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# NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

1 December 2021

## Planning Committee

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<b>Title:</b>	<b>Planning Performance Framework - Feedback</b>
<b>Purpose:</b>	To report on the feedback from the Scottish Government on the 2020/21 Planning Performance Framework.
<b>Recommendation:</b>	It is recommended that the Planning Committee notes the feedback from the Scottish Government on the performance of the Planning Service.

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### 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. The PPF captures key elements of a planning Service's performance and reports on a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators, including agreed performance markers on which the Scottish Government provide feedback.
- 1.2 Feedback on our latest PPF Report, covering the period April 2020 to March 2021 has been received from Scottish Government. Using Red, Amber, Green ratings based on the evidence provided within the PPF reports, the Planning Service has been rated 'green' against all relevant markers for a second consecutive year.

### 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 submission of North Ayrshire Council's tenth PPF Report, covering the period April 2020 to March 2021, was approved by the Planning Committee at its meeting on 16 June 2021. On 29 November 2021, the Minister for Finance, Planning and Community Wealth wrote to the Council providing feedback on the report. For a second consecutive year, the Planning Service was rated 'green' against all relevant markers.
- 2.3 The period covered by this PPF has seen the Planning Service operate under coronavirus restrictions, with all staff working from home. The PPF highlights how we have adapted to continue to provide exceptional application determination timescales;

implement the recently adopted Local Development and respond to the wider reform of the planning system in Scotland.

- 2.4 The feedback notes that decision-making timescales for local (5.9 weeks) and householder applications (5.4 weeks) were slower than in the previous year but remain faster than statutory timescales and are considerably faster than the Scottish average (12.4 and 8.1 weeks respectively). Our timescale of 11.1 weeks for determined major applications was faster than the previous year, the Scottish average of 41.3 weeks and the statutory timescale.
- 2.5 Scottish Government acknowledged the examples of continuing positive pre-application engagement, including the case study of Kilwinning Station which illustrated 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. Examples of regular and proportionate policy advice; corporate working across services and sharing good practice, skills and knowledge were also recorded by the Scottish Government.
- 2.6 The continuous improvement demonstrated by the Planning Service is highlighted in the Scottish Government's feedback. Key decision-making timescales remain the fastest in Scotland; our LDP and enforcement charter are both up-to-date and there a low number of legacy cases (applications older than one year). Ten out of 12 of our service improvement commitments were completed, with some continued into the next reporting year and a range of tangible improvement commitments are identified.

### **3. Proposals**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Planning Committee notes the welcome feedback from the Scottish Government on the performance of the Planning Service.

### **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 Community wealth building is part of a placed-based approach which seeks to reduce inequality and improve well-being. It is inherent in much of planning policy and approaches. The Planning Performance Report highlights a Community Wealth Building and Planning Skills webinar hosted by North Ayrshire Council.

## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 None.

**James Miller**  
**Chief Planning Officer**

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

## **Background Papers**

None



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Craig Hatton  
North Ayrshire Council

29 November 2021

Dear Craig Hatton

I am pleased to enclose feedback on your authority's tenth Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report, for the period April 2020 to March 2021.

This is the first time I have written to you individually in my capacity as Planning Minister since my appointment earlier this year. I am very grateful for the support and welcome I have received and look forward to working with you.

This year has continued to present challenges for people working within planning, in the development sector and across Scotland's communities. We know people are doing the best they can to engage and operate, sometimes in ways and circumstances that may not be ideal, and with many still predominantly working from home. I appreciate that many of you will have had to make difficult choices in what work is prioritised, in much the same way the Government and Planning and Architecture Division has had to. However, we should all be very proud of how planning has responded to the coronavirus pandemic, adjusting as necessary to keep going and supporting recovery. I want to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for all the work that has been done during the pandemic and to support our ongoing recovery.

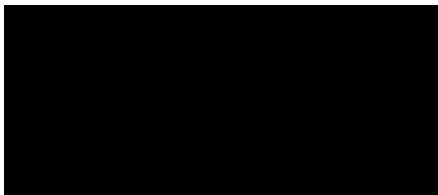
When my predecessor wrote to you last year he indicated that the pandemic had required a rethink about the timing and prioritisation of our planning work programme. A number of our workstreams were paused or delayed as a result, including the review of the planning performance and fee regimes, which had been the subject of a detailed consultation that concluded in early 2020. However, in October 2021 we published a revised planning implementation programme (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/transforming-planning-practice-updated-planning->

[reform-implementation-programme/](#)). You will note that we have now recommenced our planning performance and fees review, which reflects the importance Scottish Government attaches to this work. We are currently finalising proposals and intend to lay regulations before the end of the year to introduce increased fees, providing a boost to planning authorities' resources. We also intend to commence the recruitment of the National Planning Improvement Coordinator early in 2022.

Turning to the 2020-21 PPF reporting year, although, as expected, there have been some small changes overall in the markings awarded, the figures indicate that performance has remained relatively stable. This is a testament to the hard work and flexibility of authorities during these very difficult times and I believe that overall good progress continues to be made by Scotland's planning authorities.

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

Yours faithfully



**Tom Arthur**

Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth

**CC: Jim Miller**

## PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2020-21

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	<b>Decision-making:</b> continuous reduction of average timescales for all development categories [Q1 - Q4]	Green	<p><b>Major Applications</b> Your timescale of 11.1 weeks is faster than last year and faster than the Scottish average of 41.3 weeks and the statutory timescale. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p><b>Local (Non-Householder) Applications</b> Your timescale of 5.9 weeks is slower than the previous year but is faster than the Scottish average of 12.4 weeks. However, this is faster than the statutory timescale. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p><b>Householder Applications</b> Your timescale of 5.4 weeks is slower than last year but is faster than the Scottish average of 8.1 weeks. However, this is faster than the statutory timescale. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p><b>Overall RAG = Green</b></p>
2	<b>Processing agreements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and</li> <li>availability publicised on website</li> </ul>	Green	<p>Your report notes that processing agreements continue to be offered for all major applications and for complex local applications. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p>Processing agreement information is publicised on your website. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p><b>Overall RAG = Green</b></p>
3	<b>Early collaboration</b> with applicants and consultees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications; and</li> <li>clear and proportionate requests for supporting information</li> </ul>	Green	<p>Your report contains a number of examples of continuing positive pre-application engagement. <b>RAG = Green</b></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. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p><b>Overall RAG = Green</b></p>

4	<b>Legal agreements:</b> conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting period)</li> </ul>	Green	You did not determine any applications which were subject to a legal agreement during 2020-21.
5	<b>Enforcement charter</b> updated / re-published within last 2 years	Green	Your enforcement charter was less than a month old at the end of the reporting period.
6	<b>Continuous improvement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; and</li> <li>progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report</li> </ul>	Green	<p>Although some of your key decision making timescales are slower than last year, they remain faster than the Scottish average and remain within the statutory timescales. Your LDP and enforcement charter are both up-to-date. Elsewhere, you have a low number of legacy cases.</p> <p><b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p>You have completed 10 out of 12 of your service improvement commitments with some to be continued into the next reporting year. You identified a range of tangible improvements commitments.</p> <p><b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p><b>Overall RAG = Green</b></p>
7	<b>Local development plan</b> less than 5 years since adoption	Green	Your LDP was 1 year 4 months old at the end of the reporting period.
8	<b>Development plan scheme</b> – next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>on course for adoption within 5 years of current plan(s) adoption; and</li> <li>project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale</li> </ul>	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	<b>Elected members engaged early</b> (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i>	N/A	
10	<b>Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early</b> (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	<b>Regular and proportionate policy advice</b> produced on information required to support applications.	Green	Work to update and rationalise your non-statutory and statutory supplementary guidance is ongoing with a draft policy guidance note on new housing development in the countryside being published. You are also continuing to develop advice on climate change in response to the council's declaration of the Climate Emergency.
12	<b>Corporate working across services</b> to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact	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 developed a protocol to provide support to Housing Services on the design and development of social housing.

	arrangements; joint pre-application advice)		This sees proposals following the CLUD process rather than applying for full planning permission.
13	<b>Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge</b> 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	<b>Stalled sites / legacy cases:</b> conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	Green	You have 1 case still awaiting conclusion.
15	<b>Developer contributions:</b> clear and proportionate expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); and</li> <li>• in pre-application discussions</li> </ul>	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><b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p>You have provided some evidence to support the early consideration of developer contributions particularly for affordable housing.</p> <p><b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p><b>Overall RAG = Green</b></p>



**NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**  
**Performance against Key Markers**

Marker		13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
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	N/A
10	Stakeholders engaged early (pre-MIR)	N/A	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)**

<b>2012-13</b>	3	7	3
<b>2013-14</b>	2	5	6
<b>2014-15</b>	0	3	10
<b>2015-16</b>	2	5	8
<b>2016-17</b>	0	3	12
<b>2017-18</b>	0	0	13
<b>2018-19</b>	0	1	12
<b>2019-20</b>	0	0	13
<b>2020-21</b>	0	0	13

**Decision Making Timescales (weeks)**

	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	20-21 Scottish Average
Major Development	21.5	12.6	90.3	-	9.5	10.2	10.3	11.1	41.3
Local (Non-Householder) Development	6.8	6.2	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.9	6.5	5.9	12.4
Householder Development	5.7	5.1	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.3	5.7	5.4	8.1

