



PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK
2022

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

3

PART 1: QUALITATIVE NARRATIVE AND CASE STUDIES

4

PART 2: SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

22

PART 3: SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

25

PART 4: NATIONAL HEADLINE INDICATORS

28

PART 5: SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL STATISTICS

33

PART 6: WORKFORCE INFORMATION

37

PART 7: PLANNING COMMITTEE INFORMATION

40

APPENDIX A : PERFORMANCE MARKERS

42

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Inverclyde Council's 11th Planning Performance Framework. The Framework is published annually to record the activities, performance and continuous improvement of the Planning Service in Inverclyde. The Planning Service in Inverclyde is a very compact service comprising two teams: Development Management and Planning Policy. These teams work together with the aim of providing a high quality Planning Service and are supported by a shared Administration Team.

The period 2021-22 followed on from a previous year like no other when, in common with other Councils, Inverclyde Council had a very short time to react to the national restrictions introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Planning Service, together with its staff, responded quickly to the situation and managed to maintain service provision both initially with a very swift transition to home working, and throughout the year as the Service continued to adapt. This set the groundwork for the Service to continue operating largely as a work from home Service throughout the past year.

There was a temporary period in the summer/autumn of 2021 when there was a skeletal re-population of the office space but this came to a halt when the Delta variant of the virus became widespread in the autumn of 2021, followed by the Omicron variant. It is only more recently in May of 2022 that re-population of the office has begun, but on a rotational basis as the Council has commenced a hybrid working model whereby staff will mostly work from home for a trial period of 12 months with 20-40% of the week spent in the office. This has largely meant one person from each part of the Service in the office each day. Whether this remains the working model moving forwards will become clearer towards the end of the trial period and is dependant on staff resources.

In addition to the further challenges brought by the pandemic over the past year, there has been a significant loss of staff across the Planning Service in the past year, particularly senior staff, with challenges faced in recruiting replacements. The Planning and Building Standards Manager post was filled from April to December 2021 and has remained vacant since, despite being advertised three times, and this has resulted in management pressures.

Furthermore, the Policy Team Leader post was vacated in November 2021 and remains unfilled. A vacant Policy Planner position was also transferred to Development Management in 2021, allowing the conversion of a temporary Planner post in the Development Management team to a permanent post.

The Policy vacancies have adversely impacted on taking forward the proposed 2021 Inverclyde Local Development Plan to public examination.

Within Development Management, a Senior Planner post was vacated in March 2022 and remains unfilled. The departmental structure diagram on page 39 represents a snapshot of the department at 31st March 2022.

Whilst we wish our former colleagues well and thank them for their contributions, these losses have been keenly felt and the ongoing vacancies are impacting on the ability of the Service to carry out its normal functions as efficiently as would otherwise be the case.

This year's case studies cover a range of projects and are reflective of the range of work the Planning Service has covered or had involvement with over the past year and several years leading up to the present time. They include environmental, heritage, major development, offices systems and procedural improvements.

PART 1 of the Framework tells the story of the Planning Service's activities in the past year through a range of case studies including those mentioned above and **PART 2** sets out the evidence and references behind these case studies.

PART 3 reviews the implementation of the service improvements we set for 2021-22 and sets out service improvements for 2022-23.

PARTS 4 and 5 cover performance, with the former setting out National Headline Indicator data and the latter, Scottish Government Official Statistics.

PART 6 sets out workforce information, and **PART 7** information on committee activity in Inverclyde during 2021-22.

APPENDIX A provides evidence and reference points in respect of the performance markers.

PART 1: QUALITATIVE NARRATIVE AND CASE STUDIES

QUALITY OF OUTCOMES	Page
Mixed-Use Development at the former Inverkip Power Station Site	6
Gottar Water Weir Fish Migration Improvement Works	8
Heritage Sculpture at Coronation Park, Port Glasgow	10
Affordable Residential Development at Former School Site	12
QUALITY OF SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT	Page
Creation of an Online Enforcement Register	14
Creation of a Net Zero Strategy	16
CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	Page
Local Review Body - Review and Analysis	18
Planning Service Continuity During Covid-19 Pandemic (Year 2)	20

Throughout the past year, the Planning Service has continued to focus on providing a high-quality service whilst responding to the challenges, difficulties and changes in working practices during the continuing Covid-19 pandemic. This section tells the story of the Planning Service's activities in the past year through a series of case studies.

Case Study Title:

RESIDENTIAL LED MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AT THE FORMER INVERKIP POWER STATION SITE

Location and Dates:

Inverkip, 2009-present

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

- Quality of Outcomes

Key Markers:

3 - Early Collaboration
10 - Cross-Sector Stakeholder Engaged Early
14 - Stalled Sites / Legacy Cases

Key Areas of Work:

- Design
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Planning Applications

Stakeholders Involved:

- Local Developers
- Other (Consultees)
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW

Planning Permission in Principle was granted in January 2022 for a major mixed use development comprising: up to 650 residential dwellings; a neighbourhood centre incorporating retail, commercial and employment uses; erection of a building for leisure related uses; erection of a building to accommodate community facility uses; formation of a roundabout on the A78 and alterations to the Brueacre junction; formation of landscaping, open space, play areas and recreational areas, with associated infrastructure, footpaths and access at the former Inverkip Power Station Site at Shore Road, Inverkip.

The site extends to 50.4 hectares and the oil-fired power station ceased operation in the mid-1980s, with demolition taking place in 2013/2014. This site has been a long standing derelict site identified as being suitable for re-development over a number of years in various local development plans and accords with the Spatial Development Strategy of both the adopted and proposed Inverclyde Local Development Plans.

Pre-application discussions took place with the applicant to scope the topic areas/significant environmental effects for inclusion in the Environmental Statement that accompanied the planning application, as well as to evolve and finalise the illustrative Masterplan that accompanied the planning application.

The development will result in significant inward investment and the re-development of a large brownfield site that has been identified as a Priority Place in both the adopted and proposed Inverclyde Local Development Plans. It will provide employment both during construction and on the completion of the development. It will provide new residential development which increases housing choice and will contribute to a key Council key aim of re-population. It will also provide roads improvements along the A78.

A masterplan approach has been taken to ensure a development of a well-planned attractive nature with placemaking at the heart of the design. The proposed development will create a new community and as the site is self-contained it will create its own urban form with particular character areas. The proposed development will also be connected to the surrounding area by a variety of modes, including walking and cycling with a local bus route nearby.

The final design and appearance of the buildings will have to be applied for in future detailed applications in terms of how they relate to each plot, neighbouring plots and character areas as well as to the surrounding area. It is

however considered that the proposed indicative layout shown on the Masterplan accompanying the application, where the buildings are likely to be positioned, the possible build zones within the site and character areas can all achieve placemaking goals as well as incorporating the principle of Designing Streets.

Inverkip Infrastructure is also identified as a Priority Project through the Glasgow City-Region City Deal in Policy 2 of both the adopted and proposed Inverclyde Local Development Plans. The Inverkip Infrastructure project is to address the restricted network and junction capacity on the A78 and at four locations in and around Inverkip. The Project will release investment and enable the development of the Inverkip Power Station site, creating the potential for in excess of 600 houses and up to 6,000 square metres of commercial space.



Goals:

The ultimate aim was to secure a planning permission to allow development of a site that has been derelict for a long period of time with placemaking at its heart.

Outcomes:

Planning permission in principle has been approved and applications for the approval of matters specified in conditions for the various phases of the development are awaited.

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Case Study Title:	
GOTTAR WATER WEIR FISH MIGRATION IMPROVEMENT WORKS	
Location and Dates:	
Quarriers Village, Inverclyde, January 2018-March 2022	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of outcomes 	
Key Markers:	
3 - Early Collaboration 10 - Cross Sector Stakeholder Engaged Early	
Key Areas of Work:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other (Biodiversity)
Stakeholders Involved:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Agencies

OVERVIEW

Inverclyde Council became engaged with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) early in 2018 in respect of proposed works to Gottar Weir Water within Quarriers Village, aimed at improving fish migration from Gottar Water to the Atlantic Ocean.

The original 2 metres high, 8 metres wide weir on Gottar Water within Quarriers Village was considered to present too significant an impediment for migrating fish trying to swim over it in an attempt to access the river habitat upstream. Approximately 8km of high quality habitat upstream of the weir was largely considered to be inaccessible and the works were regarded by SEPA as a priority. Improvements had been considered as early as 2015 with a range of options considered by SEPA. These options were narrowed down in late 2017/early 2018 to a solution which involved cutting a rectangular notch 0.5 metres deep and 2 metres wide across the weir, fronted by two steps (or "pre-barrages") 0.7 metres and 1.1 metres high with notches to provide a route for fish. Salmon and Trout were expected to be the species most likely to be assisted by the works. Funding was secured from the Water Environment Fund to carry out the works.

The Council was engaged early after the initial project conception phase, with discussions held and initial views gathered, particularly regarding how work on the weir might affect/be affected by a flood alleviation scheme proposed further upstream. Discussions were also held to ensure that the proposed works were designed and implemented in such a way as to be permitted development (confirmed by the later issuing of a certificate of lawfulness) and the development and installation of appropriate public information signboards explaining the nature of the works. One was to be sited on the path which runs adjacent to the weir and one next to the footpath over the bridge above the weir.

**Goals:**

The goal of this project was to improve fish migratory possibilities on Gottar Water in the interests of biodiversity.

Outcomes:

The works are now complete and the signboards are in place, all of which has led to the culmination of a successful environmental project.

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Case Study Title:**HERITAGE SCULPTURE AT CORONATION PARK,
PORT GLASGOW****Location and Dates:**

Inverclyde, March 2020-March 2022

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

- Quality of Outcomes

Key Markers:

6 - Continuous Improvement

Key Areas of Work:

- Placemaking
- Other (Heritage)

Stakeholders Involved:

- General Public

OVERVIEW

A proposal to erect a heritage sculpture in Port Glasgow, commemorating the contribution of the shipbuilding industry to the area has been mooted for several years. Riverside Inverclyde commissioned a competition to encourage the submission of suggestions from different artists with a public ballot being the method of selecting the most popular entry. The winning sculpture was designed by artist John McKenna and consists of two shipyard workers standing approximately 10 metres high engaged in working action poses. The sculpture is finished in stainless steel sheeting.

Initially planning permission was given for their installation on the roundabout south-west of the Port Glasgow Retail Park in 2014. Further investigations, however, revealed that an excessive amount of concrete foundation would be required over a sustained period which would lead to significant disruption to the A8 trunk road. It was therefore concluded that an alternative location should be sought.

Consideration of a relocation commenced in 2017 and by 2020, a 0.1 hectare grassed area within the eastern part of Coronation Park in Port Glasgow was formally identified as the preferred site through the submission of a planning application. The site was formerly a dock and is located to the west of Ferguson's Shipyard. The location was appropriate in terms of its location within a public park, adjacent to one of the main traffic routes through Inverclyde (the A8) and in close proximity to a working shipyard to help provide a heritage context. There is further industrial heritage context in the vicinity with the now converted Gourock Ropeworks and the "Endeavour" ship's hull sculpture both on the opposite side of the A8. Installed in early 2022 with feature lighting and associated landscaping, the sculpture is a striking feature which has drawn many favourable comments.

**Goals:**

The goal of this project was to create an appropriately sited industrial heritage sculpture within Port Glasgow.

Outcomes:

The sculpture is now complete and in place in a prominent location within Coronation Park and is considered to make an appropriate contribution to the industrial heritage of the area.

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Case Study Title:	
AFFORDABLE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT FORMER SCHOOL SITE, KILMACOLM ROAD, PORT GLASGOW	
Location and Dates:	
Port Glasgow, 2020-2022	
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of outcomes 	
Key Markers:	
3 - Early Collaboration	
Key Areas of Work:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regeneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placemaking
Stakeholders Involved:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Developers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW

The six hectare grounds of the former St. Stephen's High School at Kilmacolm Road, Port Glasgow, were originally identified as a residential development opportunity in the 2014 Inverclyde Local Development Plan. The site became surplus to the Council's school estate requirements due to the construction of a joint campus a few hundred yards from the site. Although it was originally intended to be a mainly private residential development, by the time of the 2019 Inverclyde Local Development Plan the tenure had been revised to wholly affordable housing provision.

River Clyde Homes came forward as the RSL in 2018 with a series of planning applications for a mix of two storey terraced and semi-detached dwellings and three and four storey flatted blocks. By 2020 the levels within the site had been so significantly adjusted as to merit the submission of a further five planning applications and it is these that have been built out. In total 54 houses and 170 flats have been constructed.

The proposals created a challenge in terms of place-making as the applicant decided not to provide one submission in the form of a major application but to submit 5 smaller applications. The key challenge, therefore, was to ensure that, notwithstanding the applicant's approach to submission, the various elements of the wider development held together and created a sense of place. This was further complicated by the varying levels on the site and the different heights of the component parts of the built form. It was decided to use a landscape ridge running east-west to create a green spine through the development. To the south of this, rows of two storey semi-detached and terraced properties present gable-on to Kilmacolm Road providing a visual permeability through the site. The gables contain appropriate levels of fenestration which, together with a mix of hard and soft landscaping treatments, present an interesting and sympathetic presentation to Kilmacolm Road. The visual permeation of the access road continues northwards with flatted blocks spaced apart by soft landscaping and path links with these links holding the disparate parts of the development together. The density is greatest close to the heart of the development with a horseshoe of flatted dwellings grouped around a courtyard of active play space. Two storey terraced and semi-detached properties bookend the development to the north.

Furthermore, the pallet of finishing materials was also key to ensuring that the development held together in its final form and these were restricted to ensure consistency between the various built forms.

The result is a contemporary low rise and flatted development which through a combination of positioning, height restriction, facing materials and design elements respects and holds together disparate elements through different planning applications and results in the creation of a successful place.



Goals:

The ultimate aim was to ensure that a series of buildings in separate planning applications “held together” to create an attractive development which will provide future residents with a sense of place.

Outcomes:

The construction of the flats and houses is complete and the resulting development achieves exactly what was set out in the original aims.

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Case Study Title:

CREATION OF AN ONLINE ENFORCEMENT REGISTER

Location and Dates:

Inverclyde, August 2021-February 2022

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

- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers:

6 - Continuous Improvement

Key Areas of Work:

- Enforcement
- Online Systems

Stakeholders Involved:

- General Public
- Other (Consultancies)

OVERVIEW

The Planning Service in Inverclyde has historically been a relatively small operation compared to other local authorities, lacking specialist staff in many areas due to the Council being subject to the staff rationalisation experienced by all local authorities in Scotland over many years. The Development Management and Policy functions have been prioritised due to statutory requirements with the result that more specialist areas have had lower priority.

One such aspect of the Planning Service in Inverclyde that has suffered has been the enforcement function, with no dedicated enforcement officer in place for 22 years. The enforcement function is performed by Development Management staff but it is carried out largely in response to promptings from members of the public and on an irregular basis. Due to the pressures of meeting application processing targets, almost inevitably there has not been the time to dedicate to the enforcement function that officers would like.

Partly due to this secondary role which it has played, departmental records over time have been inconsistently kept with the public register comprising of only a paper record of cases, consisting of a mix of notices and correspondence, which was not particularly helpful to any party. Pre-pandemic staff time was taken up by enquiring agents attempting to go through the records at the Council's reception. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in frustration for customers keen to check the enforcement register but being unable to do so either due to the office being closed or delays in organising the availability of the register.

The researching and rationalisation of records was a time consuming process. This involved rationalising the four volume enforcement register which was held in the Council offices but also cross referencing with IDOX online files to determine if there were any discrepancies in records, which indeed turned out to be the case.

	DATE EFFECTIVE	DATE COMPLIED OR *CLOSED	FILE REF
Installation of white uPVC windows on front elevation	17/10/05	*16/02/22	N/A
authorised decking and ber outbuilding and ease of height to boundary ce	16/07/21	Ongoing	20/00007/PLANN
mation of ramp	21/07/06	*04/11/21	N/A
authorised Hoardings	23/10/91	*14/10/21	N/A
authorised Hoarding	23/10/91	*14/10/21	N/A
ous unauthorised storage	16/05/85	*14/10/21	N/A
tipping of materials	11/10/10	01/06/11	08/00007/PLANN
llation of replacement	7/01/08	Ongoing	08/00007/PLANN
ows	07/01/08	14/10/10	
llation of replacement			
ows		*14/10/21	

Goals:

The goal of this project was to create an online summary enforcement register which would allow instant access to customers to secure basic information on the status of enforcement cases. A secondary goal was to ensure that all records were located in a concise register and that superfluous and duplicated information was removed. A third goal was to digitise the issued notices, pending a decision as to whether or not they were also to be placed online. Data protection concerns meant that, ultimately, the decision was taken not to place the issued notices online.

Outcomes:

Ultimately, the work resulted in a successful outcome with a concise summary register being created and placed online on the Council's website in February 2022, all in accordance with one of the service improvements identified in the 2021 Planning Performance Framework.

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Case Study Title:
CREATION OF A NET ZERO STRATEGY
Location and Dates:
Inverclyde, 2021-2022
Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of Service and Engagement • Governance
Key Markers (please select all that apply):
N/A
Key Areas of Work:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment
Stakeholders Involved:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Agencies

Overview:

The Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 requires public sector bodies to set a target date for achieving 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions and to set out how spending plans and resources will be aligned to achieve the target. In response to this, Inverclyde Council has approved a 'Net Zero Strategy', hereby referred to as 'the Strategy'. The Strategy commits Inverclyde Council to matching the Scottish Government's national target of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions from its operations and those of the Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership by 2045 from a baseline year of 2012/13 with an interim reduction target of 72.5% by 2031. The Strategy further considers greenhouse gas emissions from the household and commercial waste that the Council collects and manages.

The Strategy incorporates a change management and improvement process entitled 'Plan-Do-Check-Act', which will be used as the structure to assist Inverclyde Council deliver on its commitments. It states a requirement to review Local Outcome Improvement Plans for Inverclyde, Inverclyde Council's Corporate and Directorate Plans, the Health and Social Care Outcomes and Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan. The Strategy considers actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions involving changes to Inverclyde Council's buildings, use of transport, street lighting, water use and waste. A particular focus is placed on the nature of energy and transport use and sources since these account for more than 90% of Inverclyde Council's greenhouse gas emissions.

The Strategy recognises the importance of raising awareness and changing behaviours to help achieve its targets. It states an action to do this across Council Service areas so that net zero is incorporated throughout Inverclyde Council's operations and to empower staff to suggest changes to existing policies and practices to help achieve it. The Strategy further considers greenhouse gas emissions for the Inverclyde area with an action to work with partners on reducing home energy bills, reuse and recycling and educating local residents and businesses on the issues and opportunities with respect to climate change.

The Strategy recognises the potential significant impacts on climate change of Inverclyde Council's procurement decisions and delivery models. Inverclyde Council can have an influencing role in the development of goods and services with lower emissions of greenhouse gases. The Strategy makes provision for improvement and future change such as the inclusion of other sources of

greenhouse gases. The focus of the Strategy is on reducing greenhouse gas emissions as much as possible but for those that cannot be further reduced, Inverclyde Council will consider options to remove them from the atmosphere, such as tree planting. The Strategy regards climate change impacts as posing risks, one of which recognised by Inverclyde Council is flooding. It states an action for other climate change impacts to be considered in order for their risk to be assessed and mitigated where necessary.



Goals:

The responsibilities of Inverclyde Council's Regeneration and Planning Service includes assisting Inverclyde Council in adhering to its requirements set out by the Scottish Government regarding climate change. This notably includes Part 4 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 entitled 'Duties of Public Bodies Relating to Climate Change', which requires public sector bodies to act in the best way calculated to achieve Scottish Government greenhouse gas emissions targets.

The case study illustrates that Inverclyde Council's Regeneration and Planning Service has been active in the last year in respect to its responsibilities concerning climate change.

Outcomes:

The case study demonstrates that Inverclyde Council has in part adhered to the requirements of the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020 by setting a target date for achieving zero direct emissions of greenhouse gases. It further demonstrates that Inverclyde Council considers its other requirements for this with respect to indirect emissions of greenhouse gases and helping deliver Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Programme.

In 2022/23, Inverclyde Council proposes to develop a costed action plan with which to help achieve the targets set out in the Strategy, which will address the requirement to align its spending plans and use of resources to contribute to reducing emissions and delivering its emissions reduction targets.

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Case Study Title:

LOCAL REVIEW BODY - REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

Location and Dates:

Inverclyde, 2021-2022

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

- Quality of Outcomes
- Quality of Service & Engagement
- Culture of Continuous Improvement

Key Markers:

12 -Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefits.

Key Areas of Work:

- Development Management Processes
- Process Improvement
- Planning Applications

Stakeholders Involved:

- General Public
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW

The Local Review Body (LRB) is a committee of the Council whose purpose is essentially to review decisions made by an appointed officer, in terms of the Council's Scheme of Delegation, where the officer has either:-

- Refused an application for planning permission, consent, agreement or approval; or
- Approved an application for planning permission, consent, agreement or approval subject to condition(s).

Since the inception of the Inverclyde Local Review Body in 2010, 101 cases have been determined. The table below shows the number of applications reviewed at the Local Review Body over the last 3 years and how many of the original decisions were upheld. In 2020-21, there were fewer applications than usual which can be attributed to less applications being made due to the Covid pandemic.

	Total no. of decisions	No. of original decisions upheld	%
2019-20	9	4	44
2020-21	2	1	50
2021-22	11	5	45

Providing planning advice to the Local Review Body continues to be a significant part of the work of the Planning Service. The Planning Advisers to the Local Review Body are planners from the Council's Planning Policy Team, who have not previously been involved with the delegated decision making process.

In accordance with the Action identified in PPF 20-21, an analysis and review of the Local Review Body (LRB) procedures and outcomes has been undertaken to establish if there is any need for additional training, professional advice to the LRB, changes to policy and guidance or to procedures.

While it is not possible to amend some aspects of the Local Review Body as they are legal requirements, there are small adjustments that could be made to improve the transparency of the decision making and the efficiency of the Local Review Body process:

Transparency - for the public who may not be familiar with procedures, it could be beneficial for the Planning Adviser to give a short summary at the start of each case, outlining the proposal, the location, date of refusal, reasons for refusal, reason for review and, if necessary, highlight any corrections, policy matters etc. that have arisen.

Sustainability - there is an option to cut down on the printing and duplication of papers for the LRB. At present the same documents such as the Local Development Plan are printed for each LRB and, in some instances, for each case at the LRB. To save on the printing each Councillor and official participating in the LRB could be given a folio of reference documents at the start of the year which they would retain and use at each LRB. This would include items such as the LDP, Supplementary Guidance, SPP (or the soon to be NPF4), Historic Environment Scotland Guidelines etc. Any one-off reference documents could be copied with the papers. Full papers with relevant extracts could be made available to the public.

Technology - Covid restrictions since 2020 led to the introduction of new procedures to the Local Review Body with meetings being held online and latterly with a hybrid of officers and Councillors attending online and in the Chambers. Applicants and their representatives have attended online throughout. Members and officers adapted to the online meetings quickly and, barring a few minor broadband issues, the meetings have run with few problems, including one Local Review Body chaired from Australia. With this technology now in place throughout the Council, it is an option that can be used in future if participants are not able to attend in person. As all meetings are made available on You Tube, there is also an opportunity to reach a wider audience.

Goals:

To make the Local Review Body as accessible and efficient as possible for those participating in and observing the process.

Outcomes:

There is technology now in place which could be used to make the Local Review Body more widely accessible. There are also new measures that could be implemented to make the Local Review Body more informative and efficient, and with additional sustainability benefits.

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Case Study Title:**PLANNING SERVICE CONTINUITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (YEAR 2)****Location and Dates:**

Various locations - throughout 2021-2022

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

- Quality of Service and Engagement
- Culture of Continuous Improvement

Key Markers:

12 -Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefits.

Key Areas of Work:

- Process Improvement
- Community Engagement

Stakeholders Involved:

- General Public
- Other Authority Staff
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW

In the first year of the Covid pandemic, there were many practical issues to overcome to ensure the Planning Service, along with the rest of the Council services, were set up to operate as efficiently as possible from home and to find new ways of carrying out all statutory and non-statutory duties. Laptops were distributed to those who didn't have them, ICT worked continuously to ensure everyone was linked up online and by telephone and all staff got used to carrying out their planning duties remotely.

Into year two of the pandemic, there was a brief period at the end of 2020 when staff returned to the office on a rota basis to allow for social distancing but since the second lockdown, the staff of the Planning Service have returned to working from home with visits made to the office as required, provided the safety guidelines are followed. Site visits for Development Management officers are now fully re-established whilst their meetings are held, by appointment, online or on site. A hybrid system of working from home and in the office was introduced across the Council, subject to no more serious Covid outbreaks, with Planning taking part from after Easter.

The Planning Board and the Local Review Body are both held incorporating online and in person attendance for planning officers and Councillors, with applicants allowed to attend online. The public are not yet allowed to view proceedings in the Chambers but all meetings are recorded and are available on You Tube.

There are still some occasional connectivity issues due to the quality of broadband in some areas and intermittent technical issues arising from the rollout of new laptops across the service. However, all staff are now proficient in operating online and meetings are held efficiently within the team and with external organisations, as a matter of course.

Overall, it has been possible to continue to provide the services of processing and determining planning applications timeously whilst consultation responses on policy documents and continuing the preparation of the Local Development Plan are dealt with equally effectively. The main difference in the future is likely to be that with the option to work from home, there will be a shift from the bulk of work being carried out in the office to work being carried out at home. It is unlikely that with the majority preference to work from home, there will ever be a return to full office occupation and face to face contact with the opportunities that provides for informal discussions and exchange of information.

**Goals:**

Ensuring resilience within the Planning Service to allow the continuity of service for businesses and the general public which is key during the pandemic and the evolving nature of the resulting challenges.

Outcomes:

This case study demonstrates the flexibility of the planning service staff and their ability to continue to provide a service and meet key statutory functions under unexpected and strenuous circumstances.

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PART 2: SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

Part 1 of this Planning Performance Framework was compiled, drawing on evidence from the following sources:

Planning Home Page - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment>

Development Management office contact information page - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-applications/contacting-the-development-management-team>

Planning Policy office contact information page - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-policy/contacting-the-planning-policy-team>

Adopted Inverclyde Local Development Plan - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-policy/development-planning/ldp>

Proposed Inverclyde Local Development Plan - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-policy/development-planning/ldp-review>

Inverclyde Local Development Plan Archive - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-policy/development-planning/ldp-archive>

Historic Environment Information - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-policy/conservation>

Natural Environment Information - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-policy/natural-heritage>

Climate Change - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/climate-change>

Inverkip Power Station - <https://planning.inverclyde.gov.uk/Online/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>
https://www.scottishpower.com/news/pages/scottishpower_promotes_exciting_development_opportunity_for_former_inverkip_power_station_site.aspx

Gottar Water Weir - <https://www.georgeleslie.co.uk/what-we-do/case-study/gottar-water-fish-pass/>

Shipyards Sculptures - <https://planning.inverclyde.gov.uk/Online/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=Q7OYEUIIMGX600&activeTab=summary>

Former St Stephen's School site, Kilmacolm Road, Port Glasgow - <https://planning.inverclyde.gov.uk/Online/simpleSearchResults.do?action=firstPage>

Planning Enforcement Register - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-applications/planning-enforcement>

Net Zero Strategy - <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/climate-change/net-zero-strategy>

Case Study Topics	Issue covered by case study on the following pages	Case Study Topics	Issue covered by case study on the following pages
Design	6	Interdisciplinary Working	
Conservation		Collaborative Working	
Regeneration	6, 12	Community Engagement	
Environment	6, 8, 14	Placemaking	10, 12
Greenspace		Charettes	
Town Centres		Place Standard	
Masterplanning		Performance Monitoring	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	18	Process Improvement	14, 18
Housing Supply		Project Management	
Affordable Housing		Skills Sharing	
Economic Development		Staff Training	
Enforcement	14	Online Systems	14
Development Management Processes	14, 18	Transport	
Planning Applications	6, 14	Active Travel	

PART 3: SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Delivery of our service improvements in 2021-22:

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
<p>Undertake an analysis and review of Local Review Body (LRB) procedures and outcomes to establish the need for additional member training, professional advice to the LRB or procedural changes.</p> <p>Evidence: See the case study in this PPF which details the outcome of analysis.</p>	YES
<p>Develop a system for improving electronic document management within the Planning Policy team.</p> <p>Evidence: Document management systems have been thoroughly revamped and streamlined.</p>	YES
<p>Develop and establish a protocol for a collaborative approach to pre-application discussion relating to Council development proposals and associated planning applications to increase and efficiency and reduce delays.</p> <p>Evidence: Protocol prepared and agreed with all relevant Services</p>	YES
<p>Review and establish more efficient working practices with internal consultees to increase efficiency in the processing of planning applications.</p> <p>Evidence: Protocol prepared and agreed with all relevant Services</p>	YES
<p>Introduce an online enforcement register.</p> <p>Evidence: Summary enforcement register now online</p>	YES
<p>Conclude work on developing a system for identifying, monitoring and publicising sites for small scale residential development.</p> <p>Evidence: The loss of crucial staff and ongoing vacancies has delayed this work</p>	NO
<p>Introduce standard templates for some Planning Policy team procedures</p> <p>Evidence: The loss of crucial staff and ongoing vacancies has delayed this work</p>	NO

IN 2022-23 WE WILL...

- Aim to revise the internal scheme of delegation for the signing off of delegated decisions in Development Management
- Establish a protocol for the disposal/sale of Council owned land to ensure all Planning concerns and considerations are addressed at an early stage
- Produce a householder design guide to guide and inform planning applications

PART 4: NATIONAL HEADLINE INDICATORS

A: NHI KEY OUTCOMES - DEVELOPMENT PLANNING	2020-2021	2021-2022
Local and Strategic Development Planning		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of Local Development Plan at end of reporting period Will the Local Development Plan be replaced by its 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? Has the expected date of submission of the plan to the Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? Were development plan scheme engagement /consultation commitments met during the last year? 	1 year, 7 months Yes N/A Yes	2 years, 7 months Yes N/A N/A
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established housing land supply 5 year effective housing land supply programming 5 year effective housing land supply total capacity 5 year housing supply target 5 year effective housing land supply Housing approvals Housing completions over last 5 years Marketable employment land supply Employment land take-up during reporting year 	5305 units 1560 units 3011 units 1294 units 6 years 285 units 734 units 30.13 ha 0.00 ha	4773 units 1489 units 2895 units 1294 units 5.7 years 920 units N/A * 30.13 ha 0.04 ha

* Survey not completed due to staff shortages

B: NHI KEY OUTCOMES - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	2020-2021	2021-2022
Project Planning		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement 	57/334 (17.0%) 0%	34/354 (9.6%) 0%
Decision-making		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application approval rate Delegation rate Validation 	93.8% 97.6% 23.2%	92.2% 94.6% 30.7%
Decision-making timescales		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major developments Local developments (non-householder) Householder developments 	N/A 12.7 weeks 8.3 weeks	47.0 weeks 11.6 weeks 8.3 weeks
Legacy Cases		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number cleared during reporting period Number remaining 	6 40	21 28

C: ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY	2020-2021	2021-2022
Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed	1 month	13 months
Complaints lodged and investigated	4	31
Breaches identified - no further action taken	0	48
Cases closed	2	62
Notices served	2	1
Direct action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

In July 2020, a decision of the Court of Session quashed Chapter 7 of the Local Development Plan ('Our Homes and Communities'). In light of this the Council agreed to review its Local Development Plan. It was intended to submit the Proposed Plan to the Scottish Government for consideration in August 2021. Unfortunately a number of issues – a legal challenge on Planning Advice Note 1/2020 and implications for Scottish Planning Policy, the awaited outcome of appeals on major sites in the Proposed Plan – mean preparation of a new Local Development Plan will now begin later in 2022 under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

EFFECTIVE LAND SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF OUTPUTS

2021/22 established and effective land supply figures are based on the finalised 2020 housing land audit. 2020/21 figures are based on the *draft* 2020 audit.

Housing Supply Target figures are based on the 2017 Clydeplan Strategic Development Plan Housing Supply Target for the 2012-2029 period. It has not been adjusted for completions.

The housing approvals figures are based on the number of houses approved between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

Housing completions figure for 2021/22 is based on completions 2017/22. The 2020/21 figure is based on completions 2016/2021

Marketable employment land supply is at 31/3/22 and 31/3/21 respectively.

Employment land take-up is for 2021/22 and 2020/21 respectively.

DECISION-MAKING TIMESCALES

The decision making timescales have not varied significantly from last year, although it remains the case that in the previous year and this, the time taken to determine applications is higher than the historical norm at Inverclyde. Performance, however can still be considered favourably against the Scottish average. There have been ongoing challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic and staffing difficulties, most notably in recruiting and maintaining staff. The Planning and Building Standards Manager post was only filled for approximately 8 months of the year. Diversion to some management duties by the Development Management Team Leader largely removed the then incumbent from an application workload resulting in more applications being delegated down to Planning Officers and Senior Planning Officers with one of the latter also leaving the post during the year. This overall created a difficult working environment for a large part of the past year. More positively, a significant number of legacy cases were cleared during the period, reducing these from 40 in 2020-21 to 28 in 2021-22. There remained complications, however, as a result of the pandemic on the ability of developers and architectural practices to respond to requests for further information and the Council's desire to actively seek to address issues where possible to add value to the development proposals an enable development to proceed. Enforcement activity recovered from an historical low in the previous year and a very significant number of new cases were investigated and older cases closed. The Council records enforcement cases where a complaint is investigated and a "take up" letter issued. The enforcement function is undertaken by Planning Officers (there is no dedicated Enforcement Officer) in conjunction with their planning application case load and this has limited enforcement activity being undertaken.

PART 5: SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL STATISTICS

A: DECISION-MAKING TIMESCALES

	2020-21	2021-22	
	Timescales	Applications	Timescales
Overall			
Major developments	N/A	0	N/A
Local developments (non- householder) • Local: less than 2 months • Local: more than 2 months	12.7 weeks	119 64 (53.8%) 55 (46.2%)	11.6 weeks 7.1 weeks 17.0 weeks
Householder developments • Local: less than 2 months • Local: more than 2 months	8.3 weeks	181 129 (71.3%) 52 (28.7%)	8.3 weeks 6.7 weeks 12.2 weeks
Housing developments			
Major Local housing developments • Local: less than 2 months • Local: more than 2 months	N/A 21.0 weeks	3 28 7 (25.0%) 21 (75.0%)	52.8 weeks 17.0 weeks 8.0 weeks 20.0 weeks
Business and industry			
Major Local business and industry • Local: less than 2 months • Local: more than 2 months	0 weeks 11.0 weeks	0 2 0 (0%) 2 (100%)	0 weeks 13.6 weeks 0 weeks 13.6 weeks
EIA developments	N/A	0	0 weeks
Other consents*	7.7 weeks	41	10.2 weeks
Planning/legal agreements** • Major: average time • Local: average time	N/A N/A	0 0	N/A N/A

Notes

* Consents and certificates:
Listed Buildings and Conservation area consents, Control of Advertisement consents, Hazardous Substances consents, Established Use Certificates, certificates of lawfulness of existing use or development, notification on overhead electricity lines, notifications and directions under GPDO Parts 6 & relating to agricultural and forestry development and applications for prior approval by Coal Authority or licensed operator under classes 60 & 62 of the GPDO.

** Legal obligations associated with a planning permission; concluded under section 75 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 or section 69 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973

B: DECISION-MAKING: LOCAL REVIEWS AND APPEALS

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2021-22		2020-21	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local Reviews	11	5	45.5%	1	50.0%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	5	2	40.0%	2	66.6%

C: CONTEXT

The profile of applications received during 2021-22 has continued from the change seen in 2020-21, in that there has been a reduction in both major developments and larger local developments. The increase in householder applications as a proportion of overall workload has continued. Therefore whilst application workload has increased with regard to the number of applications, the fee income has continued to decline, falling from £239,583.00 from 344 applications in 2020-21 to £180,674.49 from 430 applications in 2021-22. The average application fee decreased from £717 to £420.

When local applications are not determined within 2 months, the reason for this is recorded. 120 applications fell into this category, which is Inverclyde Council's highest annual number. In the previous year 97 applications fell into this category.

Requests for further information in response to issues arising following consultation, public comment and detailed plan assessment are an inevitable consequence of more complex applications and this was the reason for delay in 36 cases. 11 applications were delayed due to the need to report the applications to the Planning Board.

It is clear that the Covid-19 pandemic has continued to impact on the small Development Management team. In common with all Councils across Scotland, together with other Council Services, the Development Management team was impacted by the original national lockdown response and the fallout from this, together with the ongoing restrictions as different waves of the virus hit. Nevertheless, staff were fully equipped by the start of the period to work from home and this has been the mainstay of operations during the year, with only a brief period during the summer to early autumn of 2021 where a hybrid home/office system was put in place. In addition to these challenges the team only had a replacement Manager for around 8 months of the year which once more resulted in the diversion of the Development Management Team Leader onto some management tasks causing an additional impact on application workload processing and an increased caseload to the other officers. Towards the end of the period a Senior Planning Officer left his post. Consequently 60 applications remained undetermined after 2 months as a result of officer related delays.

This remains higher than Inverclyde's historical performance. It should be noted that "officer delays" also relates to delays in replies from other officers within the Council, including consultation replies from colleagues in Council Services who were diverted onto other Covid related duties for much of the period. These have recently largely ended which should facilitate a statistical improvement next year.

The Council has sought to respond positively to the challenges of the period. A temporary Planning Officer post was converted to a full-time post to secure this resource. Within the Administration Team a Team Supervisor position has been filled. It is the case, however, that the Development Management team is currently under strength with a Senior Planner vacancy. This vacant position will have to be filled before an improvement in performance can hope to be secured.



PART 6: WORKFORCE INFORMATION

The Planning function operates within the Regeneration and Planning Service of the Environment and Regeneration Directorate.

Following changes in the structure during the 2020-21 period, the Head of Regeneration and Planning took on an additional role as Interim Director - Environment and Regeneration. The management of planning applications, planning enforcement, planning policy matters including development plan preparation, tree preservation, and conservation/ design all now rest with the Planning and Building Standards Manager position who also has responsibility for building standards verification and enforcement and licensing advice. This post was vacant from April 2020 - April 2021 and again since early December 2021, which represents 16 out of the last 24 months.

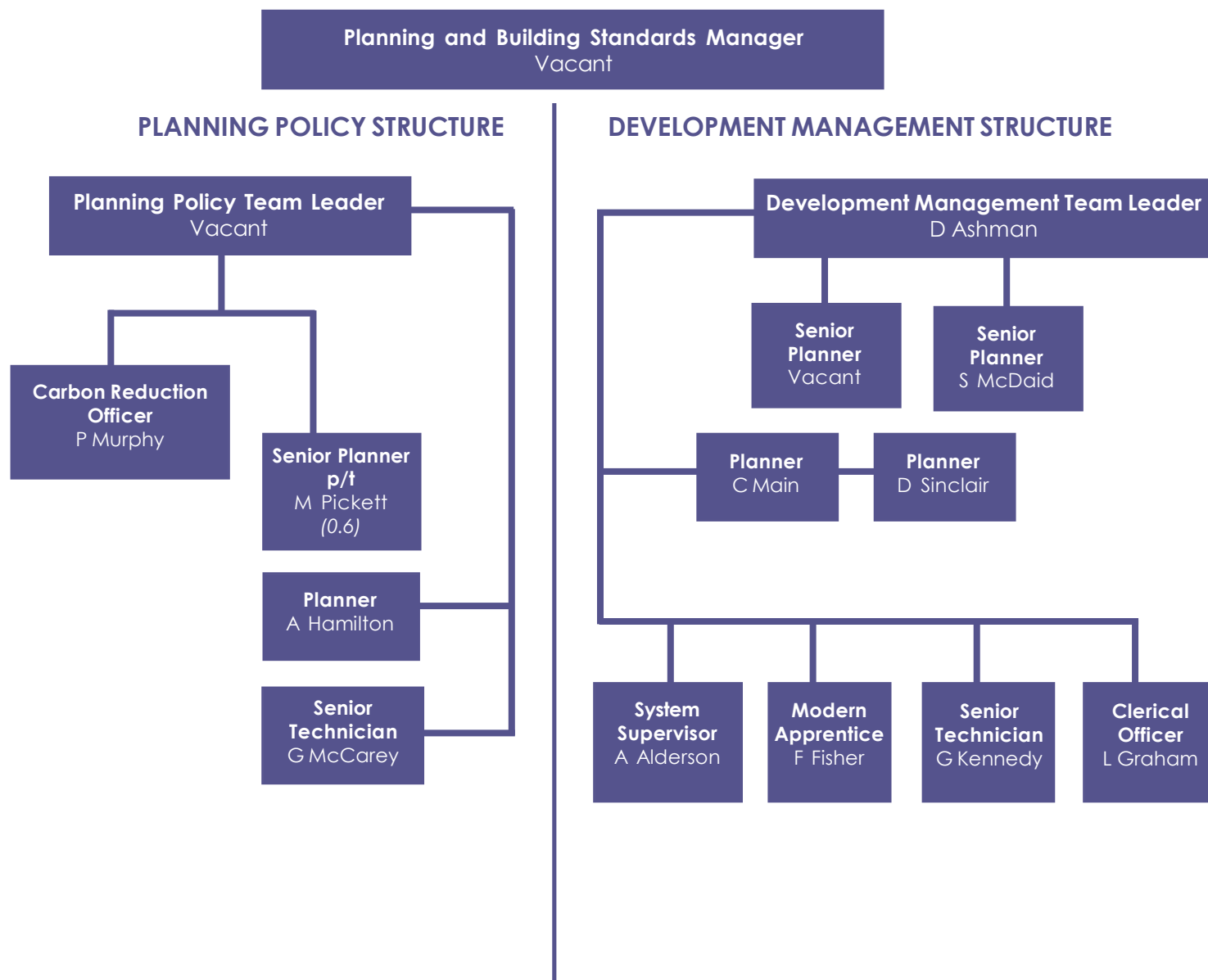
2021-22 saw the departure of the new Planning and Building Standards Manager after only just over a 7 month period in the post, the departure of a Senior Planner with 18 years' experience from the Development Management Team, the departure of the Policy Team Leader from the Development Planning Team and the deletion of an unfilled Planning Officer post from the Development Planning Team. On the other hand a temporary Planning Officer post in the Development Management Team was converted to a permanent post and a System Supervisor Post in the Administration Team was also filled.

The Planning and Building Standards Manager, Policy Team Leader and Senior Planner posts all remained vacant as at 31st March 2022.

	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		●		

RTPI Chartered staff	Headcount
Development Management (RTPI)	3
Development Planning (RTPI)	1
Other (including staff not RTPI eligible)	8

Staff Age Profile	Headcount
Under 30	0
30 - 39	2
40 - 49	6
50 and over	4



PART 7: PLANNING COMMITTEE INFORMATION

COMMITTEES AND SITE VISITS 2020/21

Ordinarily the Planning Board sits on the first Wednesday of each month when there are cases to consider. There is a summer recess, with no meeting taking place in July. The Planning Board schedule was less disrupted by the pandemic this year with more meetings. These have followed a hybrid pattern with some members and officers in the Council Chambers but others joining remotely by video conference. Site visits may be requested and agreed at Planning Board meetings, with the site visit generally occurring in advance of the next timetabled Board meeting. The Local Review Body is timetabled to meet immediately after each Planning Board meeting, although it will only sit when there are cases to be considered.

Full Council Meetings	10
Planning Committees (Planning Board)	10
Area Committees	N/A
Committee Site Visits	3
Local Review Body	6
Local Review Body site visits	1

APPENDIX A: PERFORMANCE MARKERS

	Performance Marker	Measure	Policy Background to Marker	Part of PPF report best suited to evidence this marker
DRIVING IMPROVED PERFORMANCE				
1	Decision making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types	-	Official Statistics and PPF reports	NHI Scottish Government Official Statistics
2	Project management: offer of processing agreements (or other agreed project plan) made to prospective applicants in advance of all major applications <u>and</u> availability publicised on planning authority website	Yes	Modernising the Planning System (Audit Scotland)	NHI Quality of Service and Engagement;
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	Yes Availability of pre-application advice is publicised online in the webpage text at http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-applications/applying-for-planning-permission and in the Supplementary Guidance on Planning Application Advice Notes (http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/ldp). The Council continues to operate an open and free planning application advice service, with no current plans for charging for this service. Requirements for supporting information and developer contributions are provided in the Development Management Charter (linked document on http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-applications/planning-application-procedures).	White Paper; Delivering Planning Reform; Planning Reform Next Steps	NHI Quality of Service and Engagement

	Performance Marker	Measure	Policy Background to Marker	Part of PPF report best suited to evidence this marker
4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications within 6 months of 'resolving to grant' ³	No applications with legal agreements were concluded in 2021-22	Official statistics; PPF reports; evidence of delays to major developments	Quality of Service and Engagement Governance
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published	The Council's Planning Enforcement Charter was published in February 2021. (https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-enforcement)	Planning Act (s158A)	NHI
6	Continuous improvements: - progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report	The Local Development Plan is less than 5 years old (http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/ldp) and the new Local Development Plan is under preparation with adoption expected within 5 years since the adoption of the current plan (https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/planning-and-the-environment/planning-policy/development-planning/ldp-review) Participation Statement commitments were met in 2021-22 The Enforcement Charter was published in February 2021 and the Development Management Charter in February 2021 – both are less than 3 years old at base date of this report. Four service improvements were achieved in 2021-22, with one still to be addressed.	Delivering Planning Reform; PPF Report	Culture of Continuous Improvement Service Improvement Plan

	Performance Marker	Measure	Policy Background to Marker	Part of PPF report best suited to evidence this marker
PROMOTING THE PLAN-LED SYSTEM				
7	LDP (or LP) less than 5 years since adoption	Yes The Local Development Plan was adopted in August 2019 (http://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/ldp)	Planning Act (s16); Scottish Planning Policy	NHI Quality of Outcomes Quality of service and engagement
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	No Development Plan Scheme prepared in 2021. The Proposed Local Development Plan was published in May 2021 but will not be taken forward under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2006.	Planning Act (s16); Scottish Planning Policy	NHI Quality of Outcomes Quality of service and engagement
9	Stakeholders including Elected Members, industry, agencies, the public and Scottish Government are engaged appropriately through all key stages of development plan preparation	Elected members were involved in updates regarding the status of the Local Development Plan.		Quality of Service and Engagement Governance
10	No longer applicable – gap kept for data continuity			
11	Production of relevant and up to date policy advice	There has been no change to the status of the Draft Supplementary Guidance prepared in association with the Proposed Local Development Plan.		Quality of Service and Engagement

	Performance Marker	Measure	Policy Background to Marker	Part of PPF report best suited to evidence this marker
SIMPLIFYING AND STREAMLINING				
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)	<p>Planning staff meet regularly with Housing colleagues to monitor progress on RSL development and progress housing studies.</p> <p>Planning staff work closely with Roads and Environmental Health colleagues on planning applications including at the pre-application stage. A pre-application protocol has now been put in place. Additionally, planning staff have regular dialogue and a close working relationship with internal colleagues in respect of planning application submissions for Council property.</p>		<p>Quality of Service and Engagement</p> <p>Governance</p>
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	The Council participates in a number of initiatives with adjoining authorities to share good practice. This includes the West of Scotland Planning Benchmarking Group brings together officers from Inverclyde, East Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire Councils to discuss a wide range of issues.	Delivering Planning Reform; Planning Reform Next Steps	Culture of continuous improvement

	Performance Marker	Measure	Policy Background to Marker	Part of PPF report best suited to evidence this marker
DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT				
14	Stalled sites/legacy cases: conclusion/withdrawal of planning applications more than one-year-old	21 legacy cases were cleared during the period. The Council continues to seek to reduce the number of legacy cases through a combination of regular dialogue with the together with the determination or withdrawal of applications.		Governance
15	Developer contributions: clear expectations - set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan,) and - in pre-application discussions	<p>Inverclyde Council has limited requirements for developer contributions at present.</p> <p>The Planning Application Advice Notes Supplementary Guidance allows for the contribution to off-site play equipment when housing developments are close to existing parks or play areas.</p> <p>Developers are required to provide or contribute to improvements to the transport network that are necessary as a result of the proposed development (Policy 11 of the LDP).</p> <p>The proposed Local Development Plan introduces a commitment to prepare new Supplementary Guidance setting out the types of community infrastructure developer.</p>		Quality of service and engagement

