

Planning Performance Framework 2013/14

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report introduces the 2013/14 Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Annual report as required by the Scottish Government Planning Reform Agenda.
- 1.2 The PPF is the principal annual performance measure for Planning Services (*Development Management and Planning Policy – within Planning and Regulatory Services*) and is submitted to the Scottish Government for scrutiny and scoring. The Scottish Government has recently confirmed that Local Authorities who have poor outcomes and fall short of performance marker mechanisms recorded in their PPF shall have financial penalties levied against them through a reduction in planning fees.
- 1.3 Argyll and Bute 2013/14 PPF captures our strong performance over the previous financial year with the vast majority of headline indicators improved from the previous year and better than the Scottish Average. The qualitative outcomes captured in the PPF also demonstrate that Planning Services are open for business, supporting sustainable economic growth, generating high quality development on the ground and have suitable management and delivery structures in place.
- 1.4 It is recommended that the Committee:-
- (a) Endorses the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) 2013/14;
 - (b) Agrees for the submission of the PPF to Scottish Government before 26th September 2014 ;
 - (c) Notes the new financial penalties for poor PPF outcomes enacted by the Scottish Government and shall contribute to next year's PPF 2014/15
 - (d) Notes that a update report is shall be submitted detailing Scottish Government feedback

Planning Performance Framework 2013/14

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report introduces the 2013/14 Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Annual report as required by the Scottish Government Planning Reform Agenda.
- 2.2 The PPF is the principal annual performance measure for Planning Services (*Development Management and Planning Policy – within Planning and Regulatory Services*) and is submitted to the Scottish Government for scrutiny and scoring. The Scottish Government has recently confirmed that Local Authorities who have poor outcomes and fall short of performance marker mechanisms recorded in their PPF shall have financial penalties levied against them through a reduction in planning fees.
- 2.3 Argyll and Bute 2013/14 PPF captures our strong performance over the previous financial year with the vast majority of headline indicators improved from the previous year and better than the Scottish Average. The qualitative outcomes captured in the PPF also demonstrate that Planning Services are open for business, supporting sustainable economic growth, generating high quality development on the ground and have suitable management and delivery structures in place.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-
- (a) Endorses the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) 2013/14;
 - (b) Agrees for the submission of the PPF to Scottish Government before 26th September 2014 ;
 - (c) Notes the new financial penalties for poor PPF outcomes enacted by the Scottish Government and shall contribute to next year's PPF 2014/15
 - (d) Notes that a update report is shall be submitted detailing Scottish Government feedback at the appropriate time in December 2014 or January 2015

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 This is Planning Services 3rd Annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) and is our 'balance scorecard' of performance which all Local Authorities must submit to the Scottish Government by the end of September 2014.
- 4.2 The PPF aims to be a holistic and easy to read document that encapsulates numerical performance indicators as well as more qualitative information and case studies of good practice for the previous financial year. The basic structure of the document is stipulated by the Scottish Government but the character, tone, style and content is all shaped by the individual Authority. This year we have used the strapline 'Failte – lets do business' as our theme to emphasise the positive economic contribution Planning Services have made to our area. We have recorded case studies and good practice examples demonstrating that Planning Services are 'open for business', deliver high quality outcomes on the ground, provide certainty to developers and investors, consult / engage with customers effectively and have appropriate structures / management to work efficiently.
- 4.3 In 2012/13 our PPF was very well received by the Scottish Government and we were one of a very small number of Authorities to have no 'Red' traffic lights as part of feedback. This year we have managed to improve the majority of our performance statistics and showcase a number of good quality projects and initiatives so we are confident that we can achieve a similar positive response.
- 4.4 Notwithstanding this, 2013/14 is the first year that a 'penalty clause' as enacted by the Regulatory Reform Act shall apply to Authorities who do not demonstrate positive outcomes and continuous improvement in their PPF. To this extent, this PPF is our most important to date and ongoing service improvement is essential to ensure our hugely important planning fee income is not diluted. The level of fee income that could possibly be affected if a penalty clause is incurred upon us is not yet clear but for context the Scottish Government has recently announced that a 5% fee increase shall be forthcoming on the 1st November 2014 which would equate to around £40,000 of additional fee income.
- 4.5 The Scottish Government has recently released a draft flowchart demonstrating how this year's PPF shall be scrutinised and assessed including implementation of the penalty clause. In summary, this shall be done by using Scottish Government appointed consultants who shall independently review all PPF's with feedback expected in December 2014. Those Authorities who have poor outcomes or cannot demonstrate continuous improvement shall be notified and asked to draw up an improvement plan within 3 months. A 3 month review period shall then commence where the Scottish Government shall monitor compliance with the improvement plan and other indicators. If at the end of this period improvement has not been acceptable then legislation shall be laid and a reduction in fees shall be forthcoming to those Local Authorities being penalised.
- 4.6 It is notable that the timescale from initial PPF feedback to potentially having fees reduced is small with only a 6 month window to make

improvements. It is also concerning that emphasis is likely to be weighted towards 'determination timescales' and authorities shall be reviewed against their own performance rather than the national average. This makes it even more challenging for Authorities, such as ourselves, who currently perform well against the national averages to make year on year improvements.

- 4.7 This new 'penalty clause' must also be strongly considered in the context of the Service Prioritisation process which shall commence shortly.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The 2013/14 PPF demonstrates strong performance against national statistics and agreed PPF Performance Markers and showcases a number of our high quality projects and outcomes.
- 5.2 Members and SMT should be aware of the new 'Penalty Clause' that has been introduced this year by the Scottish Government for poorly performing Authorities.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Policy:** None
- 6.2 **Financial:** Could be significant penalties incurred should PPF fail performance markers.
- 6.3 **Legal:** None
- 6.4 **HR :** None
- 6.5 **Equalities:** None
- 6.6 **Risk:** PPF not fit for purpose and penalty clause enacted. Reputational risk by being branded a poor performing authority
- 6.7 **Customer Service:** None

Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure

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10th September 2014

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Planning Performance Framework 2013/14