

Falkirk Council

Planning Performance Framework

2021-2022



Falkirk Council

Place Services

Annual Report April 2021 – March 2022

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Foreword

1. Falkirk Council is pleased to submit its eleventh annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) to Scottish Government. The PPF is an annual report produced by all Scottish planning authorities. It sets out what we have done during the year to maintain and improve the quality of planning service that Falkirk Council provides and shows our commitment to continuous improvement. The structure of the report follows the PPF template and guidance produced by Heads of Planning Scotland. The report includes Scottish Government feedback on our performance last year and provides a broad overview of how we are performing and our plans for 2021/2022.

Feedback on Previous Report

2. The feedback we received from Scottish Government on our performance last year acknowledged the challenges for people working within planning, in the development sector and across Scotland's communities because of the pandemic. Tom Arthur, the Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth stated, "we should all be very proud of how planning has responded to the coronavirus pandemic, adjusting as necessary to keep going and supporting recovery". The Minister acknowledged that although as expected the pandemic has had an impact on performance, overall good progress continues to be made by Scotland's planning authorities.
3. Our 2021 – 2022 PPF was again assessed by Scottish Government against 13 performance markers using a red, amber, green rating. Falkirk Council received 9 green ratings and 4 amber ratings. We received no red markers. We were commended for:
 - The Council's proactive approach to pre-application discussion and the clear and proportionate advice we provide.
 - The corporate working of the planning service and communication across Council services.
 - The continuing work by planning staff to share good practice, skills, and knowledge between authorities.
4. We received amber ratings for our planning application decision making timescales which, except for householder applications, were below the Scottish average. This was because of the length of time to conclude legal agreements and an increase in the number of undetermined planning applications because of delays caused by applicants/agents and Committee procedures.

Introduction

5. The Falkirk Council area is at the centre of Scotland, at the heart of the road and rail network. It has a growing population (160,560 in 2020). It comprises a network of towns and villages, each with its own strong identity, Falkirk being the principal administrative and service centre. The area retains a strong manufacturing base within a diverse economy. Grangemouth hosts the largest petrochemical complex in Scotland and is also the country's busiest container port. The area has a diverse landscape character and a proud history stretching back to Roman times. The Falkirk Council area is dynamic and forward looking with new popular tourist destinations such as the Falkirk Wheel, the Kelpies and Helix Park.
6. During 2021/22, Falkirk's planning service has continued to operate in a changing and often challenging environment. The effects of the pandemic remained a key factor, with staff still adapting to remote ways of working and the 'new normal' while continuing to deliver a high quality service and support the process of economic recovery. The delivery of LDP2 is a key focus, with a number of major housing, business and infrastructure proposals being steered through the planning process. The signing of Heads of Terms for the Falkirk/Grangemouth Growth Deal was a major milestone, signalling the area's ambition to be at the forefront of tackling the climate emergency. The year has also seen major restructuring of Development Services, within which the planning service sits, to create Place Services. Meanwhile, we have begun to gear up the changes heralded by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. Resourcing implications of the duties are a significant challenge, at a time of increasing budgetary pressures.

Part 1: Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies

Quality of Outcomes

Place Quality

7. Falkirk Council's new Local Outcomes and Improvement Plan – the Falkirk Plan – has as a key outcome that “social, community, and economic planning focusses on place, and reflects the needs and aspirations of the people that live there”. The planning service is central to delivering the spatial aspects of this outcome, engaging with our communities on how their places can be improved and made more sustainable through development planning, adding value to development through the planning application process, facilitating inclusive economic growth, and creating a quality green network which promotes health and well-being.
8. Falkirk Local Development Plan 2, adopted in August 2020, provides the overarching direction on place quality, articulated through the keynote Policy PE01 Placemaking, other supporting topic policies, and Supplementary Guidance (SG) notes. This policy and guidance form the primary reference point in discussions with applicants and stakeholders and provides a basis for negotiating high quality outcomes. Almost the entire suite of SGs associated with LDP2 is now in place.
9. The planning service continues to engage with businesses and communities to secure economic investment in the area and to improve and maintain the quality of the environment (see case studies)

Case Study 1:	
Manufacturing Facility (Class 5), Ancillary Office (Class 4) and Associated Development	
Location and Dates:	
Earls Gate Park, Beancross Road, Grangemouth	
Elements of a High-Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality of outcomes• Quality of service & engagement	
Key Markers (please select all that apply):	
1, 2, 3	
Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic development• Development Management processes• Collaborative working	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement • Project management 	
Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falkirk Council planning staff • Falkirk Council other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key agencies • Key stakeholders
Overview:	
<p>Proposed development of a facility for the manufacture of biopharmaceutical products for the treatment of various cancers and other life limiting conditions. The development is within the NPF3 Grangemouth Investment Zone. It is in an area identified as a strategic business location safeguarded for business and industry uses in the development plan and within Health and Safety Executive (HSE) hazard consultation zones. It is a National Development. The proposal is linked with existing developments in the area and ties into the Calachem CHP plant. Pre-application public consultation was undertaken following Coronavirus provisions. Pre-application consultation was also undertaken by Council officers with the applicants and key stakeholders, such as community council representatives and the HES to identify issues of potential concern and to seek solutions. Regular contact between the applicant's agent and Council officers ensured effective project management of the application and timeous responses to information requests.</p> <p>Following a well-attended pre-determination hearing and consideration of the application by the Planning Committee the Council decided it was minded to grant planning permission. The application was referred to Scottish Ministers due to a HSE objection. Taking into account the information provided in relation to the national economic benefits of the proposal and assessment of public safety concerns Scottish Ministers decided not to call in the application and permission was granted in accordance with the decision of the Council.</p>	
Goals:	
<p>To ensure the timeous determination of an application for a National Development. Effective consultation with the local community and stakeholders</p>	
Outcomes:	
<p>As a result of positive engagement between the Council, applicants, and key stakeholders prior to submission of the application and following submission, the application was determined timeously in accordance with agreed timescales. The development management procedures were clear to all parties. The processing of the application was seen to be open and transparent with all parties seen to have opportunities to participate in the decision making process.</p>	
Name of key officer	
Julie Seidel-Gregory	

Case Study 2:	
Unauthorised development and residential occupation of land	
Location and Dates:	
Land adjacent to Laurel Grove, Bonnybridge	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of outcomes • Quality of service and engagement 	
Key Markers (please select all that apply):	
2, 3, 12	
Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative working • Environment • Enforcement • Interdisciplinary working • Placemaking 	
Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falkirk Council planning staff • Falkirk Council other staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key agencies • Key stakeholders
Overview:	
<p>Complaints received in relation to occupation of a former railway siding, business activities on the land, antisocial behaviour, deposit of waste materials, people living on the land, vermin, noise and disturbance, removal of trees, fly tipping.</p> <p>Initially it was perceived that the Council were not taking action to answer and address concerns raised by nearby residents. Also, it was perceived by residents that all concerns raised were within the remit of planning to resolve. Residents were frustrated with the planning authority and what was initially perceived as inaction to resolve their concerns.</p> <p>It took time but a respectful relationship was built with community representatives. A working group comprising all agencies, within the Council and externally, that had a potential regulatory interest in the site was established. Planning took a lead on communication with nearby residents. It was established after lengthy investigation that the land was within the ownership of Highways England acting as a successor to British Rail. With their involvement and co-operation, it was possible to pursue legal action for Highways England to achieve vacant possession of the land, ensure the removal of unauthorised development and to make the land tidy and secure.</p>	
Goals:	
To resolve complaints relating to unauthorised development and use of land, to tidy a site that was considered harmful to the amenity of the area, to clarify the roles and responsibilities of agencies, to ensure a multi-agency collaborative approach to resolution, to improve community perceptions of the Council and other agencies.	
Outcomes:	

It took time but the situation was resolved. This was a result of collaborative working between Council services and external agencies. This interdisciplinary approach allowed all agencies to agree the most appropriate legislative processes to deal with the concerns raised. In the end this was not by means of the use of planning enforcement powers but by the landowner with evidential assistance and support from planning and other external agencies. This being the most effective way to resolve the concerns.

Name of key officer
Bernard Whittle

Town Centres

10. During the second half of 2021, the planning service carried out a Town Centres Health Check which was informed by a comprehensive floorspace survey of Falkirk Town Centre and our four District Centres. This has given us a clearer picture of the strengths and weaknesses in our centres and in particular the immediate impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. Our District Centres have held up reasonably well in the face of the recent challenges, as indeed have the secondary areas of Falkirk Town Centre. However, the high level of vacancies in the core area of Falkirk Town Centre has highlighted the need for concerted action in the High Street and the need for restructuring and diversification of uses.
11. A 'Revitalising Falkirk' Partnership was established in 2019 with a diverse range of stakeholders represented. A vision for the Town Centre has been agreed, along with an Action Plan built around a number of themes including governance, communication, hubs, reinvigorating retail, residential and infrastructure. Work continues on options and feasibility for the Council's new HQ/Arts Centre project which has the potential to be a catalyst for regeneration and will provide the basis around which a masterplanning exercise for Falkirk Town Centre can be built.
12. Meanwhile other smaller scale interventions are progressing, including public realm improvements in Newmarket Street and a repurposing grant scheme, offering grants for design and feasibility work to repurpose large vacant units in the High Street. A bid to the HES Heritage and Place Fund for further resources to safeguard and enhance historic properties in the High Street is being considered, as a follow on to the previous highly successful THI scheme. Planning has a significant input to these projects and continues to contribute to the cross sectoral Falkirk Town Centre working group which meets weekly to ensure co-ordination of regeneration activity and day to day management issues.

Greenspace

13. Work continues on the implementation of the Falkirk Open Space Strategy and preparatory programming work has begun on its replacement. Projects described below are priorities within the Strategy and LDP2.
14. Delivery of the £2.5m masterplan for Zetland Park in Grangemouth, is nearing completion. The project was featured as a case study in last year's PPF and has continued to be a focus for community events and involvement as successive elements of the revitalised park have been completed.
15. A key success over the course of the year was securing £583k from the Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Investment Programme to enable the transformation of the Lionthorn Policy Bing in Falkirk. The project is being delivered through a partnership with the Green Action Trust and involves the creation of path links and access enhancements, installation of a grass 'kick about' pitch, and landscaping, bulb, and woodland planting to bring this derelict site back into productive use for the local community and fill in another gap in the wider green network around South Falkirk. Developer contributions from adjacent housing development have added to the funding package, giving an overall project value of £761k. Work commenced in spring 2022.
16. Further progress has been made on the improvement of the open spaces at Bo'ness Foreshore. The foreshore is traversed by the John Muir Way and has been experiencing an increased number of visitors, so improvement of the visitor experience is seen as a priority. Funding for access and placemaking improvements was secured through the Sustrans administered Scottish Greenways (c.£105k) and Cycling Walking and Safer Streets (c.£144k) programmes. Improvements delivered since the project delivery phase began in 2020 have included path upgrading, a new pedestrian railway crossing and installation of new seating and heritage interpretation. The project is due to complete during 2022/23 with further work to include additional public art and improvement of existing railway crossings.
17. The Forest Estate Plan is a key strategic project which targets woodland management and creation opportunities within the Council's land portfolio (see case study).

Case Study: 3	
Falkirk Council Forest Estate Plan	
Location and Dates:	
Area wide, ongoing	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of outcomes 	
Key Markers (please select all that apply):	
2, 3, 6, 12	
Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenspace Active Travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Placemaking
Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falkirk Council Planning Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Action Trust
Overview:	
<p>The Forest Estate Plan is an ambitious programme to improve the significant amount of woodland across the area which is Council owned. It recognises that woodlands, and particularly urban woodlands, are a vital resource which require management. However, resources are limited to achieve this. The Plan, approved in 2019, and drawn up in partnership with the Green Action Trust, provides a means of accessing funding through the Scottish Government's Forestry Grant Scheme. The Plan is split into six distinct Urban Woodland Management Plans (UWMPs) covering different communities across the Council area, which are being delivered progressively as funds become available. Once implemented the Plan will involve: the planting of nearly 40,000 trees; the clearance of 4ha of woodland; the thinning of 93ha of woodland; safety surveys of 67ha of woodland; the creation of over 24,000m² of new paths; and the improvement of over 14,000m² of existing paths.</p>	
Goals:	
<p>The goal is to improve and manage urban woodlands within the Council's ownership, and create additional woodland where opportunities arise, to benefit local communities, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration.</p>	
Outcomes:	
<p>The implementation of the Falkirk North UWMP was completed in April 2021 delivering woodland improvement works with a value of £213k across 7 individual woodland sites. The £61k woodland expansion element of the Polmont UWMP, funded through the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund being is currently being delivered.</p>	
Name of key officer	
Danny Thallon	

Nature Crisis

18. One of the key national responses to the ongoing international biodiversity crisis is the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund (NRF). The Council and it

partners have delivered a diverse range of projects utilising NRF funding (see case study).

Case Study Title: 4	
Nature Restoration Fund Delivery	
Location and Dates:	
Various sites, 2021-22	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of outcomes 	
Key Markers (please select all that apply):	
2, 3, 6, 12	
Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity • Placemaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change • Greenspace
Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falkirk Council Planning Staff • Green Action Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various Community and Voluntary Groups
Overview:	
<p>The Council was allocated £183,000 of Nature Restoration Fund monies in its 2021/22 block grant with the money ring fenced for projects that restore wildlife and habitats and address the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change. Working in partnership with Green Action Trust, an additional £107k of funding was secured from NatureScot through the competitive element of the fund. The ten projects have been wide ranging, covering both urban and rural areas, and include biodiversity enhancements to Inchyra Park in Grangemouth in conjunction with the local community, the planting of a new native broadleaved woodland in Polmont, management works at Kinneil Local Nature Reserve, and creation of a naturalised pond feature as part of the Zetland Park Regeneration Project.</p>	
Goals:	
<p>The projects area aimed at improving, extending, and linking priority habitats as identified in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) and to improve the quality and value of urban greenspaces for local communities.</p>	
Outcomes:	
<p>The Council and its partners have delivered ten projects on sites covering a total of 235ha with a total value of £695k to restore nature and improve biodiversity.</p>	
Name of key officer	
Anna Perks	

19. Both the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and Open Space Strategy propose a review of the Council's open space maintenance regimes to establish a range of cutting

options including some of increased benefit to wildlife. Throughout this financial year we have been trialling these grass management changes at 35 pilot sites across our area with the intention that the changes will help create diverse and healthy greenspaces for local people to enjoy; benefit wildlife; and reduce biodiversity loss; and combat the climate emergency. Changes made include creating naturalised grass areas; creating patches or strips of wildflower meadow; delaying or reducing the frequency of amenity grass cutting; planting bulbs and trees; and sowing meadow seed or wildflower seed. Consultation on the pilot was ongoing throughout the year and ended in Spring 2022

Climate Change

20. In August 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency, and is committed to assisting national efforts to achieve net zero emissions by 2045. Our Growth Deal bid is built around projects which will help tackle the climate challenge, particularly those focused on a just transition in Grangemouth.
21. Under the recent service restructuring, the Council's Climate Change team is now located within the Development Management and Building Standards Unit, recognising the key role that planning has to play in this area. Planning is represented on the Energy Management Working Group and is working closely with the Climate Change team on the early stages of development of the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES).
22. The Council continues to be an active partner in Inner Forth Futures which, in February 2022, was successful in securing development phase funding from the National Lottery for its Climate FORTH project. This aims to support pilot schemes along the Inner Forth which will explore how new adaptive responses to change can safeguard, sustain, and repurpose the area's unique natural, cultural, and built heritage assets.
23. Consolidated and updated Supplementary Guidance on Renewable and Low Carbon Development was adopted in February 2022 (see case study).

Case Study: 5
Supplementary Guidance SG14: Renewable and Low Carbon Development
Location and Dates:
Area Wide, adopted in February 2022
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Outcomes
Key Markers (please select all that apply):

3, 6, 11, 12, 15	
Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
• Supplementary Guidance	• Climate Change
Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
• Falkirk Council Planning Staff	• Falkirk Council Other Staff
Overview:	
This Supplementary Guidance note supports LDP2 policies on Energy Development, Low and Zero Carbon Development and Heat Networks. It brings together and augments three previous SGs to provide an integrated package of guidance in this area which is critical to the Council's climate change commitments. The SG includes a section on the potential for the different renewable and low carbon technologies in the area, including locational guidance; detailed development management guidance on each technology; and requirements for the inclusion of low and zero carbon generating technologies in new development, including heat networks, energy statements and EV charging infrastructure. The SG is illustrated throughout with relevant case studies.	
Goals:	
The aim of the SG is to promote and facilitate development which will support national zero carbon objectives and the Council's own commitments to climate action. It is intended to be both promotional and regulatory, highlighting opportunities and identifying constraints and considerations to be addressed in renewable and low carbon energy developments.	
Outcomes:	
The SG has streamlined and updated the previous suite of guidance on energy and development. An improved energy statement template provides a more straightforward means by which developers can demonstrate how they have met the policy on inclusion of low and zero carbon generating technologies.	
Name of key officer	
Alex Lewis	

Historic Environment

24. The Lottery funded 'Rediscovering the Antonine Wall' project, delivered in partnership with the five local authorities traversing the wall and Historic Environment Scotland, has entered its final year of delivery. The project aimed to promote a better understanding of the Antonine Wall and Roman culture to a wider local audience allowing them to re-discover this element of their cultural heritage. Since the delivery phase of the project began in 2018 the project has delivered a new Roman themed playpark in Callendar Park, new public realm in Falkirk Town Centre incorporating a specially commissioned distance stone reflecting the native population's perspective on Roman occupation, as well as public artworks in Bonnybridge and at Kinneil Estate in Bo'ness.

25. The historic listed Victorian bandstand in Glebe Park, Bo'ness, which acts as the centrepiece to the annual Bo'ness Fair was closed in 2019 following the discovery of unsafe decorative ironwork. A condition survey was commissioned from conservation accredited architects ZM Architecture and initial works carried out to make the bandstand safe for re-opening to the public. Fundraising is ongoing to enable the specification of works to fully restore this historic structure.
26. The Carronworks programme initiated in 2018, which previously delivered the award winning 'Carron Dams - A Dam Fine Place' project, has turned its focus to the worsening condition of significant elements of iron heritage within Larbert Old Church Graveyard. One of key Industrial Heritage Monuments in Larbert Old Church is the Bruce Obelisk, a Category A listed iron memorial to James Bruce of Kinnaird, (d. 1794), a descendant of Robert the Bruce. A condition survey has been carried out and restoration will take place in 2022/23 subject to ongoing fundraising efforts.

Quality of Service and Engagement

Covid 19 Recovery

27. During the second year of the Covid 19 pandemic, most staff continued to work successfully from home and the planning service has adapted well to this mode of operation. This has been helped by the roll out of additional IT equipment and the introduction of MS Teams across the Council. Teams is used for meetings, general communication, and file sharing. It is recognised, however, that effective team working and team building benefits from face to face contact and the Council is working towards a hybrid working model which staff can sign up to where it is appropriate to their role and duties.

Development Management: Support and Guidance for Applicants

Pre-Application

28. Our pre-application and general enquiry services remain free to access and we continue to encourage people to make use of these services for all scales of development. Where workloads allow, officers follow pre-application enquiries through the entire process to a planning application decision. This allows for continuity of service and improves the customer experience. We have seen a significant increase in people accessing these services over the last year and will be looking for ways to streamline and improve our service provision.

29. In 2021 we dealt with over 1800 enquiries. In 2022 we have so far dealt with over 1000 enquiries. Officers spend a significant amount of time providing this enquiry service and generally provide a written response in the form of an email or a virtual meeting. Officers liaise with other Council services and external agencies to provide detailed replies.

Processing Agreements

30. A template remains available on our website and agreements are promoted by officers at the pre-application stage or early in the assessment of applications. Take up remains low but we provide clear timescales to applicants on applications and keep them up to date with progress. Customers are generally satisfied that we have procedures in place to ensure applications are progressed in a reasonable timescale. We are very open with applicants and agents and are available by phone or email to talk matters through.

Legal Agreements

31. Advice and guidance are provided in development plan policy and supplementary guidance setting out the circumstances in which legal agreements will be required. Where financial contributions may be sought, the reasoning and amounts are explained in the supplementary guidance. This information is published on our website and referenced in pre-application discussions.

32. We continue to try and speed up the process. The heads of terms of legal agreements are progressed prior to recommendation. We use standard templates for instructions to the Council's legal services to draft agreements. This ensures all information needed is provided by the Development Management Unit at an early stage and minimises potential delays. Minded granting recommendations are worded to set 6 month timescales for the conclusion of agreements or review of the minded to grant decision. The progress of legal agreements is closely monitored by the planning service and legal services.

Charters

33. Our Development Management Charter (February 2022) and Planning Enforcement Charter (November 2021) have been updated and are available on our website.

Complaints

34. The Council's complaints procedures are published on our website. It is a 2 stage procedure. The first stage is a frontline resolution. This aims to resolve complaints quickly and close to where we provide the service. Stage 2 deals with 2 types of complaint; those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. Stage 2 investigations are carried out by Service Unit Managers, with the final complaint responses signed off at Head of Service level or above. Following investigation, if customers are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have dealt with their complaint, they can ask the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it. These procedures follow the SPSO model.
35. Each Council service has a nominated lead officer for complaints and a Complaints Officers Working Group. At a national level, a Complaint Handlers network has been established in conjunction with the SPSO and a Knowledge Hub forum so that Councils can share good practice and common queries. Falkirk Council is part of this group. An annual report on the Council's performance in dealing with complaints is published on our website.

Customer Feedback

36. We obtain feedback from a variety of sources. We have links to dedicated questionnaires on our email signatures and people can comment through our website or direct to officers. Performance is monitored and regularly reported to Members for their consideration at a Scrutiny Committee. This helps us improve our service and makes sure we are meeting the needs of the communities. We have received many positive comments this year. It's been a very difficult time and so we are particularly pleased that we have managed to maintain a high level of service. We have highlighted below just some of the comments we have received.

"I am pleased to see that at least one council is performing well in responding to the public inquiries promptly and free of charge. My compliments to the management team. Unfortunately, many other councils do not even bother replying !"

"Thank you so much for all your assistance and patience with this, it really is much appreciated."

"Great work here....I know that the company will be delighted with such a smooth turnaround on this major application. It's a huge step forward for us in delivering such a key investment."

“Thank you for the attention on the above, the prompt turnaround is allowing us to remain on schedule.”

“That is very helpful indeed. It's a pity other councils weren't as reasonable and prompt like this!”

“I wanted to thank you for your efforts – you really went above and beyond to help me and it is much appreciated.”

“Thanks, you for your patience in this, the planning team have been amazing and the staff have been so helpful and have helped myself and Greg through the proses.”

“The whole team who have been working on this project would like to thank you very much indeed for your input into our survey, especially given the difficulties you all faced in providing information under pandemic conditions.”

Development Planning

37. With LDP2 adopted in August 2020, the development plan team has been focused this year on helping to deliver the plan, completing our programme of Supplementary Guidance (SG) preparation, responding to consultations on draft NPF4 and the draft Development Plan Regulations and Guidance, and starting to project plan LDP3. A report to the Council's Executive in March 2022 highlighted the changes to the development plan system arising from the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, drawing attention to the range of new planning authority duties and the associated resource implications.

38. Two major SGs were adopted during the year. SG13 on Developer Contributions brought together and updated all our current guidance on this topic, as well as providing explanatory material on new areas (see case study). SG14 on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy represents a consolidation and development of a number of previous guidance notes which is an important part of our response to the climate emergency as a planning authority (see case study). Only one SG – SG11 on the Antonine Wall – remains outstanding. This has been complicated by its cross-authority nature, but consultation was completed by the end of March and adoption is expected by the end of 2022, subject to progress by partner authorities.

Case Study: 6
Supplementary Guidance SG13: Developer Contributions
Location and Dates:
Area wide, adopted July 2021
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of service and engagement 	
Key Markers (please select all that apply):	
2, 3, 3, 11, 12, 15	
Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplementary Guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process Improvement
Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falkirk Council Planning Staff Key Agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falkirk Council Other Staff
Overview:	
<p>SG13 consolidates, updates, and expands previous guidance on developer contributions. It is now a comprehensive document, setting out contribution requirements across all relevant topic areas listed in LDP2. Contribution rates, methodologies and procedures have all been reviewed in the light of experience and the latest and most relevant cost metrics, informed by consultation with infrastructure providers and other stakeholders. An enhanced section on development viability is included to make it clear to developers what is expected in terms of information if they wish to provide evidence that contributions will compromise viability.</p>	
Goals:	
<p>The aim of the SG is to provide clear and comprehensive guidance to developers on contribution requirements.</p>	
Outcomes:	
<p>The new SG has made it easier for developers, and indeed Development Management staff, to quickly access all the information they need on contributions. Infrastructure providers now have the confidence that the guidance is up to date and reflects current infrastructure costs and pressures.</p>	
Name of key officer	
Andrew McNair	

39. The consultation on draft NPF4 was of major importance for planning authorities across Scotland, given its impending status as part of the statutory development plan, and the detailed policy content it contains. Draft NPF4 also makes significant statements about Grangemouth's future as part of an Industrial Green Transition Zone National Development. In compiling Falkirk Council's views on the document, the development plan team consulted widely across relevant services and held a workshop for Grangemouth stakeholders who currently sit on the Grangemouth NPF3 action planning group. A comprehensive response was submitted. Likewise, the Council responded to the consultations on the Development Plan Regulations and Guidance, the Local Place Plan Regulations, and the Open Space Strategy/Play Sufficiency Assessment Regulations.

40. Project planning and evidence gathering for LDP3 is underway, although the pace of this work has been dictated by progress with the implementation of the development plan aspects of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. We wish to avoid abortive work, and so are cautious to commit to timescales for the preparation of LDP3 or to progressing some aspects of advance work until NPF4 and the Development Plan Regulations and Guidance are finalised and the process we have to embark on is clear. On evidence gathering, significant progress has been made on the next Housing Needs and Demand Assessment.
41. Our engagement work on planning policy over the year has been mainly focused on SG consultations, but we have continued to issue mailings and newsletters throughout the year to keep stakeholders up to date with progress on the implementation of LDP2 and our ongoing monitoring and data gathering work. We continue to promote our activities and planning in general through our development plan Facebook page. Involvement in the corporate Community Empowerment Action Team has been particularly beneficial, enabling sharing of information and experience about engagement activity across the Council as a whole (see case study).

Regional Spatial Strategy

42. Following the joint preparation of an indicative Forth Valley Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) last year, Falkirk, Clackmannanshire and Stirling Councils have continued to meet at senior management level to consider the potential formalisation of the partnership to take forward the statutory RSS. Discussions have centred around governance arrangements and resourcing. The various models used previously in the strategic development plan authorities have been examined, including discussions with Clydeplan on their experience. We are also looking at the potential relationship with the emerging Forth Valley Regional Economic Partnership.

Local Place Plans

43. The Council has been preparing for the implementation of legislation relating to local place plans. Discussions have taken place with the Council's communities' team on the relationship of local place plans with community planning, community capacity in Falkirk to undertake local place plans, and the support likely to be available for communities within the Council. The development plan team has started awareness raising in communities, backed up by the preparation of our own 'brief guide' to local place plans, tailored to local needs and circumstances (see case study). A survey is also being undertaken to assess awareness and interest in preparing plans, and the types of support communities feel they might need.

Case Study: 7	
Local Place Plans: Brief Guide & Survey	
Location and Dates:	
Area Wide, 2022	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of Service and Engagement 	
Key Markers (please select all that apply):	
3, 10, 12	
Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement 	
Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falkirk Council Planning Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falkirk Council Other Staff
Overview:	
<p>The provision for local place plans (LPPs) in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 presents an exciting opportunity for local communities, but one which will require guidance and support from planning authorities. The Council has decided to take some early steps to prepare for the introduction of LPPs by carrying out general awareness raising, preparing its own brief guide to LPPs, and launching a survey to gauge interest in preparing them and an idea of the kind of support that communities feel they need. Published in story map format, the brief guide is a user friendly guide in plain English which sets out to answer what, why, who and when of LPPs, and to explain the relationship between it and other community empowerment measures so that communities can decide whether a LPP is the right route for them to take. The guide and survey have been produced in close collaboration with community planning colleagues and CVS Falkirk.</p>	
Goals:	
<p>The aim is to raise awareness of LPPs in the community, try to give accessible and useful information on what they are and how they could be useful to communities, and to find out the level of interest in preparing them so that the Council can start to plan resources accordingly.</p>	
Outcomes:	
<p>We expect the outcome to be better informed communities, a better informed response from the Council in terms of support for LPPs, and hopefully a better quality of LPPs as a result.</p>	
Name of key officer	
Andrew McNair	

Growth Deal, TIF & Strategic Infrastructure

44. In December 2021, Heads of Terms were signed on the Falkirk/Grangemouth Growth Deal, a package of £80m investment in the Falkirk and Grangemouth Investment

Zone. Eleven projects fall under two broad themes: Innovative Industry and Creating Great Places. Innovative Industry includes a Carbon Dioxide Utilisation Centre and Bioeconomy Accelerator Pilot Plant which will help drive the transition to net zero in Grangemouth. Creating Great Places includes a new Falkirk Central Sustainable Transport Hub, a Greener Grangemouth project, a new Scottish Canal Centre, and a National Outdoor Art Park. The planning service will continue to have significant input to these projects as they move through the Outline Business Case stage.

45. The Council's Tax Increment Finance (TIF) initiative continues to progress. The M9 Junction 5 upgrade, which will improve access to Grangemouth and Falkirk, is underway. Improvements to the A9/A904 at Westfield now have planning permission and are expected to commence soon. The centrepiece of the scheme is a major grade separated pedestrian/cycle bridge, for which £20m of Levelling Up Fund money has been secured.
46. The Grangemouth Flood Protection Scheme, which ranks as the top priority flood risk management scheme in Scotland, is progressing. The outline design continues to be developed. Community engagement was undertaken in June 2021, and further exercises are planned for 2022/23. Statutory publication of the final scheme is programmed for 2023. The planning service continues to provide input through the project board and the technical working group.
47. The CPO for the Denny Eastern Access Road was confirmed in November 2021 which will allow land acquisition and commencement of this important scheme which will alleviate congestion in Denny and facilitate planned housing growth.

Housing Delivery

48. After the inevitable slowdown caused by the onset of the pandemic in 2020, annual completions have picked up, although not yet to the levels envisaged by the LDP2 housing supply target. However, following the adoption of LDP2, LDP allocations are now being followed through with a number of major applications, which are expected to feed through into increased delivery in the coming years.
49. The planning service continues to work closely with Housing Services on the delivery of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), which is aiming to deliver 1,634 new build Council/RSL properties over the period 2022-27, and consideration of potential supply of sites for future programmes. Planning is represented on a suite of liaison groups which have been established to oversee both strategic planning and delivery.

Governance

Service Structure

50. A major restructuring of Development Services was undertaken during the reporting year, which has allowed the creation of a new delivery arm – Invest Falkirk – and assisted with the re-integration of Falkirk Community Trust functions back into the Council. The new service is called Place Services and comprises three divisions.



51. Place Services brings together the broad range of development services and disciplines, facilitating integration of these related functions. The two units which comprise the planning service are located within the Growth, Planning and Climate division, alongside economic development, transport, environmental health, and culture/arts.

52. The Development Management and Building Standards Unit now incorporates the Climate Change team, recognising the close links between planning/building and the net zero carbon agenda. The Development Management Unit is loosely split into two geographic area teams. Each team has a co-ordinator, but they share work allocation and staff management duties across both teams. The flexible area team structure is particularly beneficial for more complex applications, as it allows for effective sharing of information, discussion of issues, promotes staff development and provides continuity of delivery if staff are absent.

53. The Planning & Greenspace Unit incorporates the development planning team, a small team of design/environmental specialists who mainly deliver projects, an outdoor access team including the ranger service, and the parks team. This synergy between these functions and skills works well allowing strong links between strategy and implementation, particularly in the area of greenspace and green networks.

Council of the Future

54. 'Council of the Future' is the Council's response to the service and financial challenges facing local government and promotes a radical programme of change that will transform the organisation and how it delivers services over the next five years. It has three key strands: communities; enterprise; and innovation. The planning service supports a number of the constituent projects such as the Strategic Property Review, Climate Change, and the Growth Deal.

Service Planning and Performance Monitoring

55. The Development Management Unit continues to use the Uniform and Enterprise case management systems to record and monitor case work. These systems allow officers and co-ordinators to monitor and review the progress of applications and planning enquiries. Co-ordinators regularly meet with officers to review case work and progress towards determination. Statistical information on decision making timescales is circulated weekly to co-ordinators and the service manager for review. Performance is a standing item for discussion on the bi-monthly Development Management team meetings.

Staff Resources

56. Staff numbers in the planning service are currently stable, although the effects of staff losses from previous years due to retirement, voluntary severance and unfilled posts continue to be felt. Our planning teams are highly experienced, and the relatively low turnover of staff gives good continuity of service and excellent knowledge of the area. Nonetheless, we acknowledge the need to address issues of an ageing workforce both in Falkirk and the wider planning profession in Scotland and have continued to participate in the Council's graduate recruitment scheme, taking on two new graduates on two year contracts during 2021.

Budgets and Financial Management

57. The Council continues to operate in a very challenging budgetary environment, with budgets reviewed on an annual basis against the Council's priorities and objectives

as identified in the Corporate Plan. As part of this, revenue savings opportunities across each service are identified for consideration by elected Members.

58. Financial management is guided by the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation and through monitoring by Internal Audit and the Council's Best Value Forum. Council procurement rules and procedures are followed. Regular monitoring of budgets is undertaken between the Unit Managers and the Planning Service accountant.

Collaborative Working

59. Collaboration between the planning service, other Council services and other key agencies remains an important part of everyday working. Groups meeting on a regular basis include:

- Education and Planning Liaison Group
- Housing and Planning Liaison Groups
- Council Housing Planning Delivery Group
- Council/SEPA/Scottish Water Tripartite Group
- NPF3 Grangemouth Investment Zone Action Planning Group
- Planning Obligations Monitoring Group
- Forth Valley RSS Officer Working Group
- NHS Forth Valley Planning Liaison Group

Decision Making

60. Decision making is governed by the Council's Scheme of Delegation, under which most planning applications are delegated to officers. The number of delegated decisions remains high. The scheme allows local and major applications that are in accordance with the development plan to be determined by officers unless called in by any Councillor for consideration by the Planning Committee following publication of the weekly list of delegated recommendations. Where an application is called in the Councillor must state their planning reasons. The applicant/agent is informed of the call in, and the reason given. Councillors are encouraged to discuss applications with officers before making a call-in request. The delegation scheme ensures that the number of applications considered by the Planning Committee is generally small and limited to more controversial applications where a greater degree of public scrutiny is justified.

61. For the key stages of the LDP, decisions are reserved to full Council. Otherwise, development plan or planning policy matters are generally reported to the Council's

Executive. Information may be formally brought to the attention of councillors through information bulletins which are attached to the full Council agenda, but do not require consideration unless a specific question is asked.

Culture of Continuous Improvement

Service Improvement Liaison Group

62. We have come through a challenging period of change. Our priority has been to adapt and to maintain services. As we have moved towards a new normal our service improvement liaison group, met to discuss performance and plan for service improvements. The group comprises representatives from our Planning & Greenspace Unit, Building Standards Unit, Development Management Unit, Business Support and Finance.

Staff Development

63. With the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic and almost universal remote working, the wellbeing of staff and the maintenance of team working, and morale has been a priority. Regular team meetings to connect both socially and professionally have been held across the service, and advice on mental health has been disseminated to staff.
64. During the pandemic, there has been increased access to online conference and training events, which are often free, and staff have availed themselves of these opportunities. Where these courses are recorded, the recordings have been shared with others and stored in a shared drive for future reference. Staff continue to be involved in the RTPi Central Chapter and engaged with colleagues across the Scottish planning network through HOPS both through the Knowledge Hub and online meetings of the various subgroups.

Digital Transformation

65. Digital transformation is a key priority both in terms of the 'Council of the Future' agenda, and the Scottish Government's Digital Strategy for Planning which was published last year.
66. The roll out of both hardware and software to facilitate remote working has continued over the year. The transition to Office 365 and the adoption of MS Teams for virtual meetings, video calls, file sharing and general communication both

internal and external to the Council has transformed the way we work. Staff have received Teams training and are increasingly familiar with its functionality. A range of tools such as electronic whiteboards, comment boards, and online polling are starting to be used to capture feedback in video workshops.

67. The use of GIS continues to expand, with nearly all spatial data now converted into digital form, and ArcGIS Online used to present the data in attractive and accessible ways. Data is collected or updated digitally in the field using tablets. A graduate technician was recruited in 2021 to accelerate this work and ensure that datasets are properly maintained.

68. There has been a strong focus this year on ensuring that web documents are fully accessible and that the Council meets its obligation under the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. We have developed in house expertise in this area and all our newly posted planning documents meet accessibility standards.

Engagement

69. The potential benefits of a corporate approach to community engagement in the Council are starting to be realised through the setting up of a Community Empowerment Action Team, where the issues, resources and expertise relating to engagement are shared across Council services (see case study).

Case Study: 8	
Community Empowerment Action Team (CEAT)	
Location and Dates:	
Area wide, established in 2021	
Elements of a High-Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Culture of Continuous Improvement 	
Key Markers (please select all that apply):	
6, 10, 12	
Key Areas of Work (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative Working
Stakeholders Involved (please select/delete all that apply, as appropriate):	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falkirk Council Planning Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falkirk Council Other Staff
Overview:	
<p>The CEAT group is a forum for all Council services who engage regularly with the public. It meets every three weeks with the aim of sharing of information, ideas, and good practice. The group allows co-ordination of engagement exercises, helping to avoid overlap and consultation fatigue. Contacts and databases are shared. The relative merits of different techniques are discussed. The group is also helping to formulate a specification for a new online engagement platform which will meet the</p>	

needs of all services who will use it. For the development plan team, this is proving to be an invaluable resource in planning their engagement for LDP3 and addressing the additional consultation requirements set out in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

Goals:

The aim has been create more unified approach to community engagement across the Council with greater consistency and better sharing of resources.

Outcomes:

For the development plan team, there have already been very positive outcomes in terms of developing ideas for the LDP3 participation statement. We are getting an up to date picture of the engagement landscape across Falkirk, key contacts for community sectors and 'hard to reach' groups, new avenues for publicising the plan, and have effectively fed in our requirements in terms of the Council's proposed new online engagement platform.

Name of key officer

Louise Blance

Part 2: Supporting Evidence

[The Falkirk Plan](#)

[Development Plan Monitoring Report](#)

[LDP2 Supplementary Guidance](#)

[Housing Land Audit](#)

[Employment Land Audit](#)

[Town Centre Health Check Report](#)

[Development Plan Newsletter](#)

[A brief guide to local place plans](#)

[Falkirk Council website](#)

Case Study Topics	Issue covered in PPF	Case Study Topics	Issue covered in PPF
Design		Interdisciplinary Working	•
Climate Change	•	Collaborative Working	•
Conservation		Community Engagement	•
Biodiversity	•	Placemaking	•
Regeneration		Charrettes	
Environment	•	Place Standard	
Greenspace	•	Performance Monitoring	
Town Centres		Process Improvement	•
Masterplanning		Project Management	•
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	•	Skills Sharing	

Housing Supply		Staff Training	
Affordable Housing		Online Systems	
Economic Development	•	Data and Information	
Enforcement	•	Digital Practice	
Development Management Processes	•	Transport	
Planning Applications		Active Travel	•

Part 3: Service Improvements

In the coming year (2022-23) we will:

Service Improvement	Timescale
Prepare, consult on, and approve Development Plan Scheme	December 2022
Commence pre-Evidence Report engagement with communities and key stakeholders	March 2023
Issue LPP invitation and prepare package of LPP support measure for community bodies	March 2023
Secure robust and credible status for HNDA	September 2022
Review and republish LDP2 Action Programme	October 2022
Consider resource implications arising out of Planning (Scotland) Act 2019	December 2022
Report to members and seek approval for a scheme of discretionary charges	March 2023
Draft business case for purchase of hardware to aid site inspections/remote working	March 2023

Delivery of our Service Improvement Actions in 2020-21:

Service Improvement	Complete?
Complete LDP3 project plan	In draft form. Finalisation has been delayed by delays to finalising NPF4 and Development Plan Regulations/Guidance.
Prepare LDP3 consultation plan	In draft form. Finalisation has been delayed by delays to finalising NPF4 and Development Plan Regulations/Guidance.
Complete adoption of remaining Supplementary Guidance	Yes. 14 SGs now adopted. Only remaining SG on Antonine Wall has been delayed by partners but is planned for submission to Scottish Ministers imminently.

Carry out Teams training to enable DM to adapt its processes and work more efficiently. To streamline the committee report writing process.	Yes. Staff trained. New back office procedures adopted for use of Teams by Development Management, Business Support and Democratic Services to produce Committee agenda.
Train additional officers in dealing with Hazardous Substance Consents to future proof the Council's ability to deal with such applications	Yes. Staff trained, experience shared and assistance and support available to all officers.
Streamline the enquiry process and provide additional information on the Council website in relation to permitted development.	Yes. Existing advice reviewed and changes made to web content.
Review and update DM charter	Yes. Updated DM charter published February 2022.

Part 4: National Headline Indicators

A: NHI Key Outcomes – Development Planning

Development Planning	2021-2022	2020-2021
Local Development Planning		
Age of LDP at end of reporting period	19 months	7 months
Will the LDP be replaced by its 5 th anniversary according to current development plan scheme?	Note 1	Yes
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers changed over the past year?	No	No
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Note 2	Yes
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs		
Established land supply (units)	6930	7019
5-year effective housing land supply programming (units)	2978	2761
5-year housing supply total capacity (units)	5847	5140
5-year effective housing land supply target (units)	2650	2650
5-year effective land supply (years)	5.6	5.2
Housing approvals (units)	477	699
Housing completions over the last 5 years (units)	2109	2243
Marketable employment land supply (hectares)	271.8	273.7

Employment land take up during reporting year (hectares)	1.9	4.0
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Note 1: Indicator is effectively superseded by Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 which envisages 10 year review period. Transitional arrangements seek new style LDPs to be adopted within 5 year period of development plan regulations coming into force which the Council expects to achieve.

Note 2: Pending the implementation of the new development plan system, the Council has not been formally engaged in plan preparation over the reporting year.

Sources: Draft Housing Land Audit 2021-22
Employment Land Audit 2021

B: NHI Key outcomes – Development Management:

Development Management:	2021-22	2020-21
Project Planning		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	139 19.3%	110 23.7%
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	1 33.3%	2 50.0%
Decision Making		
Application approval rate	97.4%	96.9%
Delegation rate	96.3%	95.8%
Validation	44.9%	76.3%
Decision-making Timescales		
Major Developments	54.5 weeks	77.4 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	14.6 weeks	11.3 weeks
Householder developments	8.1 weeks	7.6 weeks
Legacy Cases		
Number cleared during reporting period	13	10
Number remaining	16	23

C: Enforcement activity

	2021-22	2020-21
Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed Requirement: review every 2 years	4 months	9 months
Complaints lodged and investigated	66	94
Breaches identified – no further action taken	16	66
Cases closed	44	40
Notices served	4	1
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

D: NHI Key Outcomes – Commentary

Commentary
Local Development Planning
LDP2 was adopted on 7 August 2020. Although the Council has started to do some project planning for LDP3, commencement of formal plan preparation awaits the finalisation of NPF4 and the Development Plan Regulations and Guidance.
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs
<p>The 5 year effective land supply has increased slightly over the course of the year, and in terms of the formula in the PPF guidance, a 5.6 year supply is currently available. While there are continuing delays with the delivery of some significant older sites, newer sites allocated through LDP2 are making good progress. There is a robust established supply of nearly 7,000 units, representing some 13 years supply. Housing approvals are down by over 200 units, but this is not seen as being indicative of any longer term trend.</p> <p>There has been a further slight dip in the 5 year rolling completions figure reflecting the downward trend in completions over the period from 2015 through to 2020, exacerbated latterly by the pandemic. However, a rise in annual completions in 2020/2021 gives hope that this trend will be reversed.</p> <p>The amount of marketable employment land is substantial, with over half located in Grangemouth. Take up this year has been modest, but the single site represents an important investment by a major pharmaceutical company. Prospects for increased take up in the coming years are good with Abbotsford Business Park subject to a number of live consents and active interests, Forth Ports continuing to promote new warehousing,</p>

and the Growth Deal and TIF-related infrastructure likely to facilitate significant development in Falkirk and Grangemouth over the coming years.

Project Planning

There is still little interest from developers and agents to enter into processing agreements despite our willingness to do so and the guidance and sample template published on our website. Developers and agents appear to be satisfied that we use informal project plans, are willing to give pre-application advice, give clear timescales, seek to resolve issues arising and are contactable and regularly monitor caseloads.

Decision Making

Our approval and delegation rates remain high and have increased slightly since the last reporting period. The percentage of applications that we can validate on first receipt has decreased. This is despite the clear guidance on our website on what information should be submitted with an application and targeting agents who frequently make invalid submissions.

Decision Making Timescales

Officer caseloads are being monitored. Use of electronic document management systems allows case officers and line managers to track the progress of applications and set timescales and monitor outcomes. In recognition of pandemic constraints, we have allowed applicants, agents, and the public flexibility on timescales for the submission of information and representations. This has impacted on our decision making timescales but has assisted other parties in these difficult times.

Legacy Cases

We continue to monitor legacy cases. Older cases are regularly reviewed by line managers in conjunction with legal services. Where appropriate, minded to grant decisions are reviewed and reported back to the Planning Committee for further consideration and determination.

The number of legacy cases we have has reduced this the last reporting period.

Enforcement

We still have one part time planning enforcement officer. Enforcement case load is regular monitored using the Uniform and Enterprise record management systems and cases reviewed by the Development Management Co-ordinators. Planning officers assist our enforcement officer with investigation of enforcement complaints.

Our enforcement charter was updated in November 2021.

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	3	54.5 weeks	77.4 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	200	14.6 weeks	11.3 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months 	(45.6%)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: more than 2 months 	(54.4%)		
Householder developments	330	8.1 weeks	7.6 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months 	(84.0%)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: more than 2 months 	(16.0%)		
Housing Developments			
Major	1	92 weeks	104.9 weeks
Local housing developments	57	19.4 weeks	23.9 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months 	(25.7%)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: more than 2 months 	(16.0%)		
Business and Industry			
Major	0	N/A	N/A
Local business and industry developments		N/A	10.1 weeks

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 			
EIA Developments	0	N/A	N/A
Other Consents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>As listed in the guidance</i> 	66	8.6	8.5 weeks
Planning/legal agreements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major: average time Local: average time 	2	54.5 weeks 47.2 weeks	104.9 weeks 51.5 weeks

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2021-22		2020-21	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	5	2	40%	0	0
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	3	1	33.3%	2	40.0%

C: Context

70 Comments on our decision making timescales are provided in Part 4 of the PPF. We continue to closely monitor the progress of legal agreements, set timescales for conclusion, seek withdrawal of applications, determine, or agree extensions of time where there are delays and make use of ‘stop the clock’ procedures. Where the determination of applications is delayed it is a consequence of delays by applicants and agents or because extensions of time have been agreed.

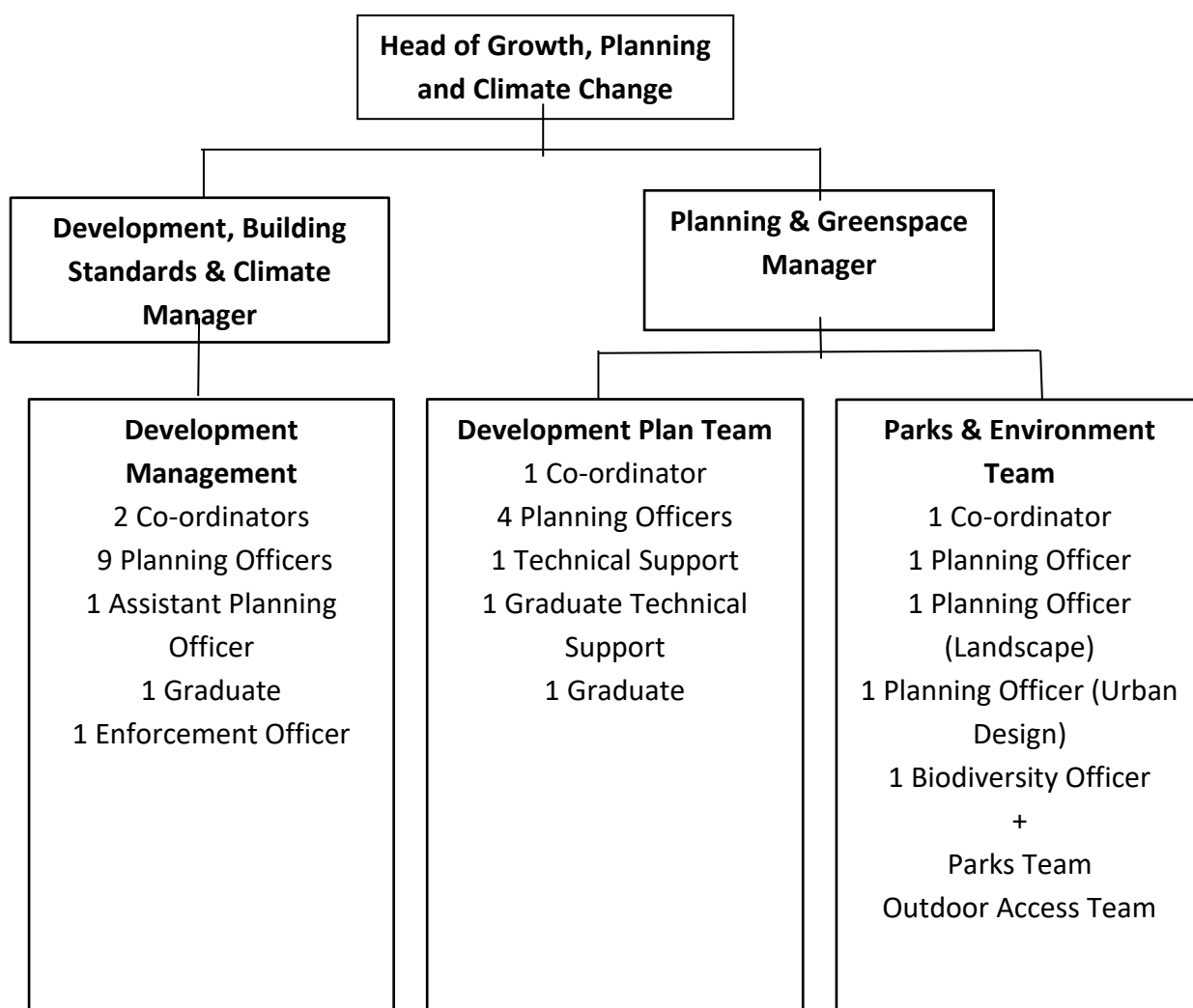
Part 6: Workforce Information

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

RTPI Chartered Staff	Headcount	FTE
Development Management	9	9
Development Planning	5	4.3
Other	3	3
Total	17	16.3
Non RTPI Chartered Staff	Headcount	FTE
Design/Environmental Specialists	3	1.5
Technical Support	5	4.5
Enforcement	1	0.5
Total	9	6.5

Staff Age Profile	Headcount
Under 30	1
30-39	9
40-49	7
50 and over	18

Planning Service Staff Structure (as at 31st March 2022)



Part 7: Planning Committee Information

Committee & Site Visits	Number per year
Full council meetings	8 (2020) 8 (2021)
Planning committees	10 (2020) 10 (2021)
Committee site visits	2 (2020) 2 (2021)
Local Review Body	1 (2020) 7(2021)
LRB site visits	0

Performance Markers

Performance Marker		Council Response/Evidence
Driving Improved Performance		
1	Decision Making	<p>We have amended our work practices to deal with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, inevitably allowing applicants and the public additional time has impacted on decision making timescales through the reporting period. We expect our performance to show signs of improvement during the next reporting period</p> <p>PPF Reference Part 4: National Headline Indicators Part 5: Scottish Government Official Statistics</p>
2	Project Management	<p>We promote the use of processing agreements. There is guidance and a template on our website. Agreements are invited during pre-application discussions and in correspondence with applicants and agents.</p> <p>Although there is general reluctance from applicants/agents to enter into formal agreements we have procedures in place for case officers and line managers to monitor and review the progress of applications</p> <p>PPF Reference Part 4: National Headline Indicators Case Studies Pre-application, para 28 – 29, page 13 Processing agreements, para 30, page 14 Legal agreements, para 31 – 32, page 14</p>
3	Early Collaboration	<p>We encourage early dialogue with applicants and agents and offer a free pre-application advice service. Guidance is published on our website. We have amended our processes to deal with the impacts of Covid-19. Although face to face engagement has not been possible, we have encouraged the use and</p>

		<p>availability of video conferencing and use of telephones</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Case studies</p> <p>Historic Environment, para 24 – 26, page 12</p> <p>Contact/Accessibility, para 69, page 25</p> <p>Pre-application, para 28 – 29, page 13</p> <p>Processing agreements, para 30, page 14</p> <p>Legal agreements, para 31 – 32, page 14</p> <p>Charters, para 33, page 14</p> <p>Development Planning, para 37 – 41, page 16</p> <p>Service structure, para 50 – 53, pages 25 and 35</p> <p>Collaborative Working, para 59, page 23</p>
4	Legal Agreements	<p>The progress of applications subject to legal agreements is closely monitored and applications are reported back to Planning Committee for reconsideration if not determined within 6 months.</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Legal agreements, para 31 – 32, page 14</p>
5	Enforcement Charter	<p>The Charter is up to date.</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Charters, para 33, page 14</p>
6	Continuous Improvement	<p>Progress on National Headline Indicators and Service Improvements are set out in the relevant sections of the PPF.</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Case studies</p> <p>Town centres, para 10 – 12, page 7</p> <p>Greenspace, para 13 – 17, page 8</p> <p>Historic Environment, para 24 – 26, page 12</p> <p>Contact/Accessibility, para 69, page 25</p> <p>Customer Feedback, para 36, page 15</p> <p>Development Planning, para 37 – 42, page 16</p> <p>Infrastructure investment and assisting development delivery, para 44 – 47, page 19</p>

		<p>Climate Change, para 20 – 23, page 11</p> <p>Staffing Resources, para 56, page 22</p> <p>Digital Transformation and Data Management, para 65 – 68, page 24</p> <p>Training and Development, para 63 – 64, page 24</p>
Promoting the Plan-Led System		
7	Local Development Plan less than 5 years since adoption	<p>The LDP was adopted in August 2020 and was 1 year and 7 months old at the end of the reporting period.</p> <p>PPF Reference Part 4: National Headline Indicators</p>
8	<p>Development Plan Scheme demonstrates next LDP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On course for adoption within 5 year cycle • Project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale 	<p>Interim DPS prepared in June 2021 but with indicative timescales only pending implementation of the new development plan system. While project planning for LDP3 is underway, confirmed programming and publication of the formal 2022 DPS awaits the adoption of the NPF4 and the Development Plan Guidance and Regulations.</p> <p>PPF Reference Part 4: National Headline Indicators</p>
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	<p>In respect of LDP2, member workshops were held in June 2016 to examine options for inclusion in the MIR and to review the pre-MIR issues responses and ‘call for sites’ submissions. Meetings were held with a sub-group of the Administration in August and September 2016 to explore key choices and provide a further opportunity for input to the process. Elected member engagement continued post-MIR with briefings on the consultation response and issues for the Proposed Plan. Process for LDP3 has not commenced, but mechanisms for member involvement are under consideration.</p> <p>PPF Reference Part 4: National Headline Indicators Development Planning, para 37 – 42, page 16</p>

10	<p>Cross-sector stakeholders, including industry, agencies, and Scottish Government, engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation</p>	<p>Pre-MIR consultation took place in 2015/16 with all stakeholders including key agencies, business, housebuilders, community councils and the public using a variety of techniques. This was carried through into the MIR consultation which took place from February 2017 to May 2017. Process for LDP3 has not commenced, but mechanisms for stakeholder involvement are under consideration.</p> <p>PPF Reference Part 4: National Headline Indicators Development Planning, para 37 – 41, page 16</p>
11	<p>Regular and proportionate policy advice, for example through SPGs produced on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information required to support applications; and • Expected developer contributions 	<p>The suite of supplementary guidance has been comprehensively reviewed and updated over the past 18 months following on from the adoption of LDP2</p> <p>Where relevant the SGs provide guidance on the information required to support applications and checklists for applicants to ensure that all the relevant issues have been considered and addressed pre-submission, to give the applications the highest chance of prompt assessment and determination.</p> <p>A consolidated and refreshed SG on developer contributions has been prepared and was adopted in July 2021. This sets out required developer contributions and provide clear guidance on the circumstances in which contributions will be required, the scale of those contributions, and how the contributions are derived, thereby demonstrating proportionality. There is also new guidance on viability statements for circumstances in which developers consider that contributions will cause viability issues with proposals.</p> <p>PPF Reference Case studies Pre-application, para 28 – 29, page 13 Processing Agreements, para 30, page 14 Legal Agreements, para 31 – 32, page 14 Charters, para 33, page 14</p>

		<p>Development Planning, para 37 – 42, page 16</p> <p>Regional Spatial Strategies, para 42, page 18</p> <p>Climate Change, para 20 – 23, page 11</p> <p>Collaborative Working, para 59, page 23</p> <p>Digital Transformation and Data Management, para 65 – 68, page 24</p>
Simplifying and streamlining		
12	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit	<p>Regular liaison meetings between planning and other Council services are held on a range of topics such as housing, education, open space, economic development, and delivery of the Council's SHIP programme, monitoring of planning obligation receipts and spend.</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Case studies</p> <p>Pre-application, para 28 – 29, page 13</p> <p>Development Planning, para 37 – 42, page 16</p> <p>Governance, page 21</p> <p>Collaborative Working, para 59, page 23</p>
13	Sharing Good Practice	<p>Staff have attended forums, conferences, training events and RTPI Chapter events. The Knowledge Hub is used to share information and experience.</p> <p>PPF Reference</p> <p>Case Study</p> <p>Historic Environment, para 24 – 26, page 12</p> <p>Collaborative Working, para 59, page 23</p> <p>Training and Development, para 63 – 64, page 24</p>
Delivering Development		
14	Stalled Sites	<p>We have cleared legacy cases during the reporting period and continue to work with applicants and agents to keep numbers to a minimum. Deadlines are set and cases monitored. Minded to grant decisions are reconsidered within 6 months if not determined.</p>

		PPF Reference Part 4: National Headline Indicators Processing agreements, para 30, page 14 Legal agreements, para 31 – 32, page 14 Governance, page 21 Legacy cases, page 31
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