
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

27 January 2021

Planning Committee

Title: Planning Performance Framework

Purpose: To report on the feedback from the Scottish Government on the 2019/20 Planning Performance Framework .

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Planning Committee notes the response.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 All planning authorities, strategic development plan authorities and seven key agencies submit a PPF report on an annual basis to Scottish Government. PPFs also report on a set of agreed performance markers on which the Scottish Government provide feedback.
- 1.3 The Scottish Government (SG) PPF audit assesses the 15 performance markers through the RAG rating and provides commentary on each marker. The Government has given a Green rating for all of the relevant markers for North Ayrshire Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 Our latest PPF Report, the ninth to be prepared, covers the period April 2019 to March 2020. In his letter dated 17th December 2020 (Appendix 1), Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government and Housing encloses feedback from the Scottish Government audit of our PPF. The PPF outlines case studies that demonstrate we are a high-quality planning service (Part 1); provides a performance update in relation to development management, development planning, planning enforcement and development land (Part 2); and considers our service improvement actions (Part 3).
- 2.2 Part 1 of PPF9 documents the qualitative story of the past year's performance, supported by a number of case studies, across four areas of activity in order to define and measure a high-quality planning service. The areas for performance assessment include 'quality of outcomes', 'quality of service and engagement', 'governance' and 'culture of continuous

improvement'. The SG commented on the success of early collaboration with the case study on pre-application engagement on Kilwinning Station which resulted in an enhanced design proposal, determined within 2 months, as all relevant issues were addressed in advance of the submission

- 2.3 Part 2 of the PPF9 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. The SG commented on a further improvement in determination timescales for both Local and householder planning applications, and faster than Scottish average determination for Major applications.
- 2.4 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. SG commented that 5 of the 6 service improvements from PPF8 had been completed with some continued into next year; together with a range of tangible improvement commitments.
- 2.5 In addition, SG commented favourably on our publication of the timetable for the replacement of the LDP, our commencement of the review of our supplementary guidance, and our continued work cross-service on such workstreams as AGD, SHIP, and school capacity

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That the Committee notes the content of the latest Planning Performance Framework feedback report (Appendix 1).

4. Implications

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. This supports many of the support the Council Plan's Priorities including 'effective infrastructure and digital connectivity' and 'a sustainable environment'.

Community Wealth Building

- 4.7 None

5. Consultation

- 5.1 None

Click here to enter text.
Russell McCutcheon
Executive Director – Place

For further information please contact **James Miller, Chief Planning Officer**, on **01294 324315**.

Background Papers

N/A

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Kevin Stewart MSP



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Craig Hatton
Chief Executive
North Ayrshire Council

17 December 2020

Dear Craig,

PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK FEEDBACK 2019-20

I am pleased to enclose feedback on your authority's ninth Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report, for the period April 2019 to March 2020.

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for enabling planning services to continue to operate during the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been a difficult year for so many, and our planning system has a vital role to play in Scotland's green recovery. The impact which the pandemic has had, has demonstrated how valuable planning is from ensuring that businesses can operate flexibly to the contribution that it can make to the Places that are so important for our communities in terms of having access to the services they need, to greenspace and other areas where families can walk, wheel and cycle safely.

Turning to the 2019-20 PPF reporting year, I believe that good progress continues to be made by Scotland's planning authorities. Overall, there has been an increase in the number of green ratings awarded this year, with a subsequent reduction in red ratings, however, there remains some variation across some authorities and markers. I have been particularly pleased to see improvements in the speed of determination of major planning applications in some authorities.

When I wrote about performance reporting last year, I indicated that a consultation on Planning Performance and Fees was underway, including preparations for the new performance arrangements being introduced through the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019; with our intention at that time being that the proposed changes would be implemented in Summer 2020. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has required a rethink about the timing and a wider reprioritisation of our work programme.

I would like to reassure you that, while we have paused the changes to the fees and performance legislation, I am committed to ensuring that planning authorities are properly resourced and that planning fee levels are proportionate. We will pick this up again when the timing is more appropriate.

Finally, although the Covid-19 pandemic will have impacted on the tail end of the 2019-20 reporting year, I appreciate the impacts on service delivery will show through more in the 2020-21 reporting year. The Planning statistics for the first 6 months of the reporting year are due to be published in January, which will provide the first indications of how the pandemic has affected the ability of authorities to determine applications. I would like to reassure you that I will consider, in liaison with the High Level Group on Planning Performance, how next year's reports will be assessed, so that authorities are not unfairly criticised due to circumstances outwith their control. It could also provide an opportunity to recognise the vital actions taken by planning authorities to maintain the planning system and its contribution to recovery.

If you would like to discuss any of the markings awarded below, please email chief.planner@gov.scot and a member of the team will be happy to discuss these with you.

Yours sincerely



KEVIN STEWART

CC: Jim Miller

PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2019-2020

Name of planning authority: **North Ayrshire Council**

The High Level Group on Performance agreed a set of performance markers. We have assessed your report against those markers to give an indication of priority areas for improvement action. The high level group will monitor and evaluate how the key markers have been reported and the value which they have added.

The Red, Amber, Green ratings are based on the evidence provided within the PPF reports. Where no information or insufficient evidence has been provided, a 'red' marking has been allocated.

No.	Performance Marker	RAG rating	Comments
1	Decision-making: continuous reduction of average timescales for all development categories [Q1 - Q4]	Green	<p>Major Applications Your timescale of 13.1 weeks is slower than last year but are faster than the Scottish average of 33.5 weeks and the statutory timescale. RAG = Green</p> <p>Local (Non-Householder) Applications Your timescale of 5.4 weeks is faster than the previous year and are faster than the Scottish average of 10.9 weeks. RAG = Green</p> <p>Householder Applications Your timescale of 4.3 weeks is the same as the previous year and faster than the Scottish average of 7.3 weeks. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>
2	<p>Processing agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and availability publicised on website 	Green	<p>Your report notes that processing agreements continue to be offered for all major applications and for complex local applications. RAG = Green</p> <p>Processing agreement information is publicised on your website. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>
3	<p>Early collaboration with applicants and consultees</p> <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 	Green	<p>Your report contains a number of examples of continuing positive pre-application engagement. RAG = Green</p> <p>Your case study on Kilwinning Station Case studies is used illustrate how pre-application discussion resulted in an enhanced design proposal being submitted and that the application was determined within the 2 month statutory timescale as all relevant issues were addressed in advance of submission. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>

4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting period) 	Green	You did not determine any applications which were subject to a legal agreement during 2019-20.
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published within last 2 years	Green	Your enforcement charter was 10 months old at the end of the reporting period.
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 	Green	<p>Your key decision making timescales are faster than last year and your LDP and enforcement charter are both up-to-date. Elsewhere, you have a low number of legacy cases. RAG = Green</p> <p>You have completed 5 out of 6 of your service improvement commitments with some to be continued into the next reporting year. You identified a range of tangible improvements commitments. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>
7	Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption	Green	Your LDP was 4 months old at the end of the reporting period.
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 	Green	You have published an indicative timetable for replacing your LDP however, work will only formally commence once regulations and guidance are in place to bring the Planning Act provisions into effect. It is expected that your LDP will be replaced within the required 5 year timescale.
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i>	N/A	
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>	N/A	
11	Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on information required to support applications.	Green	You have commenced a review of your supplementary guidance and you intend to develop advice on climate change in response to the council's declaration of the Climate Emergency.
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)	Green	You continue to work with other council services on workstreams such as the Ayrshire Growth Deal, the Strategic Housing Investment Programme and on school capacity. You have recently developed a protocol to provide support to Housing Services on the design and development of social housing. This sees proposals following the CLUD process rather than applying for full planning permission.
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Green	Your report highlights participation in the West of Scotland planning benchmarking group and the topics discussed. You have also worked to align community and spatial planning to

			focus on health which was subject to an article in Scottish Planner.
14	Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	Green	One legacy case was cleared during the reporting year, with 1 case still awaiting conclusion.
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 	Green	<p>You report states that you do not routinely require developer contributions as a means to encourage investment with most development directed to where there is existing infrastructure capacity. Where contributions are required your LDP policy sets out the requirements.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p> <p>You have provided some evidence to support the early consideration of developer contributions particularly for affordable housing.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>

NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Performance against Key Markers

Marker		12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20
1	Decision making timescales								
2	Processing agreements								
3	Early collaboration								
4	Legal agreements								
5	Enforcement charter								
6	Continuous improvement								
7	Local development plan								
8	Development plan scheme								
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR)	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	N/A	
10	Stakeholders engaged early (pre-MIR)	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	N/A	
11	Regular and proportionate advice to support applications								
12	Corporate working across services								
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge								
14	Stalled sites/legacy cases								
15	Developer contributions								

Overall Markings (total numbers for red, amber and green)

2012-13	3	7	3
2013-14	2	5	6
2014-15	0	3	10
2015-16	2	5	8
2016-17	0	3	12
2017-18	0	0	13
2018-19	0	1	12
2019-20	0	0	13

Decision Making Timescales (weeks)

	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	2019-20 Scottish Average
Major Development	30.9	21.5	12.6	90.3	-	9.5	10.2	10.3	33.5
Local (Non-Householder) Development	8.7	6.8	6.2	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.9	6.5	10.9
Householder Development	6.6	5.7	5.1	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.3	5.7	7.3