

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Mr Cleland Sneddon
Chief Executive
Argyll and Bute Council

10 January 2019

Dear Mr Sneddon

PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK FEEDBACK 2017/18

I am pleased to enclose feedback on your authority's 7th PPF Report for the period April 2017 to March 2018. Considerable progress has been made since the introduction of the Planning Performance Framework and key markers, although performance still remains variable over some authorities and markers.

As you may be aware, the Planning Bill has recently passed through the second stage of parliamentary consideration, during which the Local Government and Communities Committee voted to remove the proposed provisions on planning performance, provisions to make training for elected members mandatory, and the existing penalty clause provisions. We expect Stage 3 of the bill process to begin in the new year.

Whatever the outcome of the Planning Bill, I believe now is the time to look again at how we measure the performance of the planning system. The High Level Group on Planning Performance recently met to discuss performance measurement and other improvements. I very much hope that we can continue to support ongoing improvements in our planning service and further demonstrate the value which the planning system can add to people's lives. Ministers see an important connection between performance and fees and I am aware that any proposals to increase fees will raise applicants' expectations of an efficient and effective service.

We need to be able to measure performance to provide that crucial evidence to support any increases in fees, to help ensure that authorities are appropriately resourced to deliver on our ambitions. With this in mind, we will continue to liaise with COSLA, SOLACE and Heads of Planning Scotland on matters of the Bill's implementation and planning performance measures going forward.

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.

Kind Regards



KEVIN STEWART

CC: Angus Gilmour, Head of Planning and Regulatory Services

PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2017-18

Name of planning authority: **Argyll & Bute 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]	Amber	<p>Major Applications Your timescales of 35.7 weeks are slower than the previous year and are slower than the Scottish average of 33.6 weeks. RAG = Red</p> <p>Local (Non-Householder) Applications Your timescales of 12.6 weeks are slower than the previous year and are slower than the Scottish average of 10.7 weeks. RAG = Red</p> <p>Householder Applications Your timescales of 7.9 weeks are slower than the previous year and are slower than the Scottish average of 7.3 weeks. However, your timescales are faster than the statutory timescale of 8 weeks. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Amber</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>You encourage processing agreements to applications for all major developments. No major applications were subject to a processing agreement this reporting year. RAG = Green</p> <p>Processing agreement information is available through 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>You provide a pre-application advice service which is promoted through the website and by staff engaging with prospective applicants. The pre-application service has recently been updated with online submission form and fee calculator. RAG = Green</p> <p>You have a proportionate and clear process for requesting supporting information. Your case studies demonstrate the protocol taken to pre-application discussions and how this assists in identifying issues prior to the application being submitted. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>

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)	Amber	No major applications were subject to a legal agreement during the reporting year. Local applications were slower than last year but faster than the Scottish average. You state that applications which are subject to a legal agreement are regularly reviewed to ensure progress and completion within 6 months.
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published within last 2 years	Red	Your enforcement charter was 34 months old at the end of the reporting year. We note that you have since published this, however this was out with 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 	Amber	Your LDP is up to date and clear timescales exist for adopting the next LDP. You made significant progress on clearing your stalled sites. However, your decision making timescales, with and without legal agreements, are slower than last years and enforcement charter is behind schedule. RAG = Amber You have completed 8 out of 12 of your improvement commitments with the remaining to be continued over the next reporting year. You have identified a range of tangible improvement commitments for the coming year informed by stakeholder feedback. RAG = Green Overall RAG = Amber
7	Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption	Green	Your development plan was 3 years old at the time of reporting.
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	Your LDP2 is on track for adoption within the five year cycle. RAG = Green Your project plan for the replacement of the development plan is set out in Development Plan Scheme LDP2, published in January. This is being updated through events such as the Customer User Forums which allow for stakeholders to influence the process of the LDP2 development. RAG = Green Overall RAG = Green
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i>	Green	You engaged with elected members during 2017 through a series of seminars and workshops to inform the preparation of your MIR. The MIR was also used as a training tool for newly elected members.
10	Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year *including industry, agencies and Scottish Government</i>	Green	You held a 6 month call-for-sites exercise to assist in engaging with all developers, landowners and other stakeholders. You consulted with key agencies and Scottish Government on the results of that exercise. You also worked with community planning partners and sought to engage with hard-to-reach groups. You have innovated aspects of your engagement process with an interactive ‘story map’ and an online submissions form.
11	Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on information required to support applications.	Green	You have produced a number of guidance documents to aid your application processes. Other documents released clearly indicate a proportionate response to customer’s needs.
12	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for	Green	You provide evidence of building internal partnerships, more efficient processes and joined-up guidance (seen in the Ardfin Development case study). All of which demonstrate

	example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact arrangements; joint pre-application advice)		you are working to improve services to respond to the needs of customers.
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Green	Your Central Validation Team contributed to HOPS National Validations Standard document and elsewhere your work been used as a case study by A+DS. Your next report should clarify how you are sharing good practice with other local authorities beyond benchmarking.
14	Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	Green	You have cleared 20 cases during the reporting year, with 23 cases still awaiting conclusion. Based on this and last year's figures, only 4 reached legacy status during the reporting year and you have shown a commitment to reducing the number of stalled sites in your area.
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	Your LDP, supported by supplementary guidance sets out expectations for developer contributions with regards to affordable housing and green/play space and sets out how contributions are proportionate to the scale, nature and impact of the proposed development. RAG = Green Expectations for developer contributions are clarified in your pre-application discussions. Where pre-application discussions have not occurred officers will make applicants aware of any requirement for contributions at the earliest opportunity. RAG = Green Overall RAG = Green

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
Performance against Key Markers

Marker		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
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		
10	Stakeholders engaged early (pre-MIR)	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)

	Red	Amber	Green
2012-13	0	4	9
2013-14	0	5	8
2014-15	0	2	11
2015-16	0	3	10
2016-17	1	3	11
2017-18	1	3	11

Decision Making Timescales (weeks)

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2017-18 Scottish Average
Major Development	88.2	59.1	14.1	23.3	22.1	37.9	33.6
Local (Non-Householder) Development	14.0	13.1	10.8	10.3	12.4	12.6	10.7
Householder Development	8.9	7.2	6.9	7.0	7.5	7.9	7.3