

**REPORT BY POLICY LEAD FOR PPSL, PLANNING SERVICES, HISTORIC AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT.**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

This Policy Lead Report covers the period from 17th April 2015 to 20th November 2015.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that members note the content of the report

**3. DETAIL****3.1 Planning****3.1.1 Planning Performance Framework 2014/15**

Our Planning Performance Framework (PPF) for 2014/15, which is the principal performance measure for Development Management and Development Policy within Planning and Regulatory Services, was submitted to the Scottish Government in July 2015. This was the 4th Annual PPF which our Planning Service has had to submit and, once again, it resulted in positive feedback from the Scottish Government in October 2015. Of the 15 Key Performance Markers agreed by a High Level Group and used by the Scottish Government to assess performance of an authority, based on the evidence provided within their PPF reports, Argyll and Bute were scored on 13 of those markers and for 2014/15, scored; Red = 0, Amber = 2 and Green = 11. For comparison the Figures for 2013/14 were Red = 0, Amber = 5 and Green = 8.

After the 2013/14 PPF review was carried out, the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Communities & Pensioners' Rights - Alex Neil MSP, commented that the PPF clearly demonstrated an 'open for business approach committed to working closely with others' and commended the Council's link between the LDP, action plans and the Single Outcome Agreement. This year's document maintains that "open for business" approach.

**3.1.2 Planning Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

In September the Scottish Government released the Annual Key Performance Indicators for 2014/15 which, together with the PPF, is the other main way of measuring the performance of the planning service and it is worth noting the headlines from the KPIs for Argyll and Bute Council over the last year:

- Total number of applications submitted/dealt with increased for the 3rd year in a row
- 1,097 'Local Applications' determined in last year making ABC the 9th busiest planning authority in Scotland (out of 34)

- ABC determine applications quicker than the national average and other rural authorities with 'Local Applications' determined on average in 9.5 weeks which is 0.6 weeks better than the National Average
- ABC determine 'Major Applications', on average, in 14.1 weeks compared to the National Average of 36.6 weeks
- ABC approve 96.7% of applications compared to national average of 93.9%
- 92% of original decisions were upheld at review, compared to a National Average of 64% and similarly, 64% of original decisions at appeal were upheld compared to a 54% national average, demonstrating robust Planning Policy Framework, Governance and Decision making arrangements.
- 366 Housing applications were determined by ABC in an average of 12.1 weeks which is over 2 weeks quicker than National Average
- For further information, visit;  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Planning/Publications/plana pps2015annual>

### **3.1.3 Twitter**

Planning Services now have an established Twitter account with over 140 followers including local businesses, communities, members of the public and trade organisations. Their aim is to provide daily tweets posting photos and news regarding site visits, planning committee outcomes, consultations, design awards, re-tweets of interesting planning related material and to generate interest in the built environment. The news feed for anyone wishing to follow their tweets is: Great Places@ABC\_Planning

### **3.1.4 Sustainable Design Awards**

In June 2015 the PPSL agreed the proposed timescales and judging method for the 2015 Argyll and Bute Sustainable Design Awards. Entries over a 12 week period which closed on the 30th September 2015 were invited for the following 4 categories: New build residential (single or small scale), New build large scale residential development, New build non-residential and redevelopment or refurbishment of an existing building. The 4 categories attracted a total of 20 detailed entries and the judging panel, having carried out an initial scoring process are now conducting site visits of the shortlisted entries. It is hoped the site visits will be concluded by the end of December with the winners announced early in the New Year.

## **3.2 Planning Protective Services and Licensing (PPSL)**

### **3.2.1 PPSL Committee Training Development**

As previously reported, the PPSL committee have an ongoing training development programme in place covering a wide range of topics related to the functions of the PPSL Committee. Since my last report the 'bite sized' training sessions have covered LRB's (Local Review Bodies), The Local Development Plan and Tran 4 – policy on new and existing public roads and private access regimes. As well as the 'bite sized' sessions, members also had the opportunity to visit Glasgow Scientific Services' Colston Laboratory in Springburn to see the valuable service they provide to our Regulatory Services team, analysing various samples (food, water, fake goods etc).

In September, as part of the Council's Place Making Agenda, we held our monthly PPSL meeting in Campbeltown after which Elected Members were given a conducted tour of the town to see first hand, the significant developments and improvements that have been carried out in Campbeltown through the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI), Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS), new affordable housing and road realignment at Kinloch Road.



*Members and officers on the training visit to Campbeltown*

### **3.3 Regulatory Services**

#### **3.3.1 Council Excellence Awards**

In this year's Council Excellence Awards, Regulatory Services received 2 silver awards for development of performance measures and benchmarks for Environmental Health and Improving Food Safety in the approved sector. The 2 bronze awards were for "Debt Counselling", "Improving Health" and "Buy with Confidence". Congratulations to all who were involved in gaining these awards which raise the profile of the excellent work undertaken by staff within Regulatory Services, giving recognition to their commitment and hard work.

#### **3.3.2 Protecting Consumers Action Plan**

At the November PPSL Committee meeting, members were provided with a progress report of the Council's "Protecting Consumers Action Plan" and the positive work being carried out through the plan. Of the 27 actions identified in the original plan, 2 remain outstanding which relate to national issues and therefore delivery timescales cannot be influenced by the council.

As part of the Protecting Consumers Action Plan, our council's "Buy with Confidence" Scheme, gives greater protection to vulnerable consumers through the development of advice regarding 'no cold calling areas', provision of telephone call blockers, improved access to guidance through advice agencies or the council. Trading Standards Service has been developing a risk based, intelligence led service which provides a range of targeted work through proactive inspections, specific projects and reactive work with improved partnership (working with other local authorities, Trading Standards Scotland, Police Scotland and other agencies).

In relation to the Buy with Confidence Scheme, membership was restricted, initially, to the building sector and although demand within that sector has been slow there have been many enquiries from other businesses which were not pursued at the time. In view of this, the scheme has now been opened out to all businesses and it is hoped that by increasing membership, the scheme will become more meaningful to the consumer.

### **3.4 Building Standards**

- 3.4.1** Building Standards are currently having their second annual audit for their Customer Services Excellence (CSE) award and I wish them all the very best in the hope that they retain this prestigious award.

A recent key achievement for Building Standards was their successful tender for the private sector contract with Babcocks to provide the building standards verification service at Faslane and Coulport MOD facilities for an initial 2 year period, which will generate an estimated income of £75-£100k per annum.

### **3.5 Historic and Sustainable Environment**

#### **3.5.1 Historic Environment Strategy Consultation**

A Public Consultation on the draft Historic Environment Strategy ran from 12/06/2015 to 14/09/2015 and although there were not a huge number of responses they were useful in their content and provided a reasonable spread of national and local representation.

An assessment of the responses received is underway and they will be used to make any amendments to the document which may be required before the document returns to the council for proposed adoption.

- The strategy itself was downloaded 170 times
- The consultation page was visited 594 times
- The online response form was visited 203 times

The new historic environment section of the website was launched simultaneously with the consultation period (link below) and the site has been visited 754 times since its launch not including internal council visits

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/our-historic-environment>

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

This concludes my Policy Lead report for Planning & Regulatory Services and I would finish by thanking all officers within the service for their continued support in my role as Policy Lead.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1** Policy – None
- 5.2** Financial – None
- 5.3** Legal – None
- 5.4** HR – None
- 5.5** Equalities – None
- 5.6** Risk – None
- 5.7** Customer Service – None

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