
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

2 September 2020

Planning Committee

Title: Planning Performance Framework

Purpose: To present the 2019/20 Planning Performance Framework report.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Planning Committee notes the content of the latest Planning Performance Framework report (Appendix 1) and its submission to Scottish Government.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The performance of the Planning Service is outlined in an annual report prepared under the well-established Planning Performance Framework (PPF) and submitted to the Scottish Government in July each year. PPF captures key elements of a planning service's performance and reports on a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators.
- 1.2 Our latest PPF Report, the ninth to be prepared, covers the period April 2019 to March 2020 and was submitted to the Scottish Government's Chief Planner ahead of the 31 July deadline. PPF9 reports on the feedback from Scottish Government on last year's PPF; outlines case studies that demonstrate we are a high-quality planning service (Part 1); provides a performance update in relation to key development management, development planning, planning enforcement and development land indicators (Part 2); and considers our service improvement actions (Part 3).

2. Background

- 2.1 The Planning Performance Framework (PPF) was introduced in 2012, developed by Heads of Planning Scotland in response to the Scottish Government's planning reform agenda. PPF captures key elements of a high-performing planning service, giving a balanced measurement of the overall quality of the service while contributing towards driving continuous improvement. PPFs also report on a set of agreed performance markers on which the Scottish Government provide feedback
- 2.2 The Scottish Government's feedback on last year's Planning Performance Framework report (2018/19) is summarised on page 3 of the 2019/20 report. In February 2020, the Minister for Local Government and Housing provided feedback based around the 15 performance markers. Using a 'traffic light' scoring system, the Planning Service was rated green against 12 of the 13 performance markers applicable during the monitoring year. A delay in adopting the Local Development Plan, partly out with our control, meant the LDP was not replaced within the required 5-year timescale, leading to one amber

rating. Nevertheless, the feedback represents a continuation in strong overall markings over that last four years, with no red ratings over this period.

- 2.2 Successes of the Planning Service over the past 12 months, highlighted within the PPF, include recognition at the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning in December 2019 and at the 2020 RTPI Excellence in Planning Awards for a Development Brief prototype; becoming the first authority in Scotland to adopt a Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) aimed at stimulating development of a prime housing site and adoption of the Local Development Plan in November 2019.
- 2.4 Part 2 of the PPF8 is focused around National Headline Indicators – quantitative indicators which examine all aspects of the planning process, providing data on areas such as planning decision making timescales, the progress of the Local Development Plan, and the level of the housing land supply – and Official Statistics, which together provide an accurate and reliable account of performance over time. An update in respect to the performance markers is also provided.
- 2.5 Highlights include a further improvement in determination timescales for local development (non-householder) planning applications. During 2019/20 the Planning Service determined 221 local applications in an average of 5.4 weeks (down from 5.9 weeks). Average timescales for determining householder applications remained at 4.3 week and, in these two categories, our performance is the best among all Scottish planning authorities.
- 2.6 Part 3 of the PPF reports on the delivery of service improvement actions committed in the previous year and planned service improvements for 2019/20. The focus of the Planning Service continues to be driving improved performance; positioning the Service to promote placemaking; promoting the plan-led system and the achievements of the Service, while meeting statutory requirements. Of significant importance this year will be supporting economic recovery and renewal in response to the COVID-19 crisis by contributing to a cross Council approach to economic development centred on placemaking and Community Wealth Building.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 Due to the disruption cause by COVID-19, it was not possible to report and seek approval for the report ahead of its submission to Scottish Government at the end of July. Committee is therefore recommended to simply to note the PPF.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 None.

Human Resources

- 4.2 None.

Legal

4.3 None.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 None.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 None.

Key Priorities

4.6 The Planning Performance Framework report contributes to increasing the levels of accountability and transparency within the planning service; promoting the role of the service and continual improvement. The service supports many of the key priorities of the Council, including around the environment, housing, the economy and health and well-being.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None.

5. Consultation

5.1 None.

RUSSELL McCUTCHEON
Executive Director (Place)

For further information please contact **Alistair Gemmell, Strategic Planning Manager**, on **01294 324021**.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 – Planning Performance Framework – 2019/20 Report (July 2020)

July 2020

Planning Performance Framework 2019/20 Report



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Highlights



**Scottish Awards for
Quality in Planning
winners for our
Development Brief
Prototype**

**Determination
times for planning
applications
remain among the
fastest in Scotland**



**Adopted new Local
Development Plan,
leading to an increase
in effective housing
land supply through
new consents**

**Adopted first
Simplified Planning
Zone aimed at
stimulating
development on a
major housing site**



Introducing...

North Ayrshire Council Planning Service

It has been another successful 12 months for the team which continues to provide an efficient, effective and innovative service that delivers measurably leading performance amongst planning authorities in Scotland.

Our determination timescales for planning applications remain among the fastest, significantly quicker than the national average. 2019/20 saw a further improvement in timescales for local applications.

In November 2019, the North Ayrshire Local Development Plan was adopted, the authority's second LDP. The Service's joined-up approach saw planning permission granted for two new housing sites and around 390 dwellings in December, five days after the adoption of the plan and contributing to our aim through LDP2 to stimulate a sluggish housing market.

The team's work in preparing a Development Brief Prototype was acknowledged at the 2019 Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning (SAQP) and the RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence 2020 (see **A1**). The techniques developed as part of the prototype have also informed a Simplified Planning Zone established in Irvine, again to promote housebuilding in North Ayrshire (**A2**).

The end of this reporting period – March 2020 – coincided with an unprecedented health emergency, COVID-19, which will have long lasting implications for all aspects of our lives. In the short-term, the team has quickly adapted to allow the service to continue; in the medium to long-term we are preparing to support our recovery, including through the Ayrshire Growth Deal and implementation of the Council's ground-breaking Community Wealth Building Strategy.

Planning Performance Framework

This is the Planning Performance Framework Report for North Ayrshire Council's Planning Service for the period April 2019 to March 2020.

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

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

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

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

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

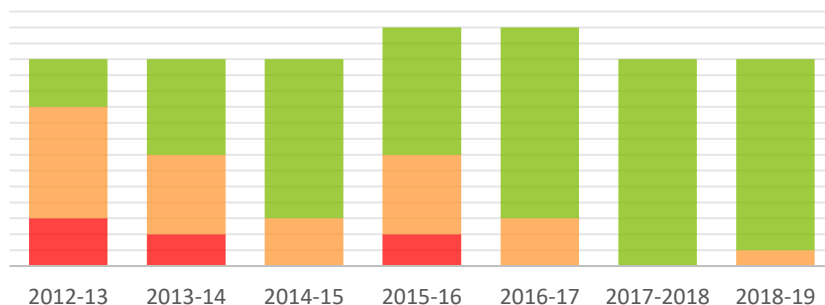
Scottish Government Feedback 2018/19

North Ayrshire Council's eighth Planning Performance Framework Report, covering the period April 2018 to March 2019, was submitted to Scottish Ministers in July 2019. In February 2020, the Minister for Local Government and Housing provided feedback on the report based around the 15 performance markers agreed by the High-Level Group on Planning Performance. Red, Amber or Green ratings were awarded based on the evidence provided, giving an indication of performance and the priority areas for improvement action.

The graphic below illustrates that, for 2018/19, the Scottish Government rated us green against 12 performance markers applicable during the monitoring year. This represents a continuation in the high number of good ratings over the past three years. A delay in adopting the Local Development Plan, partly out with our control, meant the LDP2 was not replaced within the required 5-year timescale, leading to one amber rating for 2018/19.

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

► Scottish Government Feedback: <https://tinyurl.com/yy6j8ng8>



Members of the Planning Service volunteering at Eglinton Country Park

Key Performance Markers Summary 2019/20

No.	Performance Marker	Evidence	Page
1	Decision-making: continuous reduction of average timescales for all development categories [Q1 - Q4]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timescales for determining Local (non-householder) applications improved, from 5.9 weeks to 5.2 weeks. Average Householder timescales remained at 4.3 weeks. Minor increase in timescales for determining major applications, from 10.2 weeks to 11.0 weeks. 	15-17
2	Processing agreements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and availability publicised on website 	Processing agreements continue to be offered for all major applications and for complex local applications. This is highlighted on our website at: https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-standards/make-a-planning-application.aspx	18
3	Early collaboration with applicants and consultees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications; and clear and proportionate requests for supporting information 	<p>The service provides pre-application advice and guidance on development which needs approval from the Council, including: the development of business and commercial properties, or making alterations to existing premises; the development of new housing; change in the use of land or buildings; outdoor advertisements; buildings in conservation areas; listed buildings and trees covered by tree preservation orders. This year we dealt with 131 pre-application enquiries.</p> <p>See case study B1 for evidence of clear and proportionate requests for supporting information.</p> <p>https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-standards/do-i-need-planning-permission.aspx</p>	18
4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting period)	No applications were subject to a legal agreement as we continue to seek to avoid the use of such agreements where possible.	18
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published within last 2 years	The Enforcement Charter was updated in May 2019. https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-standards/report-planning-breach.aspx	19
6	Continuous improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; and progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report 	<p>All but one of the 15 key performance markers have been marked green by Scottish Government over the last two years. Last year's 'amber' has been addressed with the adoption of a new local development plan.</p> <p>See Part 3 for update on Service Improvement Commitments.</p>	23

7	Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption	The North Ayrshire Local Development Plan (LDP2) was adopted on 28 November 2019. See: https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-standards/ldp/local-development-plan.aspx	20
8	Development plan scheme – next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on course for adoption within 5 years of current plan(s) adoption; and project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale 	A draft Development Plan Scheme has been prepared which sets out an indicative timetable for preparing our next LDP (LDP3). Work will formally commence on LDP3 when regulations and guidance pertaining to the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 is published by Scottish Government. It is expected LDP3 will be adopted within 5 years of LDP2. See: https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-standards/ldp/development-plan-next-steps.aspx	20
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i>	Not applicable.	
10	Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i> <i>*including industry, agencies and Scottish Government</i>	Not applicable.	
11	Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on information required to support applications.	The recently adopted Local Development Plan forms the basis of our proportionate approach to providing policy advice. Work to update and rationalise our non-statutory supplementary planning guidance is ongoing and we intend to develop policy advice relating to climate change in response to the Council declaring a 'Climate Change Emergency'. Other Planning Guidance: https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-standards/ldp/other-planning-guidance.aspx	20
12	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact arrangements; joint pre-application advice)	The Planning Service continues to work across the services to support, among other things, the Ayrshire Growth Deal, the Council's ambitious Strategic Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) and with regard to school capacity. The last 12 months has seen us develop a protocol to provide support to the Housing Service in the design and development of social housing developments. This sees planning officers form part the design team for each site. Rather than full planning permission, proposed schemes are assessed through submission of an application for a Certificate of Lawful Development.	
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	A strong emphasis within the service is placed on sharing good practice, skills and knowledge. In July 2019, one of our officers wrote an article for Scottish Planner magazine setting out how we have aligned community and spatial planning, with a	13-14

		focus on health. We also continue to be actively involved in the West of Scotland Planning Benchmarking Group; Heads of Planning Executive, Development Planning and Development Management sub-groups.	
14	Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	One legacy case was resolved during the year (withdrawn in September 2019). This leaves one remaining live application which is more than one year old.	21
15	Developer contributions: clear and proportionate expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); and • in pre-application discussions 	To support development and regeneration in North Ayrshire we do not routinely require developer contributions. The Local Development Plan expects the majority of new development to be directed towards sites that have infrastructure or services in place. Where further provision is required, the Supporting Development Objective: Infrastructure and Services policy within the LPD (p.16) sets out clear and proportionate expectations and the need for relevant assessments is highlighted alongside each development site where potential infrastructure deficiencies are known: https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/Documents/CorporateServices/LegalProtective/LocalDevelopmentPlan/ldp2.pdf	22

Part 1 – Demonstrating a high-quality planning service

The Planning Performance Framework Annual Report aims to provide both quantitative and qualitative evidence to illustrate the performance of the Planning Service over the past 12 months, with a focus on our improvement journey.

Part 1 of the Planning Performance Framework Annual Report seeks to document the qualitative story of the past year's performance, supported by case studies.

The narrative is structured around the following four themes:

A: Quality of Outcomes – Demonstrating the added value delivered by planning;

B: Quality of Service and Engagement – Demonstrating positive actions to support sustainable economic growth, initiatives to work consistently with stakeholders and deliver a positive customer experience;

C: Governance – illustrating how structures and processes are proportionate, effective and fit for purpose;

D: Culture of Continuous Engagement – improvements and changes in the last 12 months.

A. Quality of Outcomes

A1. Development Brief Prototype

A design brief template developed by the team as a prototype was recognised at the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning in December 2019 and at the 2020 RTPI Excellence in Planning Awards.

The prototype takes an innovative approach to design briefs, minimizing text and instead using graphical methods to provide a simple walk-through of a site's context, constraints and key design and placemaking expectations. These are presented in a user friendly, accessible format that can be viewed as an 'easy read' document or, optimally, as a video which takes the user through a logical flow of the design requirements, using inhouse 3D fly through technology and GIS footage of a site.

The combination of techniques to compile a simplified, coherent and effective site design brief has, even in its infancy, demonstrated that the design brief template is an effective, efficient, and, crucially, place-based design framework which prioritises the delivery of key design principles to ensure the success of the place being created, dispensing with an overly prescriptive design solution that is based on generic concepts such as standardized roads and space standards.

This is a game-changing approach to making places in North Ayrshire that will maximise the potential impact of the briefs. The highly visual and appealing format increases their power to communicate, creating a common expectation from all users including communities, developers, agencies and planners.

The template was adapted for use by the Scottish Government's Simplified Planning Zone pilot, including at Montgomerie Park (A2), providing a manual for the emerging Masterplan Consent Areas.

Design Brief Prototype ► <https://youtu.be/rtisKkSqLLM>



"The Judges were impressed to see a planning team working with limited resources to elevate text-based policy into something graphic and succinct. The project has worked well to foster interest from developers in locations that were previously overlooked. The work undertaken to simplify and visualise a complicated process helps to deliver quality places to live, work and enjoy. A picture can tell a thousand words." SAQP Judges



A2. Montgomerie Park Simplified Planning Zone

In December 2019, North Ayrshire Council became the first in Scotland to adopt a Simplified Planning Zone (SPZ) aimed at stimulating development of a prime housing site. The SPZ is the output of our involvement in a Scottish Government pilot to support development and inform legislative changes introducing Masterplan Consent Areas.

Montgomerie Park in Irvine has been allocated in the development plan for residential development for around 30 years, with approximately half of 1000 new homes built to date. After slow delivery and sales rates in recent years post-recession, the SPZ seeks to reinvigorate house building at Montgomerie Park by providing planning consent upfront, before the land is sold.

The team worked with Scottish Government to draft a scheme that provides a framework to guide development and place standards through a concept masterplan and conditions to deliver a high-quality place; allowing developers flexibility and certainty whilst, through conditions, safeguarding amenity. If developers comply with the parameters and conditions of the SPZ Scheme they do not need to apply for planning permission.

A six-week deposit consultation ran from August to September 2019 and was supported by the highly visual nature of the scheme, including a video visualising what the development could look like if the design complies. Further alterations to the scheme were made, aimed at protecting the amenity of existing Montgomerie Park residents.

The Montgomerie Park SPZ is split into two sites (site A and B) covering a total of 14.5 acres (approx. 165 homes). The Council-owned site has undergone marketing and is expected to be sold to a housing developer soon.

“Our Planning team has done a great job in getting this off the ground.

They’ve been working very hard with the Scottish Government to arrange this and make appropriate parameters for developers. They’ve effectively done the leg work for the developers so they don’t have the planning process to deal with.

We are now looking to market the area and hopefully we will see even more development on the site soon”.

Councillor Jim Montgomerie, Cabinet member for Place

Details ► <https://tinyurl.com/y7pl7rqf>

A3. Seamill Development Update

Last year’s Planning Performance Framework reported on how collaboration between Council officers and Hope Homes was creating successful new development with a high-level of design and placemaking at its heart. Building at Chapelton continues, with around 50 units completed during 2019/20 and the development has been recognised nationally:

“The Hope Homes site at Chapelton, Seamill was awarded ‘Development of the Year’ at The Herald Property Awards for Scotland 2019. We are very proud of this achievement and we would like to acknowledge North Ayrshire Council for their efficient and progressive stewardship of the application process. We have found all concerned at both Planning & Building Control to be very helpful and we would like to mark our appreciation of the service”

Steven Denham, Managing Director, Denham/Benn Architects

B. Quality of Service and Engagement

B1. Kilwinning Station – Lift and Bridge Project

Kilwinning Station is North Ayrshire's busiest in terms of passenger numbers per year, with over 1 million customers during 2018/19. An interchange station, with four platforms, many journeys via Kilwinning required the crossing of one or two steeply sided pedestrian bridges to change platform. For wheelchair users or parents with children's buggies, the use of the bridges was impractical or impossible, requiring them to leave the station grounds altogether.

Following an award of funding from Transport Scotland, Network Rail, as owners of the station, consulted North Ayrshire Council in Autumn 2017 with plans to enhance the connectivity between the four platforms. The concept was to develop a 'lift and bridge' system. Initial discussions were based on developing a metal tower/deck design which, although functional and practical in engineering terms, failed to take into account the blonde sandstone and slate character of the original station buildings which dated back to 1840.

Planning Services made the case for a design based on aesthetics as well as functionality, citing the important role of Kilwinning Station as a gateway for North Ayrshire, with a significant role to play in terms of the passenger experience. With thousands of passengers using the station each day, including many visitors to the area, Planning Services was aware of the need to ensure that good design was integral to the scheme.

Following several on site pre-application meetings and consideration of a variety of

options including the design of a similar facility at Dunblane Station, a planning application was submitted for a much-enhanced design using stone cladding panels in a colour/texture to match the original station building, which would be fully retained behind the new bridge. A glass fronted walkway was also secured through the planning process as well as a curtain wall rainscreen to the front. The application was approved well within the statutory two-month period since the pre-application discussions had addressed all relevant design and access issues and clear and proportionate requests from Planning Services in relation to supporting information were made in advance.

Although the original station building is not listed, Network Rail also agreed to undertake stone cleaning works on the front entrance elevation, removing layers of unsuitable paint from the sandstone thus helping to preserve the original building fabric by providing a means for moisture to evaporate from the building. The works were completed and open to passengers in September 2019.



Not only has the bridge and lift system provided improved essential access for ALL passengers using Kilwinning Station, good design has been achieved through the early engagement of Planning Services and the commitment of a client prepared to invest additional resources in making the project a success. The project has enhanced Kilwinning Station as a distinctive, forward looking transport hub which also retains and respects its 180-year history. The project delivery team achieved a successful outcome through a collaborative process and a willingness to listen and share ideas.

B2. Locality Partnership Updates

A key component of our new Local Development Plan is its alignment with North Ayrshire's well-established Community Planning structures.

North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership is a strong and effective partnership of a wide range of organisations. In addition, at a local level there are six Locality Partnerships: Arran, Garnock Valley, Irvine, Kilwinning, North Coast and Three Towns. In support of an overall vision for a healthier, working, safer and thriving North Ayrshire, the LDP recognises and gives due weight to proposals that address the priorities identified by the Locality Planning Partnerships, including an assessment of whether the proposal promotes equality of opportunity and inclusive growth in line with a Fair for All approach.

In continuation of our engagement with the Locality Planning Partnerships, in January we attended the meetings of all six localities to provide an overview of the Local Development Plan following its adoption and the next steps, including ongoing engagement with locality planning partnerships as we look towards LDP3.



C. Governance

B2. COVID-19 Response

The Planning Service has moved quickly in response to the COVID-19 emergency to ensure structures and processes are proportionate, effective and fit for purpose to enable the service to continue operating.

Early stages of the outbreak saw the number of staff working from the office reduced to a minimum. Within 24 hours of declaration of lockdown by the Prime Minister in mid-March, we moved seamlessly to all staff working from home and the digital delivery of the service, continuing our support for business and developers, the community and the Council.

All members of staff have adapted well to working from home, with 'business as usual' largely possible for both the development management and development planning functions. For example, we approved 427 new homes between 1 April – 30 June 2020, including at our first 'Virtual' Planning Committee.

As we begin to look forward to lockdown restrictions easing, the service stands ready to support business and developers and have contributed to the development of a service-wide Recovery Plan which will help co-ordinate the Council's response in the short, medium and long-term.

North Ayrshire Council is focused on addressing the unprecedented economic challenges arising from the coronavirus pandemic by grasping the opportunities presented by Community Wealth Building and the Ayrshire Growth Deal to create a fairer, more inclusive, sustainable and democratic economy.

'In these unprecedented times, the Planning Service has responded with speed and agility, under difficult conditions, to provide a high-level service for all of our customers and the Council.'

Cllr Tom Marshall, Chair of the Planning Committee.

D. Culture of Continuous Improvement

D1. Training

The Service continues to provide a training and learning environment to support our staff. Experience and learning from training events is shared among the team using training feedback forms. Examples of training and capacity building undertaken in the last 12 months include:

- ▶ Development Viability (May 2019)
- ▶ SNH Capacity Building Event (May 2019)
- ▶ EIA Conference (May 2019)
- ▶ Coal Authority CPD Event (September 2019)
- ▶ Planning Act (October 2019)
- ▶ “Future Planning – Designing Places in Climate Emergency” (Oct 2019)
- ▶ Vacant Land Workshop (November 2019)
- ▶ Scotland’s Towns Conference (November 2019)
- ▶ Enforcement Forum (December 2019)
- ▶ Planning and Health Webinar (February 2020)

In March 2019, we undertook training with Elected Members. The session covered a wide agenda, updating Councillors on the Planning (Scotland) Act; adoption of the Local Development Plan and next steps; National Planning Framework 4 and the Regional Spatial Strategy; Reports of Handling; the operation of the online planning system (OPIS); the Councillor’s Code of Conduct and Town Centre Health Checks.

D2. Benchmarking

The West of Scotland Planning Benchmarking Group is a good example of Councils working collaboratively in a cost-effective way. The group comprising representatives of West Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, North Ayrshire and Inverclyde Councils continues to meet every 3-4 months with high attendance levels. It met three times between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020 to share good practice and benchmark on specific planning issues.

The meetings are minuted and chaired by the host council. Topics discussed this year included:

Pre-application charging	Non-material variations
Street naming and numbering	Planning (Scotland) Act 2019
Planning Fees	PPF Feedback
Design Codes & Masterplanning	Scottish Water MoU
Mobile advertising and adverts on roundabouts	Administration support for validation checks
Parking Standards	DPEA time extensions
Stop-the-Clock	Restoration Bonds
FOI and publishing information	Staffing Levels
Pre-determination hearings	Amenity Notices
SEPA advice	Site layout design reviews

An email group continues to be used by all levels to exchange information and to get views on specific planning issues.

In addition, this year a well-attended training day was held by the Benchmarking Partners for Planners from each Authority at Whitelee Windfarm on renewables and climate change.



The Council also participates in the national (Solace) benchmarking group (including East Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, Fife, Stirling, South Ayrshire, East Lothian, Perth and Kinross and Loch Lomond) which is held twice a year and is primarily used to discuss the Planning Performance Framework submissions together with general planning and enforcement issues.

D3. Sharing Best Practice

In addition to sharing best practice through the Benchmarking group, in July 2019 we contributed an article to Issue 178 of Scottish Planner, the Journal of RTPI Scotland. This issue focused on Planning and Health and Thom Ledingham's article highlighted how we have aligned spatial planning with community planning at North Ayrshire.

Indeed, not only do LDP2 and the North Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership have a shared vision, closer collaboration realised what have always been common aims and goals to create places in which our communities can thrive.

The article outlines how our assessment of prospective new development sites included an assessment against 'tests' linked to achieving the vision of a healthier North Ayrshire; using the Place Standard to further investigate opportunities to embed community involvement and ensure that health remains key to decision-making; and introducing the requirement for a Human Health Impact Assessment with new planning applications.

We consider this is a great starting point, linking two related practices with common goals is sometimes not as straightforward as it could/should be. Now, human health is being discussed universally as an indicator of a successful place, from the resident involved in the first engagement exercise to the developer submitting their planning application.

Scottish Planner article ► <https://tinyurl.com/ycmhepas>



Part 2 – Performance Update

Including National Headline Indicators & Official Statistics

Development Management

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Application approval rate	97.8%	96.7%	96.2%	97.1%	96.6%	95.7%	96.5%
Delegation rate	93.8%	96.8%	96.5%	97.0%	97.2%	96.2%	97.5%
Percentage of applications valid upon receipt				58.0%	39.2%	37.5%	37.7%
Number of applications determined	629	590	571	639	564	603	560

PM1 – Decision Making

<i>Major Development (not subject to processing agreement)</i>	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of decisions	8	5	6	0	2	4	2
Average number of weeks to decision	21.5	12.6	24.3	-	9.5	10.2	11.0

Local Development (non-householder)

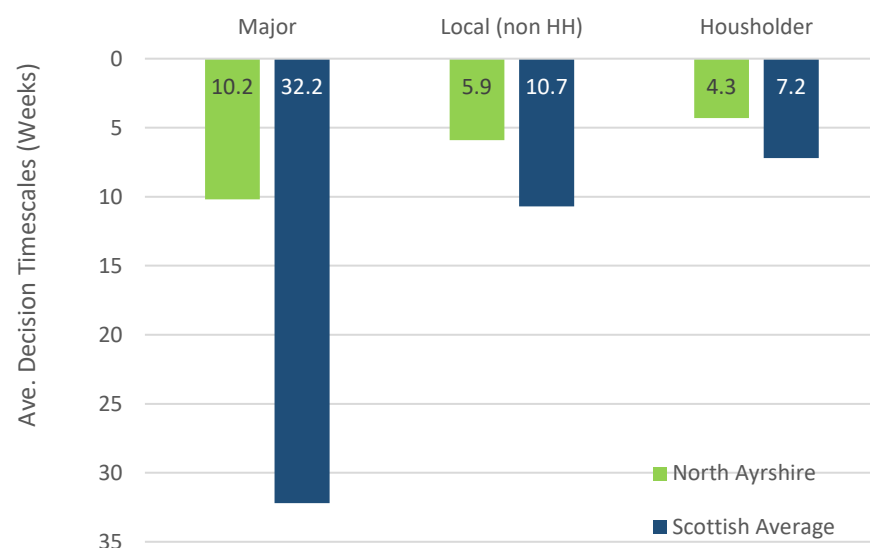
Number of decisions	261	247	241	259	231	234	221
Average number of weeks to decision	6.8	6.2	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.4
< 2 months	Percentage of decisions	93.1%	95.5%	97.5%	98.5%	98.3%	96.4%
	Average number of weeks to decision				5.8	5.6	5.3
> 2 months	Percentage of decisions	6.9%	4.5%	2.5%	1.5%	1.7%	3.6%
	Average number of weeks to decision				9.8	9.7	9.6

Householder developments

Number of decisions	234	224	213	253	225	268	229
Average number of weeks to decision	5.7	5.1	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.3	4.3
< 2 months	Percentage of decisions	99.1%	100%	100%	100%	99.1%	99.6%
	Average number of weeks to decision				4.6	4.3	4.2
> 2 months	Percentage of decisions	0.9%	-	-	-	0.9%	0.4%
	Average number of weeks to decision				8.6	8.7	9.9

2018/19 ● Our previous PPF Report again reported outstanding decision-making timescales that for two of the three the main development types – local (non-householder) and householder – were the quickest across all planning authorities in Scotland. The Scottish Government awarded us a green rating for Performance Maker 1 – Decision-making.

Figure 1: North Ayrshire average decision-making timescales vs. Scottish average, 2018/19



2019/20 The last twelve months has seen a further reduction in average timescales for determining local (non-householder applications), from 5.9 weeks to 5.4 weeks. This is well within the statutory timescale of 8 weeks. Timescales for householder applications remained at 4.3 weeks. There was minor increase in timescales for major applications, from 10.2 weeks to 11.0 weeks.

Development Management Overview

Our development management team was increased from five to six planners this year when the vacant position for an Assistant Planner was filled in December 2019. The team operates on a broadly area basis, with a 'west' team covering the north coast, Three Towns and Arran and 'east' team covering Irvine, Kilwinning, and the Garnock Valley. Each team is headed by a Senior Development Management Officer, while there is a planning officer dedicated to the Isle of Arran.

This arrangement provides senior overview of key issues within each area whilst allowing for flexibility for officers. It also reflects the distinctive nature and challenges of serving a large island within a predominantly mainland authority. This system gives the officers the chance to engage in a wide range of development management issues, increasing knowledge and skill base, whilst allowing them to focus on the ethos of providing timely decisions and first-class customer service. The Council's decision-making performance continues to be class leading with timescales in all classes of development consistently and significantly lower than the Scottish averages.

Other Development and Decision Types *(not subject to processing agreement)*

<i>Housing developments – Major</i>	2018-19	2019-20
Number of decisions	4	0*
Average number of weeks to decision	10.2	-

<i>Housing developments – Local</i>		
Number of decisions	87	83
Average number of weeks to decision	6.4	6.0
< 2 months	Percentage of decisions	92.0%
	Average number of weeks to decision	6.1
> 2 months	Percentage of decisions	8.0%
	Average number of weeks to decision	10.0

<i>Business and Industry developments – Local</i>		
Number of decisions	11	11
Average number of weeks to decision	6.7	5.1
< 2 months	Percentage of decisions	72.7%
	Average number of weeks to decision	5.8
> 2 months	Percentage of decisions	27.3%
	Average number of weeks to decision	9.2

<i>Advertisements</i>	2018-19	2019-20
Number of decisions	15	24
Average number of weeks to decision	3.8	3.8

<i>Listed Building & Conservation Area Consent</i>		
Number of decisions	35	33
Average number of weeks to decision	6.2	5.9

<i>Other Consents and Certificates</i>		
Number of decisions	45	45
Average number of weeks to decision	2.6	2.4

<i>Local Reviews</i>		
Number of decisions	7	10
% of original decisions upheld	71.4%	70%

<i>Appeals to Scottish Ministers</i>		
Number of decisions	2	1
% of original decisions upheld	0%	100%

NB: There have been 0 *Business and Industry developments – Major, EIA Developments or Hazardous Substances* applications in 2018-19 and 2019-20

* Four major housing developments were improved during the year, all with a processing agreement.

PM2. Processing Agreements

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of major applications subject to processing agreement	6	5	2	6
Percentage of major applications subject to processing agreement	100%	62.5%	50%	75%

PM3. Early Collaboration

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of applications subject to pre-application advice	261	193	148	131
Percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice	41%	35%	24%	20%

PM4. Legal Agreements

		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Major	Number	0	1	0	0
	Average number of weeks	-	13.9	-	-
Local	Number	0	0	0	0
	Average number of weeks	-	-	-	-

2018/19 ●●●

The Scottish Government's Performance Markers Report awarded us a green rating for the performance markers on processing agreements, early engagement and legal agreements for the 2018/19 reporting period. It noted that processing agreements were offered for all major applications and for complex local applications; that our report contained a number of examples of continuing positive pre-application engagement and clear and proportionate requests for supporting information; and that our website promotes both pre-application discussion and the use of processing agreements.

2019/20

We continue to encourage the use of processing agreements for all major and relevant local applications and last year two-thirds of major applications were subject to such an agreement. Ensuring we use processing agreements proportionately assists us to project manage the formal application process and sets out what is expected of applicants in terms of information needed to reach a decision. The use of Processing Agreements is promoted and explained on our website ► <https://tinyurl.com/y2abqudl>

The Council offers free pre-application advice for all applications, which are recorded within Uniform in case files to ensure consistency of advice. Pre-application Advice for applicants: <https://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-standards/do-i-need-planning-permission.aspx>

Again, no applications were determined with a legal agreement.

Enforcement

PM5. Enforcement Charter

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Time since enforcement charter published or reviewed (requirement: every 2 years)	23 months	9 months	21 months	10 months
Indicators and Statistics				
Complaints lodged and investigated	183	148	162	147
Cases taken up	157	146	103	105
Breaches identified	124	107	96	90
Cases Resolved	125	113	210	152
Notices Served	21	17	10	9
Direct Action	0	0	0	0
Reports to the Procurator Fiscal	0	2	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0	0	0

The Planning Service's Enforcement Charter was updated in May 2019 ►

<https://tinyurl.com/yaom9fmq>

The Council has continued its more informal approach to resolution and this has led to a decrease in 'cases taken up' over the last two years i.e. where written notice of a potential breach is given, despite the consistent number of cases lodged. Cases have been resolved through telephone calls and personal contact with landowners. It remains important to ensure enforcement actions are properly recorded to ensure an accurate reflection of the work done. The Council remains committed to providing efficient and effective planning enforcement and is mindful of the positive contribution such a service can make to the lives of residents.

“Throughout this process, you have been unfailingly helpful and supportive of the residents and we are all very grateful to you for that. For obvious reasons, I hope this is the final correspondence between us.”

Resident of Millport on conclusion of planning enforcement investigation

Development Planning

2019/20 saw the adoption of the North Ayrshire Local Development Plan, our second local development plan.

Work on LDP2 began back in July 2016, with the Proposed Plan submitted to Scottish Government just 27 months later in October 2018. The 2018 Development Plan Scheme programmed the examination to last 5-7 months until the second quarter of 2019, with adoption of the plan also within this period. Despite the quick turnaround of the Main Issues Report and Proposed Plan it ultimately was not possible to adopt LDP2 within five years of the adoption of LDP1 (May 2019), with the report of examination of the Proposed North Ayrshire Local Development Plan submitted to North Ayrshire Council in July 2019.


After informing Scottish Ministers of our intention to adopt the Local Development Plan in September 2019, Ministers extended the statutory period for considering the plan for a total of 35 days and issued a

direction to modify the plan. The modification addressed the requirement of Section 3F of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act to include policies which pursue greenhouse gas emissions savings from new buildings through the installation and operation of low and zero-carbon energy generating technologies. With the modification made, LDP2 was adopted on 28 November 2019.

Attentions have already turned to the preparation of LDP3, which will be prepared under the new regulations and guidance once they are published. An updated Development Plan Scheme has been adopted, setting out the timetable for LDP3, which we hope to adopt by November 2024.

► LDP webpage: <https://tinyurl.com/yymblen>

► Development Plan Scheme: <https://tinyurl.com/y6a2g933>

PM7. Local Development Plan	2018/19 			
PM8. Development Plan Scheme	2018/19 			
	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Age of local development plan at end of reporting period (requirement: < 5 years)	2 years, 10 months	3 years, 10 months	4 years, 10 months	4 months
Will the local development plan be replaced by its fifth anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	Y	Y	N	Y
Was the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	N	N	N	N/A
Were development plan scheme engagement/ consultation commitments met during the year?	Y	Y	Y	N/A

PM11. Regular and Proportionate Advice

2018/19 ● Scottish Government noted: “You have commenced a review of your supplementary guidance, including development briefs and design guidance. This will include deletion of guidance which will become redundant when the LDP is replaced. You have also updated guidance on conservation areas”.

2019/20 The comprehensive review of our supplementary and other planning guidance is ongoing following the adoption of the Local Development Plan in November 2019, which forms the basis of our proportionate approach to providing policy advice. This includes the updating of information relating to conservation areas; guidance on the application of the Placemaking and Housing in the Countryside policies arising from LDP2 and work to develop planning guidance that will support the Council’s response to the Climate Change Emergency.

► Planning Guidance: <https://tinyurl.com/yajqprto>

PM14. Legacy Cases

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of cases cleared during reporting period	3	2	0	1
Number remaining	4	2	2	1

2018/19 ● Despite no legacy cases being cleared last year, the Government were satisfied with our approach to concluding old planning applications

2019/20 At the end of March 2020, the number of legacy cases (applications over 1 year old) had reduced to one. The remaining legacy case relates to a key regeneration project under development and the applicant has indicated the intention to retain the application.

Officers continue to ensure that all new applications are progressed effectively, pro-actively managing cases using a range of approaches including weekly programming meetings, time management of casework, use of processing agreements, and pre-application discussions to enable ‘right first time’ submissions. We continue to focus on negotiating out issues which, in the past, would have resulted in S75 obligations, which limit the likelihood of an increase in legacy cases in the future.

PM15. Developer Contributions

- 2019/20** ● Feedback from the Scottish Government acknowledged the establishment of a group to consider developer contributions; examples of developer contributions with case studies and the evidence indicating the early consideration of contributions in pre-application discussions.
- 2019/20** The adoption of a new Local Development Plan has significantly altered our expectations regarding developer contributions. To support development and regeneration in North Ayrshire we do not now routinely require developer contributions. The LDP expects the majority of new development to be directed towards sites that have infrastructure or services in place. Where further provision is required, the Supporting Development Objective: Infrastructure and Services policy within the LPD (p.16) sets out clear and proportionate expectations and the need for relevant assessments is highlighted alongside each development site where potential infrastructure deficiencies are known: [Local Development Plan ► https://tinyurl.com/y8e79jgn](https://tinyurl.com/y8e79jgn)

Land Supply and Development NB. Latest Housing Land Audit covers 2018/19. Last Employment Land Audit completed in 2017.

Indicators & Statistics	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Established housing land supply (units)	8800	9249	9110	8620
5-year effective housing land supply – programming (units)	2674	2405	2443	2491
5-year effective housing land supply – total capacity (units)	7012	4984	4714	5099
5-year housing supply target (units)	2090	1585 ¹	1585 ¹	1585¹
5-year effective housing land supply (years)	6.4	7.6	7.7	7.9
Housing approvals (units) ³	580	451	551	378
Housing completions over last 5 years (units)	1491	1350	1359	1541
Marketable employment land supply (ha)	-	416 ²	416 ²	416²
Employment land take-up (ha)	-	-	-	-

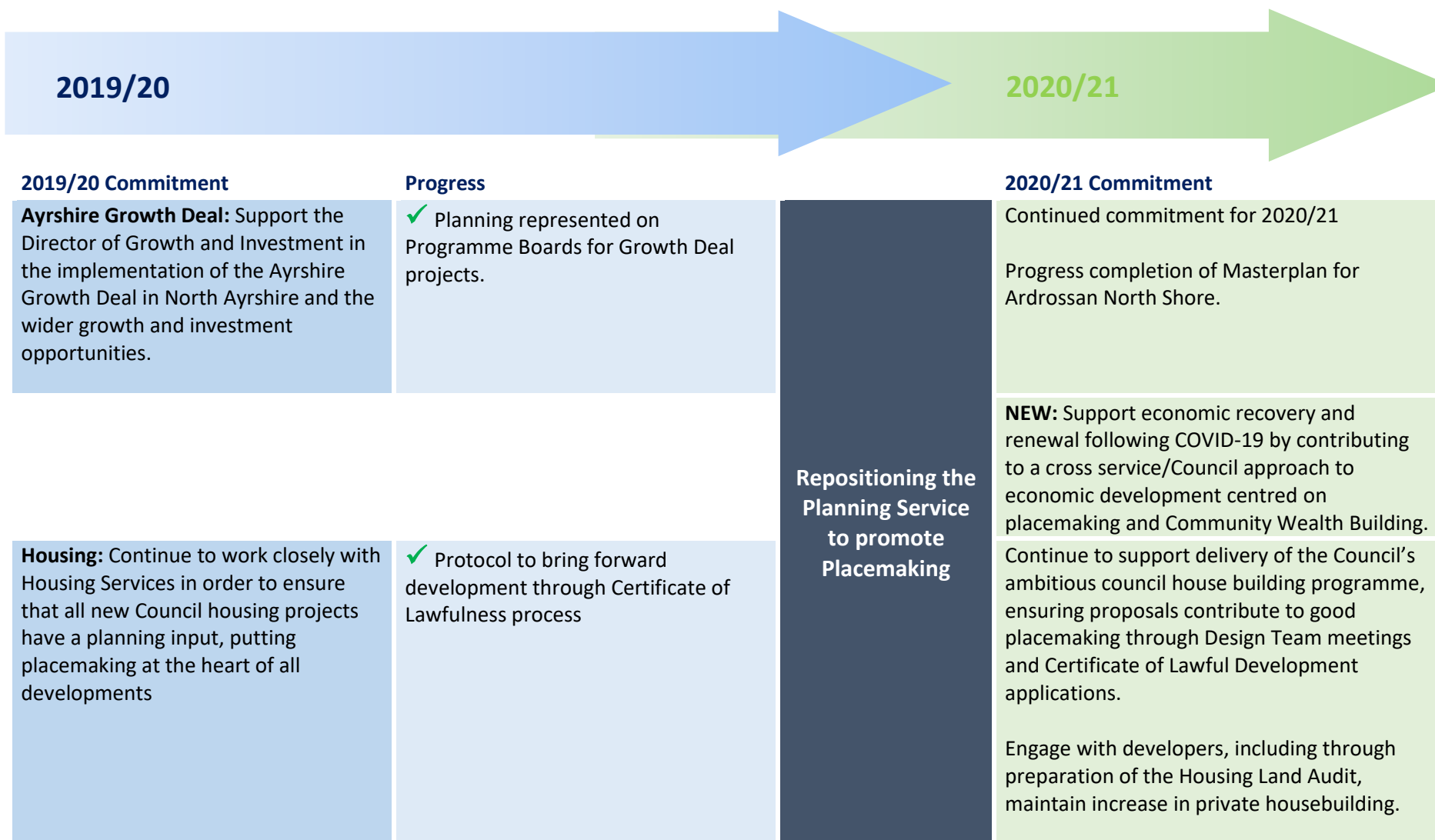
¹ Housing Supply Target updated from Local Housing Strategy 2018-22 agreed by Cabinet 12 December 2017

² Figure from Employment Land Audit 2017




³ Doesn't include all sites developed as part of Strategic Housing Investment Plan as these can be developed under Permitted Development rights.

Part 3 – Service Improvements

Delivery of service improvement actions committed in previous year and planned service improvements in 2020/21



New Directorate: Ensure the Planning Service continues to play an important role within the new directorate in respect to placemaking.	✓ Embedded within new directorate with wider cross service delivery.		Cross Service Working: Designation of Chief Planning Officer. This will support cross-service working and ensure that land-use and placemaking considerations are fully factored within corporate decisions. The Chief Planner will be involved in quarterly Corporate Extended Leadership Team meeting focusing on service transformation and priority policy discussions amongst Chief Officers.
Development Management: Continue to provide an efficient and effective Development Management Service.	✓ Sector leading performance maintained	Driving Improved Performance	Continued commitment for 2020/21 Service Delivery: review changes to service delivery necessitated by COVID-19 potential opportunities to improve robustness of service delivery.
Review and modernise our application forms to ensure they are up-to-date with current regulations, simplifying them where possible.	✓ Updates forms to align with provisions of 2019 Planning Act and related legislation	Meeting Statutory Requirements	Deliver the emerging provisions of the Planning Act 2019.
Development Planning: In order to help shape the long-term future of North Ayrshire as a place to live, work and spend time in, we will progress the Local Development Plan to adoption and the end of the current Examination process.	✓ The Local Development Plan was adopted in November 2019.	Promoting the Plan-led System	Following the timetable set out in the Development Plan Scheme, develop Evidence Base to inform LDP3. Explore how Community Wealth Building can be embedded within the new LDP.

Supplementary Guidance: implement work programme for the comprehensive review of supplementary and other planning guidance to provide proportionate and up-to-date guidance to support applications.	 Ongoing during the last 12 months, including engagement with Development Management officers over the implementation of Housing in the Countryside Policy and commitment to develop policy advice relating to climate change in response to the Council declaring a 'Climate Change Emergency'.		Continued commitment for 2020/21, including preparation of Draft Climate Change Planning Guidance.
Clyde Regional Marine Plan: Working as part of the Clyde Regional Marine Planning Partnership to adopt a Regional Marine Plan for the Clyde.	 We continue to support the preparation of the Clyde Regional Marine Plan, by contributing to the work of the Board to develop draft plan.		Completion of draft plan and submission to Ministers.
Promotion: Showcase the achievements of the Service	 The service was recognised at the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning in December 2019 and at the 2020 RTPi Excellence in Planning Awards.	Promoting Planning	We will continue to highlight examples of good practice and excellence within the service.

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				✓	See Appendix 2

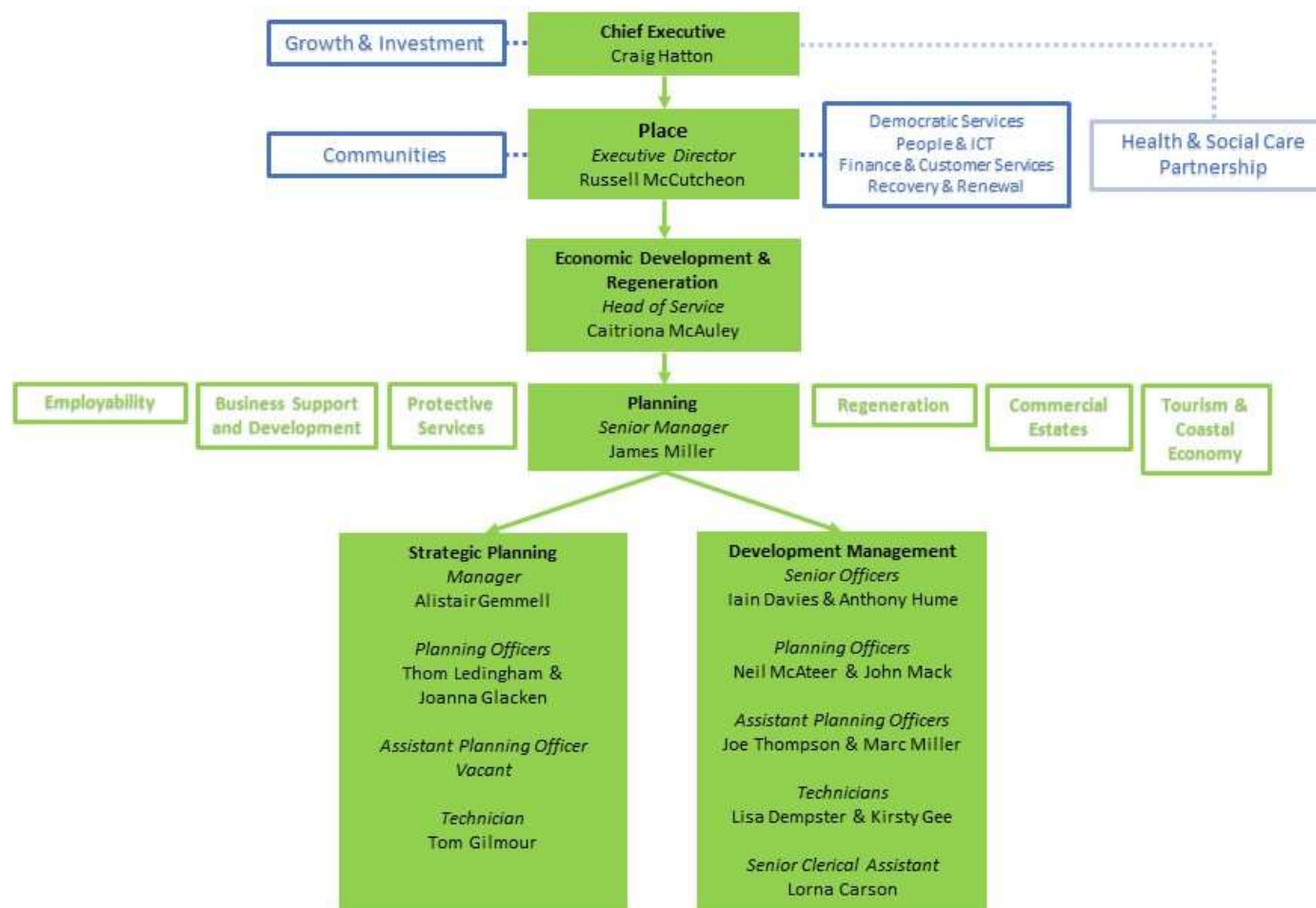
	Headcount				Age Profile
	Chartered RTPI	Licentiate RTPI	All		
Development Management	2	3	6	Under 30	2
Development Planning	2	1	3	30-39	6
Technical Support			4	40-49	2
Total (inc. Senior Manager)	5	4	14	50 and over	4

Planning Committee Information

Committee & Site Visits	Number per year
Full Council meetings	7
Planning committees	7
Area committees	n/a
Committee site visits	0
Local Review Body	7
Local Review Body site visits	1

Appendix 1 – Corporate Structure

(at 31st March 2020)



Our Contact Details

For more information or advice, please contact:

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This Planning Performance Framework can be made available in other formats such as on audio tape, on CD, in Braille or in large print. We can also provide it in other languages if you ask us to.



North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath