monitoring	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance		Process Improvement	
Housing Supply	Case Study 2, page 8	Project Management	Case Study 1, page 3
Affordable Housing	Case Study 2, page 8	Skills Sharing	
Economic Development (rural Development)	Case Study 3, page 12	Staff Training	
Enforcement		Online Systems	
Development Management Processes		Transport	
Planning Applications	Case Study 1, page 3 & Case Study 3 page 12	Active Travel	

Part 3: Service Improvements

In the coming year we will:

Quality of Outcomes

• Undertake preliminary work to enable delivery of a new Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan for Stornoway, leading to a future regeneration scheme for Stornoway Conservation Area.

Quality of Service and Engagement

- Following receipt of Government Guidance, establish a role of Chief Planning Officer in line with the statutory duty arising from the Planning (Scotland) 2019 Act;
- Establish and recruit staff to deliver regional marine planning function and operational aspects of the Marine Planning Partnership;
- Promote the Design Agenda in the Outer Hebrides.

Governance

 Design and deliver a training programme on key themes to elected Council Members.

Culture of Continuous Improvement

- Identify a planner to participate in the Conservation Officers Group (Built Environment Forum Scotland), following retiral of current representative;
- Ensure all RTPI members are meeting Continuous Professional Development obligations;
- Develop a workforce plan/succession planning arrangements for the Planning Service.

Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2020-21:

Committed improvements and actions

Complete?

Use electronic forms for LDP consultation exercises and utilise TIBCO Jaspersoft embedded analytics software for online form responses, this will allow us to collate all the data in the form and export to excel so that it can be manipulated/ published as required:

[Yes, successful pilot exercise and potential application for future use]

We worked in partnership with IT Business Support to develop interactive representation forms for consultation exercises on DRAFT supplementary guidance for Wind Energy Development; and on Caravans, Huts, and Temporary Buildings. Using TIBC Jaspersoft Reports made data collation and analysis of representations significantly easier, and we plan to use this software application during engagement and consultation for the next OHLDP.

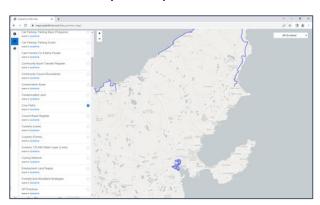
Develop a Pre-App form designed to filter out routine enquiries, [Yes, implemented] saving time and enabling planners more time to plan:

- Following implementation of this improvement it has been found that most applicants use this initial contact/enquiry form (administered by Planning Support), resulting in a reduction in direct telephone contacts by potential applicants, allowing planners more time to focus on dealing with assessment and determination of registered planning applications.
- The Pre-Application Planning Advice Form may be downloaded from the Comhairle's planning Service web pages.

Increase participation in the Spatial Hub, gathering and providing quality-assured local authority data, contributing to digitisation, eplanning and enrichening the National data set:

Our planning technician contributes data from the Outer Hebrides to the Spatial Hub initiated by the Improvement Service

[Yes, good progress made, and updates are sent regularly to ensure data is current]



Core Paths

Improve the accessibility and readability of our hard copy and digital publications.

 Documents hosted on the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar website now comply with new accessibility requirements for public sector bodies. Officers worked closely with IT Business Support to ensure compliance; using new templates; and deploying accessibility checkers including PAVE software to fix any issues arising to ensure digital documents on websites and apps are accessible to all users, including visually impaired people.

[Yes] Committee
Reports, online
publications,
newsletters are
checked for
accessibility and
now have improved
readability.

Development Planning & Marine Planning Team will take the lead on promoting the Design Agenda in the Outer Hebrides.

[No] To be progressed in 2022/2023

 Unfortunately, due to lack of staff resource and sickness absence: senior DP officer was absent since October 2020 due to Long Covid, and is currently working reduced hours due to complications arising, this action has not been progressed during this reporting year

Part 4: National Headline Indicators (NHI)

A: NHI Key outcomes - Development Planning:

Development Planning	2021-22	2020-21
Local and Strategic		
Development Planning:		
Age of local/strategic	3 years and 4 months	2 years and 4 months
development plan(s) at end of		
reporting period		
Requirement: less than 5 years		
Will the local/strategic	N	Υ
development plan(s) be	(Under the 2019 Act we are	(Under the 2019 Act we may
replaced by their 5 th	moving to the new process	be moving to a different
anniversary according to the	for LDPs and await finalised	format of LDP)
current development plan	DP regs)	
scheme?		
Has the expected date of	N	N
submission of the plan to		
Scottish Ministers in the		
development plan scheme		
changed over the past year?		
Were development plan	Υ	Υ
scheme		
engagement/consultation		
commitments met during the		
year?		
Effective Land Supply and	_	_
Delivery of Outputs ¹		
Established housing land	1,155* units	1,555* units
supply		(NB: we produce a biennial
		audit, published July 2021)
5-year effective housing land	508* units	508* units
supply programming		(NB: we produce a biennial
		audit, published July 2021)
5-year effective land supply	508* units	508*units Per LDP
total capacity		(NB: we produce a biennial
E year bayeing surply to get	460	audit, published July 2021)
5-year housing supply target	460 units	460 LDP target units
5-year effective housing land	5.5 years	5.5 years
supply (to one decimal place)	162 - 212	246 11 -
Housing approvals	163 units	216 units
	l .	

¹ This relates to 2021 HLA, which covers the 5-year period April 2021 to March 2026 and then 2026+

Housing completions over the	378 units	341 units
last 5 years		
Marketable employment land	13.67 ha*	13.67 ha*
supply		
Employment land take-up	0 ha*	0 ha*
during reporting year		

^{*}Reduced number of economic development sites identified in LDP, adopted Nov 2018, hence significant change in figures.

B: NHI Key outcomes – Development Management:

Development Management:	2021-22	2020-21
Project Planning		
Percentage and number	We no longer analyse this	We no longer
of applications subject	data	analyse this data
to pre-application		
advice		
Percentage and number	0%	0%
of major applications	We offer this service on our	We offer this service on our
subject to processing	website, however we have	website, however there is
agreement	minimal major applications and no recent uptake	little uptake
Decision Making		
Application approval	99.3%	99.0%
rate		
Delegation rate	98.7%	97.0%
Validation	We do not analyse this	We do not analyse this
Decision-making Timescales		
Major Developments	35.1 weeks (2 cases)	9.4 weeks (1 case)
Local developments (non-householder)	12.7 weeks	9.6 weeks
Householder	8.9 weeks	8.4weeks
developments		
Legacy Cases		
Number cleared during	6	2
reporting period		
Number remaining	4	3

C: Enforcement activity

	2021-22	2020-21
Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed	months	months
Requirement: review every 2 years	2	15
Complaints lodged and investigated	0	0
Breaches identified – no further action taken	0	0
Cases closed	4	3
	breaches	breaches
	resolved	resolved
Notices served	2	1
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

<u>D: NHI Key outcomes – Commentary</u>

Commentary

The application Approval rate increased slightly from 99% to 99.3%

The number of Planning applications (as well as other planning related applications) increased sharply in the reporting year from 298 to 386 cases (an additional 88 cases.)

The service had a vacancy for the first quarter, and it took the newly appointed officer some time to become familiar with processes but on account of his skills and experience in Heritage casework made a significant contribution to the work of the team.

Complaints, including many anonymous complaints, regarding Breaches of Planning increased through the year and placed an additional pressure upon the Development Management team.

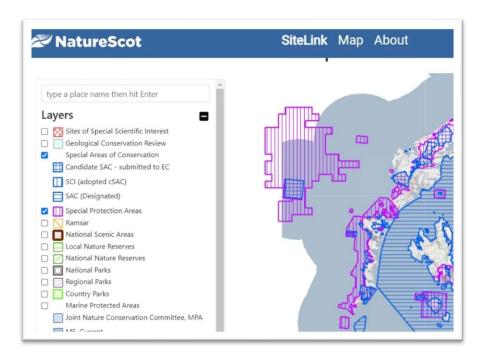
Overall, the volume of work exceeded the capacity of the staff resource and that was reflected in a decline in performance - non householder took on average 3.1 weeks longer than the previous year with all local developments taking 12.2 compared to 9.3 weeks in the previous year.

The demands for both pre-application advice and post-consent amendments has been unprecedented and remains a challenge for the team. Post consent enquiries have arisen largely due to redesign of proposals to address cost savings; spiralling costs; supply chain issues; and materials/product shortages.

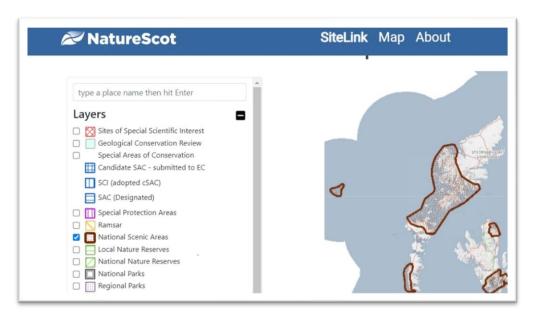
Requests for advice principally in tourism and housing development) has dominated requests for pre-application advice.

The Service is still recovering from the backlog created by COVID spike in demand and the need in 20/21 to deploy resource from a team of 4 DM officers to two large-scale windfarm applications.

A large part of the Authority area is designated with increased requirement for EIA Screening and for even minor developments within SPA/SAC designation across our landmass and coastal area, the preparation of Appropriate Assessments (AAs). EIA Screening and Appropriate Assessments are increasingly required for proposals that are Permitted Development e.g., changes to Fish Farming sites.



EXTRACT from NatureScot SiteLink illustrating SAC and SPA designated areas in the Outer Hebrides.



EXTRACT from NatureScot SiteLink illustrating NSA designated areas in the Outer Hebrides.

Part 5: Scottish Government Official Statistics

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

Timescales	2021-22	2021-22	2020-21
Overall			
Major developments	2	Weeks	weeks
		35.1	9.4
Local developments (non-	332	Weeks	weeks
householder)			
Local: less than 2 months	22.3%	7	6.6
• Local: more than 2 months	77.7%	14.3	12.9
Householder developments	54	Weeks	Weeks
Local: less than 2 months	57.4%	7	6.9
• Local: more than 2 months	42.6%	11.4	10.9
Housing Developments			
Major	1	weeks	weeks
		50	9.4
Local housing developments	155		
		weeks	weeks
 Local: less than 2 months 	16.1%	7.6	6.8
 Local: more than 2 months 	83.9%	13.7	12.5
Business and Industry			
Major	0	weeks	weeks
		n/a	n/a
Local business and industry	13	weeks	weeks
developments			
 Local: less than 2 months 	32.0%	6.8	6.3
 Local: more than 2 months 	68.0%	15.1	12.4
EIA Developments	1	weeks	weeks
		14.9	25.6
Other Consents	16	weeks	weeks
		12.9	8.9
Planning/legal agreements	0	weeks	weeks
Major: average time	0	n/a	n/a
Local: average time	0	n/a	n/a

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

	Tatal	Origi	nal decisi	on upheld (9	%)
	Total number of decisions	2021-2	022	2020-2	021
Туре	No.	No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	3	2	0.0%	1	0.0%
		(2021/22)		(2020/21)	
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	1	0	-	1	100%
		(2021/22)		(2020/21)	

C: Context

There was a substantial increase in non-householder applications, corresponding to a 40.7% increase (236 last year to 332 in this reporting year). This increase reflects a trend over the past two years of increased interest in development, mainly single houses and tourism accommodation.

Conversely there was a small decrease in householder applications (62 to 54) possibly reflecting a downturn in the local economy, uncertainty on the availability of contractors to undertake works and spiralling construction costs.

The increase in determination time for major applications is not statistically significant since it relates to only two cases. One was a Section 42 application to change conditions related to the subsequent non-requirement for a gas membrane and change in landscaping (SuDS) for a major housing application which was on-site and under development (50 weeks). There were delays in concluding the plans re SuDS due to protracted discussions with Scottish Water.

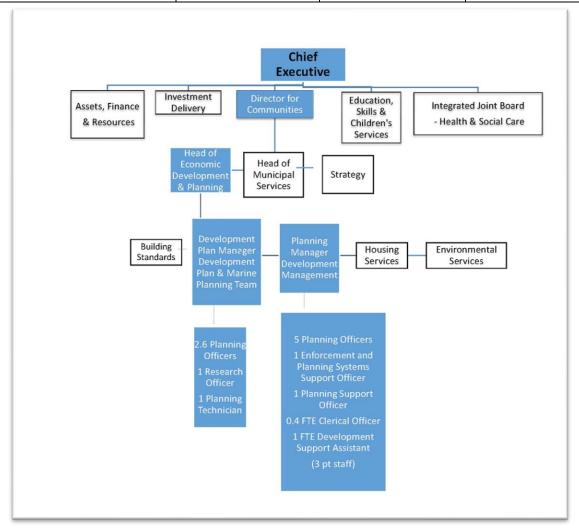
The other for the extension of an existing mineral site (20 weeks).

Part 6: Workforce Information

A snapshot of the authorities planning staff in position on the 31st of March 2022.

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

Staff Age Profile	Headcount	RTPI Membership	Headcount
Under 30	1	Chartered	5
30-39	2	Associate	3
40-49	5	Licentiate	1
50 and over	9		



During the reporting period the Development Management team had a vacant post (1 of 5) for 4 months while the Development Plan & Marine Planning team had one Planning Officer return from extended long Covid absence in November initially for 0.05 FTE rising to 0.3 FTE.

Part 7: Planning Committee Information

1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

Committee & Site Visits	Number per year
Full council meetings	10 ordinary Comhairle meetings including one budget setting meeting
Planning committees	5
Area committees	N/A
Committee site visits	None in 2021/22
Local Review Body	2
LRB site visits	None in 2021/22

Performance Markers and Evidence Base

	Key Marker	Previous R.A.G Rating in PPF10	Source of Evidence
Drivii	ng Improved Performance		
1	Decision-making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types	AMBER	Part 4 – Table B & Part 5 – Table A Contextual commentary setting out factors affecting performance on decision-making are set out under Part 4 D: NHI Key outcomes – Commentary on page 42 and Part 5C Context on page 45.
2	Project management: offer of processing agreements (or other agreed project plan) made to prospective applicants in advance of all major applications and availability publicised on planning authority website	GREEN	For all major and substantial or complex local developments we advertise the availability of Planning Processing Agreements on the Comhairle website and there are Excel and PDF templates listing Key dates; EIA Processes; Application Phase and all information required in support of the Application and issues to be dealt with, etc. Processing agreements are offered to prospective applicants through pre-application discussions. Although not many developers choose to use these, we continue to promote the use of Processing Agreements and their benefit to developers. To further assist developers, we have added a link to recent guidance from SG Architecture and

			Planning Division on the benefits of using processing agreements. https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/media/2389/00475120.pdf https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-service/other-planning-information/major-and-national-developments/
3	Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications: - availability and promotion of preapplication discussions for all prospective applications - clear and proportionate requests for supporting information	GREEN	Due to the significant volume of pre-application enquiries coupled with an increase in caseload (as of May 2021) it has been necessary to curtail our free pre-application advice service to focus staff resources on the assessment and determination of applications that have been submitted and registered with CnES. We have provided a form for enquirers to fill in to seek free pre-planning advice https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-service/planning-service-contact-details/ We review requests for advice on Thursday of each week and aim to respond to straightforward questions either by phone or in writing via a Duty Officer on Thursday or Friday of each week. In other more complex cases we request up to three weeks to respond. Due to Covid, the Comhairle offices remain closed for in-person

			appointments at present. Telephone messages are forwarded to Planning Officers daily. We provide clear and proportionate requests for information by email; telephone and via video link. Enquiries for advice principally in tourism and housing development) has dominated requests for pre-application advice (See D: NHI Key outcomes – Commentary on page 43. See Case Study 1: Progress at Care Centre and Sinclair Avenue, Stornoway (page 3-7) and Case Study 3: Grinneabhat Community Hub (page 13) for evidence of meeting this marker.
4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant	GREEN	There were no cases with legal agreements determined in this reporting year
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published	GREEN	The Comhairle's Enforcement Charter was updated and republished in February 2022 (making it 2 months old at the end of the reporting period) which is within 2 years of the previous iteration. https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-service/enforcement-of-planning/planning-enforcement-charter/

6 Continuous improvements: - progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report A	Our LDP and enforcement charter are up to date and our LDP is on track for replacement in line with the new style of LDP. See page 6 of our DPS 2022. https://www.cne siar.gov.uk/media/19818/development- plan_scheme-2022.pdf This has been a challenging year for both planners and developers, but our teams have continued to function, providing a good service to customers leading to successful outcomes. For more detail see Outer Hebrides Planning Context on page 2; Part 4 D: NHI Key outcomes — Commentary on page 42; and Part 5C Context page 45. We have made significant progress, having resolved 6 legacy cases during this reporting period. Please refer to our NHI table and see paragraph 3.8, pages 30-31 for commentary on these. See Case Study 2: Outer Hebrides Housing Land Audit 2021 for evidence of innovative and proactive engagement with potential developers (landowners) to seek suitable land for affordable house building.

Officers continued to attend online CPD sessions as a Team and individually, including ones on the Draft Development Plan Regulations; and on Open Space Strategies and Play Sufficiency Assessments Regulations; and on Climate Change mapping and data collation with a view to keeping up to date with planning practice, sharing good practice with other Authorities and to keep abreast of the impending changes arising from the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. See paragraph 2.5 on page 23 and paragraph 4.2 on page 32 of this report.

Officers progressed service improvements as agreed in last year's PPF report, unfortunately, we were unable to make significant progress on the promotion of the Design Agenda, partly due to direct impact of long Covid-19 on the officer who has the remit for Design. However, the Service has made significant progress on all the other service improvement commitments, see Part 3, pages 38 and 39 this report for evidence of this. We have developed the use of StoryMap interactive software. The Outer Hebrides Housing Land Audit will be published on-line with interactive maps using new software called ArcGIS StoryMap (see Case Study 2: Outer Hebrides Housing Land Audit 2021 on page 8). We are hoping that this story authoring webbased application will improve our engagement and accessibility with stakeholders and the

community, enabling us to share our maps and in the context of narrative text and other multimedia content.

https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-service/development-planning/development-plan/local-development-plan/housing-land-audit/

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's Planning Service was one of the first Scottish Local Planning Authorities using digital platforms during lockdown and we were successful in delivering our service interactively and assisting other organisations with the application of interactive technology as demonstrated in the report (see Case Study 4: Climate Change Adaptation in the Outer

Hebrides on page 17.

The Comhairle's ongoing work with Telecoms to establish high speed broadband throughout the Islands has enabled officers and external partners to work effectively from home during lockdown, if not for the timely provision of these digital services, this might not have been possible during pandemic and as we emerge with greater resilience from it.

We have included a number of considered service improvements for our twelfth reporting year (see page 37)

	PROMOTING THE PLAN-LED SYSTEM		
7	LDP (or LP) less than 5 years since adoption	GREEN	Yes, our LDP was Adopted in November 2018, making it 3 years and 4 months old at the end of the reporting period. Our monitoring framework is indicating that the Development Strategy and policies are proving to be largely effective in guiding new development to the right place during the life of the plan. We have also carried out significant work on the Indicative Regional Spatial Strategies (iRSS) — ongoing work to refine Outer Hebrides iRSS, contribute to wider regional planning and lobby for candidate national developments.
8	Development plan scheme demonstrates next LDP: - on course for adoption within 5-year cycle - project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale	GREEN	Please see our NHI for evidence of meeting this Marker. Our DPS demonstrates how the Development Plan & Marine Planning team will continue to project manage the LDP process whilst liaising with the Scottish Government for guidance; and on the timeline for a new LDP; progress supporting policy guidance under the existing LDP; expand the monitoring framework; and collation of data for the evidence report. The Coronavirus necessitated alternative approaches to engagement and consultations as part of Development Plan work as set out in the Participation Statement, and this has by necessity created new ways of working.

The DPS has been published and we are on track to deliver the next plan in line with the requirements of the impending new LDP Regulations (see paragraphs 2.8 and 2.9 of this report). This reporting year to align with national policy we reviewed and refreshed the Wind Energy Development SG as well as the Caravans, Huts, and Temporary Buildings SG to include a new policy on hutting, carrying out a joint engagement exercise to gather views from stakeholders, community and key agencies on these key development issues in the Outer Hebrides planning context (see paragraphs 2.10 and 2.11 of this report).

Revised guidance on Marine Fish Farming was taken to an advanced stage but has been suspended on the advice of Scottish Government due to pending revision on regulation of this sector and new policy.

Work on preparing the technical Supplementary Guidance on Minerals was initiated and an updated Mineral Audit to establish supply with minerals operators was issued to operators.

Further work will be progressed to inform new Supplementary Guidance for Minerals, and work has begun on developing a brief for a new Conservation Area Character Appraisal, which will inform a new Conservation Area Management Plan for the Stornoway Conservation Area. This

			work and the engagement processes proposed are detailed in the DPS at: https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/media/19818/development-plan_scheme-2022.pdf The current LDP was adopted in November 2018, and under the 2006 Act would have been subject to revision and renewal every 5 years. As a result of the new 2019 Planning Act however we will be moving to a different format of Local Development Plan. We have responded to consultations on the LDP Regulations and Guidance and await transitional requirements for Local Development Plans, in the meantime we have included a timeline for a new LDP (see page 5 and 6) of the DPS 2022.
9	Stakeholders including Elected Members, industry, agencies, the public and Scottish Government are engaged appropriately through all key stages of development plan preparation	N/A	As part of the new Planning Act there is a requirement for planning authorities to prepare an Evidence Report, Open Space Strategy and Play Sufficiency Assessment as part of the Development Plan. We are currently developing our approach into the research and preparation of these aspects of the new LDP. This is still evolving but is more progressed than other aspects of the Development Planning requirement from the Act, although the final regulations on this process haven't yet been released, we will be engaging with other

10	No longer applicable – gap kept for data continuity	N/A	Comhairle departments on the Open Space Strategy and the provision for play. Members have been briefed regarding the pending regulations and will be engaged in the LDP planning process in due course. As part of our service improvements, we are developing training programmes in different aspects of the planning process for members, this will be useful for both existing and newly elected members of the Comhairle (see Part 3 Service Improvements page 37 for evidence of our intent) In the last reporting year Members participated in iRSS workshops and contributed to the iRSS content, which in due course will feed into our new LDP. N/A
11	Production of regular and proportionate policy advice	GREEN	Supplementary Guidance is regularly updated to align with the latest national policy and guidance. The DP & MP team are involved in ongoing work on the adoption of updated and new Guidance for Wind Energy Development and Caravans, Huts and Temporary Buildings. Here is a link to our Supplementary Guidance web page: https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-service/development-

			planning/development-plan/local-development-plan/#supplementaryguidance Work will be further progressed to inform new Supplementary Guidance for Marine Fish Farming, Minerals, and for the Conservation Areas. We promote the use of processing agreements on our website For all major, and substantial or complex local applications the Planning Service have Processing Agreements and templates identifying what information is required to support an application. These are online at: <a href="https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-service/other-planning-and-building/planning-service/other-planning-and-building/planning-service/other-planning-and-building/planning-service/other-planning-</th></tr><tr><th></th><th></th><th></th><th>information/major-and-national-developments/</th></tr><tr><th></th><th>SIMPLIFYING AND STREAMLINING</th><th></th><th></th></tr><tr><th>12</th><th>Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (e.g., protocols; joined-up services; single contact; joint pre-application advice)</th><th>GREEN</th><th>Our Planning Technician continues to co-ordinate data collection, collating spatial datasets from various departments within the council regarding assets, infrastructure, services, and facilities and publishing the data to the Scottish Government, Improvement Service Spatial Hub . During this reporting year our DP&MP Planning
			Technician collaborated with the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership in a project to

develop an interactive tool which organisations, groups and individuals can access to find out about climate change and its impact on the Outer Hebrides Case Study 4: Climate Change Adaptation in the Outer Hebrides. (See page 17 of this report).

Regarding corporate working across services for customer benefit, relating to Case Study 1:

Progress at Care Centre and Sinclair Avenue,

Stornoway the Planning Service continues to play an active part in a project sub-group charged with assessing applications for some of the 40,000 tonnes of excavated topsoil from this former farmland. In a joint protocol with SEPA, who regulate movement of topsoil, the Comhairle has enabled community groups, individual householders, and some commercial businesses to legitimately apply for batches of the topsoil, whilst still complying with SEPA regulations (see page 7 of this report).

Post consent planning staff remain in contact with project agents and contractors regularly on this major development and an officer sits on the project delivery board: this has proved to be an effective approach with the officer ensuring that problems and opportunities are addressed on an ongoing basis.

The DM&MP team also work in partnership with the Council's Technical Department; and the

			Housing Service to identify suitable sites for affordable housing (see Case Study 2: Housing Land Audit page 8 and Housing Feasibility Studies paragraph 2.3 of this report.
13	Sharing good practice, skills, and knowledge between authorities	GREEN	See Housing Feasibility Studies paragraph 2.3 for evidence of meeting this key marker The DM Planning Manager attended a joint Planning Authority Annual meeting (5 LAs with fish farm interests) online rather than face to face this year due to the Covid situation (page 29). The DM and DP & MP Managers attended HOPS DM and HOPS DP Meetings and the DM & MP Manager attended the North of Scotland Development Plan forum quarterly (paragraph 4.5).
			We have been also working with the other Island Authorities in scoping projects for the Islands (Growth) Deal. DP&MP Officer attended Improvement Service (IS) workshops on PPF preparation in March 2021 & April 2022 DP&MP Officer contributed an article on the link between heritage restoration and affordable housing to the Scottish Planner Journal (see paragraph 4.7 of this report)

	DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT		This reporting year DM Officer Anne Napier prepared and delivered a Planning lecture on Life in DM to Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) see page 33 of this report. The Planning Service is contributing technical resources to the development of a new interactive mapping tool to assist with planning for climate change in the long term (See Case Study 4: Climate Change Adaptation in the Outer Hebrides) on page 17. DM Manager and Officers, the Planning technician and on occasion the DP manager attend monthly liaison meetings with SEPA (see page 33).
14	Stalled sites/legacy cases: conclusion/withdrawal of planning applications more than one-year-old	AMBER	Six legacy cases were cleared during this reporting period. Please refer to our NHI table and see paragraph 3.8 , pages 30-31 for commentary on these.
15	Developer contributions: clear expectations - set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan,) and - in pre-application discussions	GREEN	The Adopted Outer Hebrides LDP includes Policy EI 12: Developer Contributions which sets out clear expectations on contributions, stating that these will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development and will be addressed. through planning conditions or through a legal agreement if appropriate.

	The Planning Service offers pre-application
	consultation at no cost and developer
	contributions are clearly set out at the pre-
	application stage.
	See Case Study 1, Case Study 1: Progress at Care
	See Case Study 1, Case Study 1: Progress at Care Centre and Sinclair Avenue, Stornoway on page
	Centre and Sinclair Avenue, Stornoway on page



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