



PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 8

2018/19

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Foreword:

We are very pleased to introduce the eighth edition of the annual Argyll and Bute Council Planning Performance Framework report.

All Local Authorities are required to produce such a report annually. It has evolved into a concise record of our performance measured against a broad range of outcomes and improvement actions. In addition, because of its continuity from one year to the next, it has developed into a valuable timeline that illustrates progress and success over a number of ongoing projects and case studies.

The document demonstrates how our Planning Service is central to the delivery of the Council's corporate objectives; and makes tangible impacts on addressing population decline, delivering sustainable economic growth, strengthening communities and protecting our exceptional built and natural environment.

It is clear to see our Council officials work collaboratively in partnership with a variety of stakeholders including the public and private sectors, the community and third sector groups, in order to achieve common goals and maximise opportunities to drive forward positive change and the document is as much a celebration of their successes as it is that of the Council's.

I am delighted to see the Planning Service's continuing efforts, along with other Council Services, to continually put the customer at the heart of everything we do, has been recognised by attaining the independent Customer Service Excellence accreditation.



Cllr David Kinniburgh

Chair of the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing (PPSL) Committee

Argyll and Bute Council



Pippa Milne

Executive Director with responsibility for Planning Services

Argyll and Bute Council

Part 1: Defining and Measuring a High Quality Planning Service

1.1 QUALITY OF OUTCOMES

1.1.1 Throughout 2018/19 the Planning Service has worked closely with communities, developers and partner organisations to deliver a range of developments across Argyll and Bute.

1.1.2 The [adopted Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2015](#) (the LDP) is firmly embedded into decision making with 12 key policies which seek to promote the delivery of sustainable long term economic growth to support the retention and growth of our population; to support the transition to a low carbon economy; to help retain and improve essential services; to protect and enhance our outstanding natural and built environment, and to maintain and improve our quality of life.



1.1.3 Interpretation and implementation of the LDP policy aims is assisted by a suite of Supplementary Guidance and non-statutory Technical Working Notes. During 2018/19 these have been augmented with the preparation of a new Technical Working Note relating to [Houses in Multiple Occupation](#).

1.1.4 In addition to providing a policy and [guidance](#) framework, the Council seeks to promote high quality design through its own [Sustainable Design Award](#) scheme and identification of [exemplar designs](#) via the Council's website. The



Sustainable Design Awards are not run on an annual basis but are now programmed to be held again during 2020.

1.1.5 There are [32 conservation areas](#) across Argyll and Bute providing protection to the historic built environment. The Council has continued to successfully pursue investment in these locations through establishment of Townscape Heritage Initiatives (THIs) and Conservation Area Regeneration Schemes (CARS). During 2018/19 members of the Planning team continue to have been involved in projects in [Dunoon](#), [Rothesay](#), [Inveraray](#) and [Campbeltown](#) where significant investment and improvement to the fabric and appearance of these historic town centre locations, along with training in traditional skills and [community engagement with](#) schools to foster an understanding of their local heritage. The



Planning Service has also participated in the delivery of site specific projects, including the restoration of the Winter Gardens in Rothesay in Case Study 3. The Council has also been successful in a bid to secure [£1m funding](#) for a new CARS to run in Lochgilphead between 2019—2024.

1.1.6 Involvement of the Planning Service has been instrumental in facilitating a number of developments which have/will deliver new housing, schools, employment, renewable energy, and tourism accommodation/facilities. Case Studies 2, 3, and 7 detail some of these quality outcomes.

1.2 QUALITY OF SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT

1.2.1 The LDP and priorities of the Planning Service are closely aligned with the [Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan 2013-23](#) (previously known as the Single Outcome Agreement and Community Plan). The Outcome Improvement Plan remains the sovereign document and the LDP aims to translate its objectives in to a deliverable spatial strategy. The Council's [Action Programme](#) is utilised to focus action on priority proposals and allocations, and to identify work which is required to enable development. Case Study 5 provides an example of these corporate aims being delivered on the ground by LDP policy.

1.2.2 During 2018/19 preparation of LDP2 included Main Issues Report Analysis, workshops with elected Members, and engagement with Key Agencies and other stakeholders on specific issues. Production of the proposed LDP and associated documents including a Habitats

Regulations Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment and an Action Programme were also commenced. An updated project plan for the [Development Plan Scheme](#) was published in February 2019.

1.2.3 The Planning Service is located in four offices across the main settlements of Argyll and Bute providing relatively easy access to a large proportion of the population. Customers on remoter mainland and island locations are also able to access Council services at Customer Service Points. The Planning Service also provide website, e-mail, and telephone based services to customers, and continues to utilise social media as a means of public engagement.

1.2.4 The Planning Service, working in partnership with Regulatory Services, attained the [Customer Service Excellence Standard](#) in February 2019. An overview of



the work undertaken to reach this attainment is set out within Case Study 4. The Planning Service is committed to retaining the award and will require to undergo partial reassessment during 2020.

1.2.5 The Planning Service continues to build partnerships both internally and externally. The Planning Service has close links with Building Standards, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Housing, Access, GIS and Coastal Development which have been developed through management of these functions by a single Head of Service. Departmentally the Planning Service is also aligned with Economic Development and Roads under a single Executive Director. The Council Service structure facilitates partnership working and promotes symbiosis in working practice including alignment of Housing with Development Policy to better realise the synergies between these services in the delivery of affordable housing development and the [Strategic Housing Investment Plan](#). Looking forward to 2019/20 a restructure of Heads of Service will see even greater alignment of complimentary services as Economic Development is also brought within the same Service structure as Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services.

1.2.6 Customer User Forums were held in November 2018 as a joint exercise between the Development Management, Development Policy and Building Standards Services providing a co-ordinated approach to engagement with regular professional customers. The content of the Forum



included an update on the LDP2 process, introduction of new National validation standards, the Scottish Government's ongoing Planning Review, details of a Service Redesign for Development Management, performance appraisal, and details of recent publications/guidance.

1.2.7 In addition to engaging with individual companies on application specific issues, the Planning Service also seeks to engage directly with the aquaculture industry by arranging an annual liaison meeting with local industry representatives. This year's event was hosted by Argyll and Bute Council in November 2018. The agenda included an update on LDP2, the [Clyde Marine Plan](#), Planning Performance, revised Industry Planning Protocols, discussion about [changes to SEPA's licensing regime](#) and its implications for planning, wild fish interactions, and updated EIA Regulations.

1.2.8 The Development Policy Service have reviewed housing land supply in order to verify that it is fit for purpose and does not act as an impediment to the delivery of new house building. The Council continues exploring innovative ways in which it can contribute to or facilitate the further delivery of a variety of housing types as reported in PPF 7.

1.2.9 The Helensburgh Making Places project is funded by the [Scottish Government's Making Places Initiative](#). The project has sought to engage as widely as



possible to arrive at a widely endorsed vision which articulates ambitions for the town and reflects the aspiration and concerns of all sectors of the community. The project utilised a range of consultation techniques including use of the [Place Standard Tool](#), surveys, social media, workshops, and live drawing. A total of 10 engagement [events](#) were held, 458 written submissions received, feedback from 11 groups, and from 400 face-to-face interviews. The final project outputs are intended to inform policy change, strategic decision making and the forthcoming Local Development Plan and will ensure a strong connection between grassroots and high level decision making. The final document will be designed to be accessible and usable for all within the community, and will provide a body of evidence to help interested groups progress opportunities and work toward seeing shared aspirations



realised.

1.2.10 The redevelopment and revitalisation of Kilcreggan village centre is a key priority of the [West Rosneath Peninsula Community Development Trust](#). The Council has worked in collaboration with the Development Trust to appoint design consultants to undertake community engagement and produce a masterplan for the waterfront area. Two consultation events saw over 100 people attend and contribute to the project.

1.2.11 The roll out of 4G by EE/BT and the [Emergency Service Mobile Communication Programme](#) continued during 2018/19. This has seen 4G coverage from this Mobile Network Operator reach 68% across Argyll and Bute with a further 16 sites to be developed; commercial coverage will improve as the fibre network increases. Additionally the Scottish Government's 4G infill programme has identified a number of sites which meet the criteria for investment as 4G "Not-Spots". The Council's Digital Liaison Officer continues to provide assistance and single point contact for numerous consultants and monitors progress of applications as they are developed, submitted and implemented, following internal protocols to engage planning officers with greater expertise in telecoms development when required. Feedback from consultants has been complimentary of the processes which the Council have implemented to assist in the progress of digital connectivity.

1.2.12 The Development Management Service continues to offer a [pre-application and permitted development enquiry service](#). Whilst recent times have seen the introduction of charging, template responses and online submissions feedback from customers in 2018/19 has identified a demand for a pre-app initiation and follow up service which is currently under development. Case Studies 2, 3 and 7 look at examples where there has been successful early engagement with developers.

1.2.13 Elected members are involved at an early stage of an application for 'major' development and are provided with a briefing on all Proposal of Application Notices. This [protocol](#) requires all PANs to be reported to the PPSL Committee and allows Members the opportunity to identify matters which they consider would be material to the determination of any subsequent application. Any issues raised

by Members are then fed back to the applicant to take into account in the preparation of their formal application.

1.2.14 We have reported in previous PPFs on the certainty provided through development of masterplans and LDP allocations. 2018/19 has seen development, including affordable housing, delivered within masterplan/LDP allocations in Bowmore, Campbeltown, Dunoon, Helensburgh, Lochgilphead, Inveraray, Port Ellen, and Tobermory and we reported in PPF 7 that the Dunbeg masterplan area was the subject of an application for 300 dwelling units in accordance with phase 1 of the approved masterplan. A collaborative and proactive approach between stakeholders has secured necessary funds for delivery of essential road improvements and infrastructure upgrades which the Council is currently implementing to enable the development. The early involvement of Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS) at Masterplan stage has been followed up with meetings to discuss and evaluate the current planning application thus maintaining communication links as the proposal has evolved. Case Study 5 provides an update on delivery of development at Dunbeg subsequent to planning permission being granted during 2018/19.

1.2.15 The Development Policy team have undertaken public consultation on the [pilot project to deliver two Simplified Planning Zones](#) in Lochgilphead and Mull during 2018/19.



1.3 GOVERNANCE

1.3.1 Development Management and Development Policy items are reported to the centralised Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee which meets monthly (except for July) and convenes for site visits and discretionary

Local Hearings as required. The PPSL Committee met on 14 occasions during 2018/19. Local Review Bodies operate flexibly to demand with 23 LRB meetings and 1 site visit convened during 2018/19.

1.3.2 The Council's Scheme of Delegation to officers was reviewed and updated during 2018/19 however this continues to operate effectively with 97.7 decisions being made under delegated powers in 2018/19. During this period 97.4% of applications were approved demonstrating the effectiveness of a planned system, flexible/pro-development policies which are aligned to the corporate priority of sustainable economic growth, and a commitment to delivering positive outcomes.

1.3.3 Argyll and Bute Council's Planning Service continues to face significant budget pressures due to the requirement for delivery of savings across all Council services. Whilst we reported in PPF 7 that depressed planning fee income was creating further difficulties this position has fortunately proven to be short-lived with planning fee income returning to expected levels during 2018/19 along with staff resources. Significant budget savings were delivered during 2018/19 through extension of the chargeable pre-application service and staff rationalisation. The Development Management Service also undertook and implemented a Service Redesign which will deliver further savings during 2019/20. Budgets and efficiency measures are considered at management meetings at all levels with updates provided regularly to the Executive Director and elected Policy Lead. Participation in the Costing the Planning Service in Scotland project, as detailed in Case Study 8, has confirmed that the cost efficiency of Argyll and Bute's Planning Service compares favourably with that of other Local Authorities and has provided additional insight to assist with budget planning for future years.

1.3.4 Planning Enforcement is currently delivered by two dedicated Enforcement Officers based in Lochgilphead and Oban covering the West of Argyll and Bute with the undertaking enforcement duties now being combined with Development Management casework in the East of the Council area. Enforcement is delivered on a priority basis which is set out in The Enforcement Charter which was reviewed during 2017/18 and subsequently adopted by the Council in June 2018.



1.3.5 The Council's Housing Service was brought under the umbrella of the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services in November 2017. The revised Service structure has combined management responsibilities for Housing with the Development Policy team. The revised arrangements have already helped to forge better linkage and integration of activity between these complimentary services and has seen Planning and Housing staff being represented at each Service's annual conference.

1.3.6 The Planning Service continue to engage in a multi-agency project in the development of the Oban Strategic Development Framework. It is intended to deliver a long term strategic vision for the town and to act as a vehicle to co-ordinate and maximise synergies between a variety of ongoing project streams.



1.3.7 The Planning Service continues to engage with other Council Services through Area Property Action Groups (APAGs). This approach and some of its successful, high quality outcomes are explored in Case Study 1.

1.3.8 The Council continues to explore the delivery of shared services with other authorities. An example of this approach is that the Council's Conservation and Design Officer is currently providing built heritage advice to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority.

1.3.9 The Development Management Service continues to seek to review and refine existing processes to deliver efficiency savings and improve performance and outcomes for customers. During 2018/19 the Development Management Service has invested and delivered an upgrade of Public Access improving stability of this customer engagement tool and allowing greater scope to improve the customer experience. The Service has also invested in the purchase of IDOX Enterprise for Uniform during 2018/19 and will roll out this tool to deliver improved workflow processes and performance management during 2019/20.

1.3.10 All professional staff within Planning Services are provided with laptops/tablets to facilitate their ability to travel efficiently and work flexibly across the Council area.

1.3.11 Customer appetite for Processing Agreements remains indifferent. The Development Management Service only processed one planning application with a Processing Agreement during 2018/19 despite engaging with all applicants for Major development. Information on the availability of [Processing Agreements](#) is available on the Council's website, is highlighted in all pre-application reports, and has been promoted in User Forums.

1.3.12 Argyll and Bute Council has a [corporate complaints process](#); customer information is provided on the Council website and in customer Charters. All complaints are subject to performance reporting and 'Stage 2' complaints require review by senior management.

1.3.13 Legacy cases are reviewed regularly as part of caseload management. Unfortunately despite continuing to clear legacy cases the number of 'live' applications older than 12 months has increased slightly during 2018/19. In response monthly caseload reviews of longstanding applications have now escalated to involve a senior manager.

1.3.14 Applications which are to be subject to planning legal agreements are flagged up on lists of undetermined applications to ensure that the progress can be reviewed on a regular basis. The average time period for processing applications with legal agreements decreased from 25.9 weeks to 18.5 weeks during 2018/19.

1.4 CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

1.4.1 During 2018/19 the Planning Service delivered on a range of Improvement Actions identified in PPF 7. An overview of progress is set out in Part 3 of this document.

1.4.2 The Council continues to benchmark its performance on the determination of planning applications against the National average and the performance of other rural local authorities.

1.4.3 Internally, team meetings are held on a regular basis. The Executive Director attends fortnightly Strategic Management Team meetings. The Head of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services attends the fortnightly Departmental Management Team meeting, provides a regular update to Policy Leads, and holds his own Service meetings on a quarterly basis; a Service level e-Development group is also convened quarterly. The DM Management Team also meet quarterly; with area teams meeting weekly to assign casework, and review caseload performance.

1.4.4 All Council staff are required to

prepare an annual Performance Review and Development plan (PRD). This process allows staff to individually review their performance with their line manager and identify training/development needs. All Planning Services staff had completed their PRDs within the allocated time period.

1.4.5 The Annual Planning Conference had a general theme of recognising and encouraging collaborative working across the Council. This included attendance and presentations from colleagues in the Council's Housing, Economic Development, and Roads Services, in addition to the Local Biodiversity Officer, the Marine and Coastal Development Officer, and GIS Manager. Topics for the day included delivery of affordable housing, homelessness, SuDS, flooding and coastal erosion, Construction Environmental Management Plans, the Clyde Regional Marine Plan and the availability of new GIS services. The conference was an extremely useful exercise for exchange of ideas and knowledge between different Council services and will help foster smarter, more efficient working moving forward.

1.4.6 For the past six years, the Planning Service has delivered a series of short training events for elected Members. These are normally undertaken in bite size sessions in the hour prior to a meeting of the PPSL Committee but have also included half day workshops and site visits. Training during 2018/19 included planning law/procedure, local review bodies, minerals and planning, simplified planning zones, an update on the Planning Bill, biodiversity, and managing the historic environment. Further detail on the training programme is set out in Case Study 9.

1.4.7 Planning Services representatives regularly attend meetings of Heads of Planning Scotland (inc. DM and DP subgroups), Scottish Planning Enforcement Forum, the Local Authority

Aquaculture Forum, Clyde Marine Planning Partnership, West of Scotland Archaeology Service, and e-Development/Digital Taskforce.

1.4.8 The Planning Service have engaged with Scottish Government consultations, in particular during 2018/19 to those relating to Stage 2 of Planning Bill and a revised Financial Memorandum by providing feedback directly, to elected Members for input via COSLA, and to the Heads of Planning Scotland. The Planning Service has also contributed to a HOPS consultation which sought to review [the impacts of the 2017 increase to Major Application fees](#).

1.4.9 During 2018/19, the Planning Service has published a new Technical Working Note relating to [Houses in Multiple Occupation](#). The new guidance covers both planning and licensing requirements for HMOs and was developed in collaboration with the Council's Environmental Health Service and public consultation.

1.4.10 During 2018 the Council appointed consultants to carry out a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan for [Lochgilphead](#), as well as to consider a new Conservation Area designation within [Helensburgh Town Centre](#) with public consultation for both being concluded during FQ1 2019/20.

1.4.11 Aquaculture is an area of planning that relatively few authorities have expertise. Argyll and Bute is one of four Scottish Local Authorities that deal with the majority of fin fish planning applications. The aquaculture industry is however currently seeking to expand into new locations. During 2018/19 Argyll and Bute Council provided assistance to colleagues in North Ayrshire Council and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park following receipt of EIA Screening and Scoping requests for aquaculture development within their areas. A workshop hosted by the Council's lead Development Officer for

aquaculture and the Marine and Coastal Development Officer provided a forum to discuss the applications, the relevant processes for assessment and determination, and identify stakeholders who would require to be involved. Officers also participated in a joint pre-application enquiry for aquaculture development where the developer's site selection process had identified potential development sites within both Argyll and Bute and the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

Customer Feedback:

"North Ayrshire Council received three EIA screening and scoping requests in quick succession for marine fish farms. These were the first such requests since 2011. Given the relative infrequency of applications, we contacted Argyll & Bute as an authority with extensive experience. The meeting they hosted was extremely useful with discussions of general considerations, procedures and processes. The glossary of fish farm terms Argyll & Bute shared was most helpful. The meeting also provided an opportunity to share details of specific proposals in areas of close proximity but different authority areas."

Iain Davies, North Ayrshire Council

1.4.12 We reported in PPF 7 that there were a number of recurring issues that affected the availability and stability of the Public Access System which allows external consultees and the public to review planning files and to submit representations; resolution of these issues was accordingly identified as a Service Improvement. Accordingly in 2018/19 the Planning Service has worked with the Council's IT Service and invested in updated software/systems to deliver a more resilient Public Access service resulting in the availability of the Public Access system rising to 99.9% for the second half of 2018/19.

1.4.13 Internal processes for handling pre-applications and the management of e-mail correspondence and file attachments have been subject to review and updating throughout 2018/19 having regard to the implications of [GDPR](#) with updated data retention policies, procedure notes for staff and training sessions delivered.

1.4.14 We reported in PPF 7 our development of sharepoint to provide a

centralised internal hub which will be utilised for the monitoring of strategic and minerals developments and development of this tool has continued in 2018/19.

1.4.15 As noted earlier and in Case Study 4, the Planning Service has successfully attained Customer Service Excellence Standard during 2018/19. Retention of CSE accreditation will require continued engagement with customers to develop and inform the ways in which we deliver our services in the future and the standards to which we deliver them.

1.4.16 The online and mobile capabilities of the Council's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) continue to be developed saving officer time and providing customers with quicker access to information. During 2018/19 an online [Access Reporting Form](#) was developed. The form allows members of the public to report issues such as fallen trees on core paths, deliberate blocking of routes by landowners, or signage which acts to



dissuade the public exercising rights of access. A map is embedded in the form allowing the complainant to identify the exact location if they are using a mobile device at the site of the issue. Completion of the form triggers electronic notification of the Council's Access Manager to identify and investigate the issues, with Planning Enforcement officers where required, at the earliest opportunity.

Case Study 1 Area Property Action Groups (APAGs)

Area Property Action Groups

Area Property Action Groups (APAGs) have been established in all 4 administrative areas of Argyll and Bute Council to address concerns regarding unsafe/problematic buildings. Officers from various services are involved. This includes; Housing, Planning, Building Standards, Landlord Registration, Environmental Health and Community Safety and Economic Development.

The aims of the partnership meetings associated with APAG are to identify 'problematic buildings' and to develop a pro-active, co-ordinated and strategic approach for practical and effective Council intervention across services. This method provides an opportunity for Officers to address the relevant issues associated with a variety of buildings and to identify the most effective/appropriate tools and service to liaise with owners/ responsible parties.

Whilst there are many statutory powers available that Services can utilise to bring properties up to an acceptable standard, this type of action can result in high costs to the Local Authority with limited scope for recuperation. By linking the different powers and tools available to each service, Officers can now take a more targeted and joined up approach to addressing the particular problems associated with each building that have been highlighted by colleagues, elected members, and/or our customers.

5 Branksome Park, Oban is a good example of this co-ordinated approach with the APAG working group coming together to identify funding and facilitate development after the property was identified as a priority for repair and energy efficiency improvements by the Council's Housing Service having fallen into a bad state of repair. The project consists of four private owners; and has benefitted from a variety of different funding options to create a suitable and sustainable funding package for all owners involved. The property is a 1950's style cavity wall flatted property and delivering the necessary improvements was considered problematic due to issues surrounding the multiple ownership including timescale and legal matters relating to a property that was vacant following the death of an owner with the state of disrepair preventing resale until improvements had been carried out.

The improvements to the property included provision of cavity wall insulation, external wall insulation, replacement of a flat roof with a pitched roof, and interior works to eradicate rot. The Housing Service contributed a proportion of Private Sector Housing Grant which was utilised for common repair issues and has been factored in to the package; predominantly for the roofing upgrades. The Council also receive a grant from the Scottish Government for fabric insulation upgrades called the [Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland: Area Based Scheme \(HEEPS: ABS\)](#) which has assisted with the cavity wall insulation and external wall insulation for the project. In addition, Argyll and Bute is one of the pilot areas for the Scottish Government's [Equity Loan](#) pilot project – which allows householders the opportunity to take equity out of their property in order to fund repair and energy efficiency improvements. Development Management officers were engaged at an early stage in the project by attendance at the APAG group and were able to process and determine the related planning application within a 4 week period to assist with delivery timescales of the project.



Case Study 2

The Hill House: The Big Box Project

The work of the Scottish architect, designer and artist, Charles Rennie Mackintosh (7 June 1868 – 10 December 1928) is today celebrated internationally. His designs have connections with the Arts and Crafts, Glasgow Style, and progressive developments on the Continent. Glasgow Mackintosh introduces you to many of his world-famous buildings and interiors.

In the 1890s he was part of 'The Four' – an informal grouping with the English sisters Margaret and Frances Macdonald and James Herbert McNair – that produced some of the most inventive decorative art and graphic design of the period. His major achievements include his masterpiece The Glasgow School of Art, the villas Windyhill and The Hill House, Scotland Street School and a series of city-centre tea room interiors. In common with many of his contemporaries he believed that the architect was responsible not just for the fabric of a building, but for every detail of its interior design.



The innovation driven by Mackintosh in the construction of Hill House has however resulted in some fundamental problems which have allowed prolonged water ingress and a requirement for a major conservation project to safeguard the future of the property. The house is a Category A Listed Building located within the 'Hill House Helensburgh Conservation Area'. Following pre-application engagement, a planning application for the project was submitted by the National Trust for Scotland during March 2018 with planning permission granted within the statutory determination period and ensuring that there was no undue delay to delivery of urgent conservation works.

The proposal comprises a free standing temporary shelter placed over the entire building to prevent further water ingress into its interior. The shelter is required for a 5 year period whilst conservation work is undertaken. In addition planning consent was granted for the erection of a two storey modular café/visitor centre located inside the shelter. This is required to ensure the building still functions as a world famous visitor destination.

Water ingress has occurred due to defects in the original construction and the limitations of early 20th century building technology. As a result the house is suffering on-going damage to its original fabric, both internally and externally.

The objectives of the conservation works are to:

- Stop further water ingress by erecting weather protection around vulnerable areas

- Confirm sources of water ingress by close inspection and moisture survey work
- Confirm extent of original roughcast (in order to establish how much survives)
- Confirm condition of existing fabric behind wall linings (in order to establish the extent of rot and monitor the drying out process)
- Implement a managed drying out of existing fabric using a conservation heating system
- Develop long-term solution which addresses the short-comings of the cement roughcast
- Demonstrate a rigorous conservation approach to all stakeholders

The conservation project consists of a series of key elements, which include:

The 'Big Box' – A free standing structure with no support from the house. Designed as a shelter for the house from direct rainfall a solid steel apex roof with gables facing south and north. Walls are vertical metal mesh perforated façades that provide high levels of daylight and airflow. An artificial lighting system is required to illuminate within enclosure and provide 'daylight' replacement within the house. The steel framed substructure is located within the grounds of garden with some planting, trees and vegetation also enclosed. Materials are metal roof, a lightweight lattice frame clad with a perforated stainless steel mesh which allows the building to remain visible to the public.

Visitor Walkways – Inside the structure accessible ramps and high-level walkways allow visitors the unique experience of being able to view conservation work as it progresses and to discover parts of property which are usually hidden from view, to venture onto a walkway which extends over the roof, and also to enjoy panoramic views across Helensburgh and the surrounding area.

Customer Feedback:

"This project required a considered planning process due to its unique nature and importance of the building it was to protect. As agents for the project we had a strong collaborative relationship with Frazer MacLeod as the Planning Officer responsible for the project. This included excellent pre application engagement, with clear advice and concerns outlined allowing the design to be adapted in a timely manner. Communication during determination was open and responses to questions and queries raised was swift. During construction, when the public raised issues around the construction these were dealt with by Frazer and the planning department in an open and pragmatic manner. While planning queries from the National Trust for Scotland and the design team were addressed clearly and swiftly.

The excellent approach from Argyll and Bute Planning Department helped in the successful construction of the Box to protect and conserve the Hill House."

Neil Michels, Carmody Groarke Ltd.

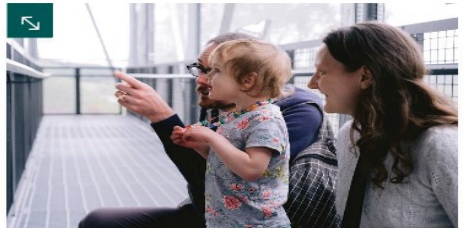
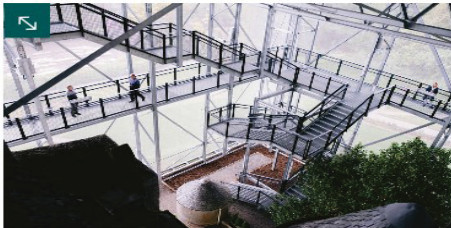
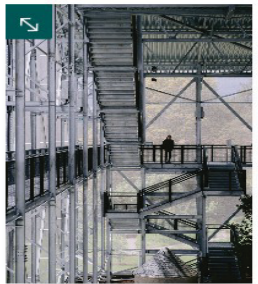


Image credit: screen shot from [NTS website](#)

Case Study 3

The Winter Gardens Discovery Centre Rothesay

Rothesay Townscape Heritage (TH) is a £3.2m partnership project comprised of funding from the following sources: Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Environment Scotland, Argyll and Bute Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Paths for All, Argyll and the Islands LEADER, and property owners' contributions.

The Winter Gardens Discovery Centre is currently host to a cinema and tourist information centre, which are both owned and managed by Visit Scotland. The property is of cast iron frame design and was constructed around 1920 at which time Rothesay was a popular seaside destination. Key features of the building included its roof which includes a large shallow dome and six finial style pagodas, and the external walls comprising Art Nouveau panels which are affixed to the cast iron framework. The building itself is Category A listed and occupies a prominent location within the centre of Rothesay Conservation Area. The building has however suffered from a backlog of maintenance issues and it was identified that significant restoration works were required to bring the building back to a condition befitting its status and prominence. The building was identified by the Council as a TH priority building for grant, for which funding would enable the first large scale repair project of the 2017-2022 programme.

Works completed included:

Replacement of roof coverings

Full exterior redecoration

Overhaul of windows

Replacement of corroded steel panels

Replacement of glazed canopy panels

Re-lining of rainwater goods

Replacement of corroded rainwater goods

Upgrade of insulation to shallow dome roof

The restoration works totalling £510,000 were funded by Visit Scotland as property owners with a contribution of £200,000 from the Rothesay Townscape Heritage Programme. The conservation scheme was based on substantial survey analysis of the property and were deemed to be essential to ensuring the category 'A' listed building is safeguarded for future generations. A key part of the project was early liaison with the Council's Planning Department through pre-application discussion, and continued engagement during subsequent applications to secure the necessary planning and listed building permissions, and then latterly through post-determination engagement.

The restoration of this iconic building was completed in March 2019 and has provided significant improvement to the area and a much needed boost to the community. This has also helped improve the welcome to Rothesay as it is one of the first buildings seen from the ferry as visitors arrive into the Harbour.



Case Study 4 Customer Service Excellence Standard

Argyll and Bute Council has a corporate objective to place the customer at the heart of everything we do and accordingly we have previously reported within both PPF 6 and PPF 7 of our aspiration to prepare a combined submission by Planning and Regulatory Services seeking [Customer Service Excellence](#) Standard accreditation, and indeed we included this within our PPF Improvement Actions for 2017/18 and 2018/19. Following an extensive review of customer engagement for each Service area (Development Management, Development Policy, and Regulatory Services the latter comprising Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Animal Welfare, and Licensing) [accreditation](#) was received on 3rd February 2019 following a two day assessment process which involved submission of evidence, and sessions with both customers and staff. Having attained the CSE standard it is now necessary to undertake a rolling reassessment of criterion on an annual basis to retain the award.

Customer Service Excellence is recognised as being a practical tool for driving customer focussed change on organisations and the standard has a particular focus on delivery, timeliness, provision of information through a variety of appropriate channels, professionalism and staff attitude. There is also an emphasis on developing insight of customer requirements, understanding a customer's experience and measuring their level of satisfaction with the service provided.

CSE Assessor Feedback 3rd February 2019:



“Planning and Regulatory Services as an organisation is customer focussed and fully committed to achieving CSE accreditation status as part of the whole drive of Argyll and Bute Council for excellence in customer service delivery. Overall quality of the evidence is of a good standard and a lot of effort has been made to ensuring the evidence covers all strands of the business.

Specific efforts have been made to understanding customer needs through sound use of customer insight, including strong consultation and engagement. There is strong leadership and a commitment of the workforce to deliver services to a high standard of customer satisfaction. The ethos is supported, by good levels of communication, innovative methods to use modern technology and very strong working partnership working. Generally services are delivered to set standards across the board and performance is monitored thoroughly ...

Overall a lot of effort has been made to show commitment to delivering a customer centric service across all parts of the business and it is clear that this commitment is shared at all levels of the organisation. Consequently accreditation to CSE standard is thoroughly deserved, with only 2 areas being considered partially compliant ... and 4 areas being awarded compliance plus rating.”

In order to retain the CSE standard accreditation the Planning Service will require to continue with its approach of actively seeking and responding to matters raised through customer feedback. During 2018/19 the Planning Service have issued a customer satisfaction questionnaire with every decision notice in addition to online surveys hosted by the Council website. Customer feedback through these channels is monitored at a departmental level every quarter.

Additionally regular customers (architects, agents, elected members, developers and landowners) are invited to attend annual User Forum's where representation is provided from Development Management, Development Policy and colleagues in Building Standards where an agenda of topical issues, Service performance, and updates to delivery arrangements are discussed.

All Planning staff are required to complete the Council's online training modules in 'Customer Service' as part of their induction.

Case Study 5 Dunbeg Masterplan Update



As part of its “Lorn Arc” proposals to deliver strategic scale development in the Oban area, Argyll and Bute Council, working in close collaboration with other internal and external stakeholders, and following the approval of a Masterplan, has continued to make significant progress to deliver the Masterplan vision. A planning application to build 300 affordable dwellings, in accordance with Phase 1 of the Masterplan, was approved by the Council in early 2019 and Roads Construction Consent was granted soon afterwards.

A collaborative and pro-active approach between stakeholders has secured necessary funding to deliver the 300 dwellings. During 2019 and early 2019, the Council, funded by the Scottish



Government’s [Housing Infrastructure Fund \(HIF\)](#) has upgraded the Kirk Road which is the key point of access both to the Dunbeg development and to the European Marine Science Park. At the same time services and utilities have also been upgraded, thus allowing for the rapid delivery of the [LINK Housing Development](#), and regular updates to the local community have been maintained to appraise them of construction progress and disruption.

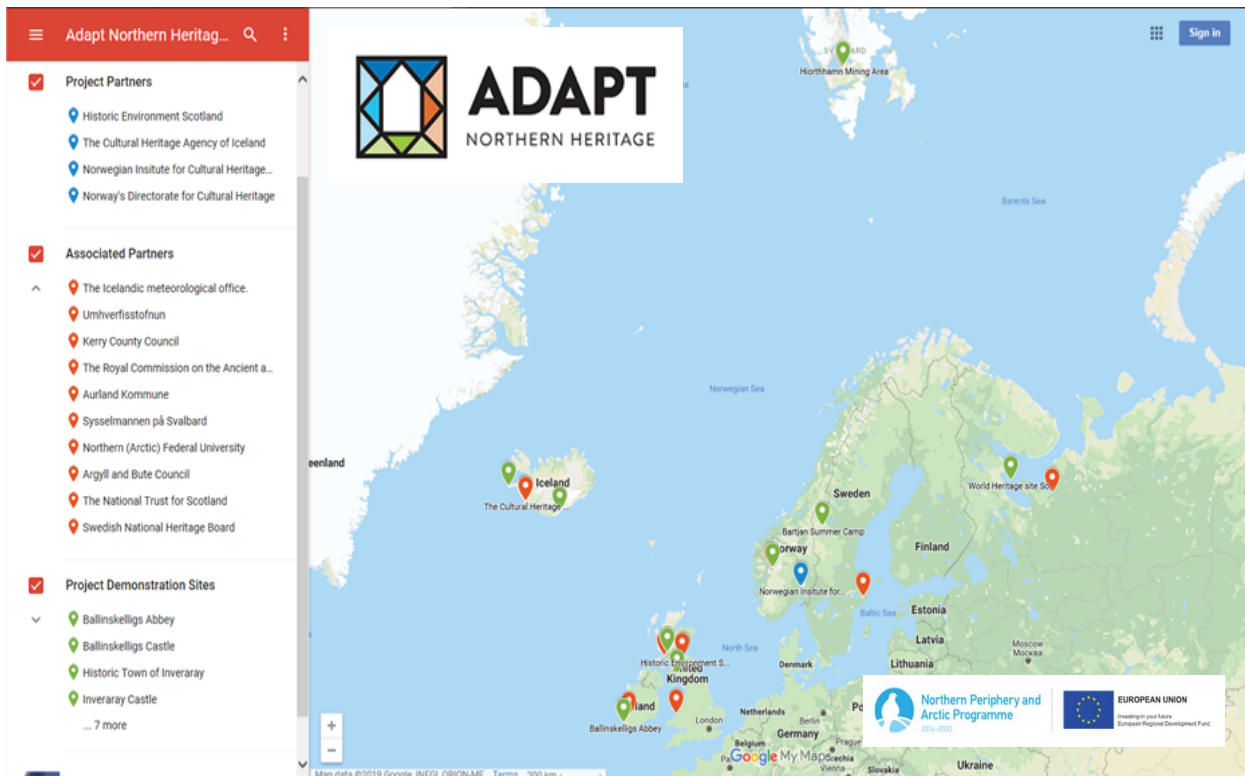
In January 2019 the Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning attended a formal turf cutting ceremony. Since that time the developers have made good on site progress, with the first phase of housing completions and occupation programmed for March 2020.

The sound relationships and trust built up through the strategic and operational boards and the Masterplan approval process has allowed positive discussions between Planning Officers and Link Group to identify early solutions and keep delivery on track. Discussions continue in the background to discuss delivery of further phases of the Masterplan in the medium term.



Case Study 6 Adapt Northern Heritage Programme

Argyll and Bute Council has continued to participate in the three year programme [Adapt Northern Heritage](#), running between 2017 and 2020, in relation to the sustainable adaption of historic places. Historic Environment Scotland is one of the project partners, along with [Minjastofnun Íslands](#) (THE Cultural Heritage Agency of Iceland), the Norsk institutt for kulturminneforskning (Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research) and Riksantikvaren (Norway's Directorate for Cultural Heritage).



The project includes consideration of how climate change will affect the historic town of Inveraray, particularly from coastal flooding, sea level rise and moisture related damage due to increased precipitation.

Argyll and Bute Council have participated in various stakeholder events throughout 2018/19, with future workshops arranged for 2019/20. Following an initial meeting in February 2018, workshops were held in Inveraray in March and August 2018, including presentations from Argyll and Bute Council, educational walks through Inveraray and community engagement events. At the workshop in August Historic Environment Scotland introduced the draft Place Assessment Guide which was tested, analysed and discussed by stakeholders.

In October 2018 Argyll and Bute Council attended a workshop funded by the programme in Reykjavic, Iceland which explored connections between climate change, conservation practice and heritage management. Argyll and Bute Council drew on experience from the completed Inveraray CARS work in terms of repair as well as a programme of training and events including sessions on keeping warm in older houses, dampness in traditional buildings and energy efficiency. Workshop sessions also covered assessing risk and reducing impacts from climate change, and sharing experiences with other delegates on strategies for adaption and mitigation of the effects of climate change on the historic environment.

In 2019 a summer workshop is to be held in Inveraray focusing on testing the practicability of the drafted Adapt Northern Heritage Risk Assessment and Adaptation Planning Guides, followed by an autumn event in Trondheim, Norway to draw together the experiences of the assessment tool and finalise it for use.

The aim of the programme is to lead to the implementation of better management practices in a manner which will mitigate the potential effects of climate change. Argyll and Bute Council will test the assessment method and develop a site specific action plan, to integrate into the [Inveraray Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan](#) and [A Guide for Homeowners in Inveraray](#). The assessment tool kit may then be applied to other historic environments to assess their robustness to the effects of climate change.

Case Study 7 Examples of High Quality Design 2018/19



The Columba Hotel, Tarbert

Change of use and alteration of former hotel to form 7 residential flats.

Key Issues: Sensitive conversion and alteration/extension which has secured the long term future of a derelict, category C listed building that occupies a prominent location within the Tarbert Conservation Area.

Added Value: Pre-application engagement provided the developer with sufficient comfort to purchase this derelict building and assistance in the development of detailed proposals which successfully obtained planning and listed building consent.

Image credit: https://bellingram.co.uk/property/flat-1-columba-house-pier-road-tarbert-pa29-6uf/#fndtn-panel_description



Image credit: <http://l-m-a.co.uk/work/play/premier-inn-oban/>



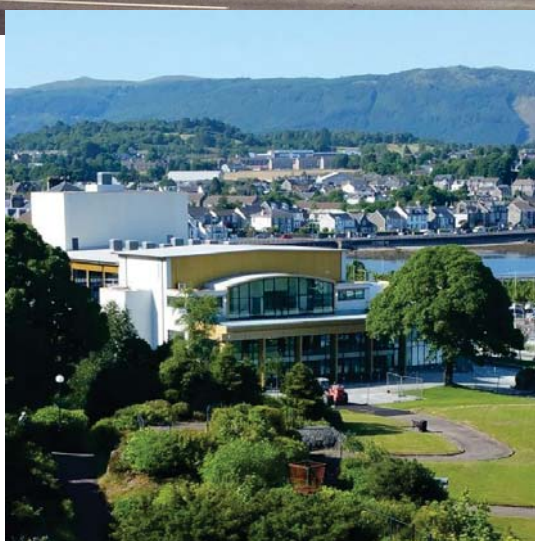
Premier Inn, Oban

Development of an 81 bedroom hotel

Key Issues: Redevelopment of a key site within Oban town centre; development is located on a location with a dual frontage.

Added Value: Pre-application engagement provided certainty on key matters relating to the acceptable scale of the development, key features of the building design and the palette of materials.

Image credit: <https://www.hfm.co.uk/projects/queens-hall-dunoon/>



Queens Hall, Dunoon

Refurbishment and remodelling of auditorium to incorporate fitness suite, library, café and playzone, and improvement of urban realm

Key Issues: Council led project to renew and revitalise a tired and dated 1950's auditorium and improve the public realm forming the gateway to Dunoon town centre to create an exciting gathering place with indoor and outdoor spaces.

Added Value: Investment of £9m led by the Council's Economic Development team supported by input from the Planning Service as a key component in the [Dunoon Regeneration Project](#).

The Machrie Hotel, Isle of Islay

Alteration and Extension of Hotel

Key Issues: Transformation of a landmark at one of Scotland's best golf courses which had fallen into disrepair into a 47 bedroom boutique golf hotel with facilities including a cinema and private lodges which re-opened in Summer 2018.

Added Value: Significant input by the Planning Service to assist with the development of the project from pre-application discussions through to implementation. Development was shortlisted for 2019 RICS Award for Tourism and Leisure.

Image credit: <https://hudsonarchitects.co.uk/our-work/the-machrie-hotel-1>



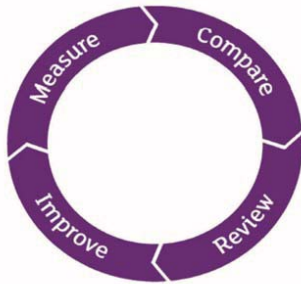
Case Study 8 Costing the Planning Service in Scotland

CIPFA The Chartered Institute of
Public Finance & Accountancy

Research and Analytics

Heads of Planning Scotland
costing the planning service

2018 – Argyll and Bute Council
Final Report



29/01/2019

aggregated up to an assumed 12-month position, and the fee income was derived from the performance information provided by local authorities relating to a 6-month period, averaged to an annual figure. The costs used in these figures include staff time and overheads such as premises, ICT, transport, postage and adverts and external advice.

The [Costing the Planning Service in Scotland Project 2018](#) was undertaken by the Heads of Planning Scotland with the aim of providing detailed information on the cost of delivering planning services, particularly development management. The 2018 study is a follow up to a project of the same name which ran in 2014 in which Argyll and Bute Council also participated.

The study findings are intended to assist Kevin Stewart, the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning, and the Scottish Government in their understanding of the totality of planning costs for providing planning services and to further inform on-going discussions at the High-Level Group on Planning Performance. They offer a good basis from which to understand the nature and relationship of planning costs and increased performance, and the potential for application fees and charges to achieve cost recovery.

12 Authorities participated in the 2018 Project. The methodology was developed by the Planning Advisory Service and CIPFA and is based on three main components – time recording, performance information, and detailed financial information. The data collection was carried out with results providing a snapshot of information based upon a 4-week time recording period (21st May to 15th June 2018), combined with financial and performance information from a 6 month period since the increase in Major Application fees (1st June 2017 – 1st December 2017). The 4-week period data was

The data from the survey is comprehensive and covers the following critical cost areas:

- Cost of handling applications
- Costs per application by category including: Major Non-Residential, All Dwellings, Local Non-Residential, All Others, Householders, and Heritage.
- Planning cost per hour
- Basket analysis – providing a comparison between local authorities of the cost to handle a 'standard basket' of applications.
- Performance analysis, which includes valid on receipt, zero fee applications, pre-application advice, appeals, speed of processing, and enforcement costs.
- Appendices cover recorded staff costs, staff hours and cost calculation, non-staff costs, and indirect costs.

The outputs from the study offers insight into the financial efficiency and effectiveness of an individual planning authority however sharing of data within the study group also allows this position to be benchmarked with other participating local authorities to ascertain where there are individual areas requiring improvement and collective areas where shared working to drive forward changes to working practices and/or legislative/procedural reform may be required.

The study will be utilised to inform the Council's budget proposals for 2020/21 onward and the key outcomes and lessons from the project have already been reported widely within the Council to the Departmental Management Team, the Strategic Management Team, and also to the elected Members of the [Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee](#).

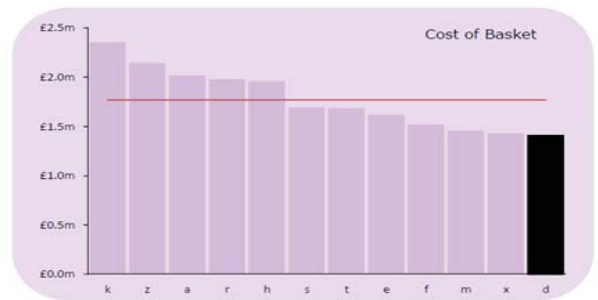
The key message for Argyll and Bute from the study was confirmation that, on a cost per application basis, our planning service is one of the most cost effective in Scotland and are heading in the right direction to deliver a cost neutral Development Management Service given that subsequent to the

study period further savings totalling £274k have been delivered through reduction in staffing levels, introduction of charging for pre-app advice, and Service Redesign. Benchmarking with 2014 study data has confirmed that the Council's Planning Service has become leaner in terms of its resource but that this is now more focussed on statutory service requirements than it has been in the past.

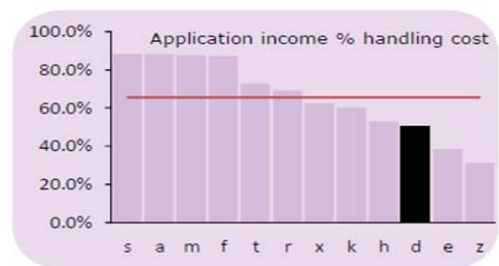
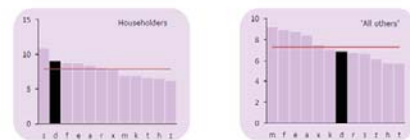
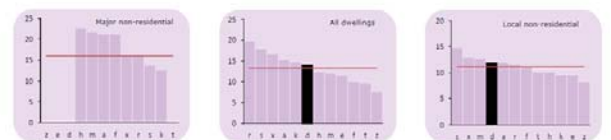
The study has however confirmed that within Argyll and Bute one consequence of improved cost effectiveness in application handling has been a reduction in performance levels with the Council having slipped from a position of being one of the leading rural authorities in terms of determination timescales to now being in line, or slightly worse than, the National average. This position has previously been recognised and a commitment to improve workflow processes to improve performance management through investment in the purchase of IDOX Enterprise was secured during 2018/19 for roll out during 2019/20.

The study has also reaffirmed the requirement for the Council to intervene in order to address low levels of applications which are valid upon receipt. Whilst validation levels had initially improved in 2017/18 following implementation of the [National Validation Standards](#) published by the Heads of Planning Scotland the study has confirmed that with only 34% applications received being valid on receipt that there is still considerable scope to improve both performance and cost efficiency of this aspect of the development management process and accordingly a Service Improvement to review validation processes and seek engagement with regular customers to improve the quality of their submissions has also been identified.

Analysis of data from the study has also suggested that there is a significant disparity between rural and urban authorities when reviewing the average value of planning application fees with applications submitted within Argyll and Bute receiving almost £200 less per application than the average for the study group. The study also highlighted that in addition to lower value of applications that rural authorities also appear to handle a significantly higher volume of 'zero-fee' applications which currently require to be processed at cost to the Council. These conclusions drawn from the study would support the position that reform of the permitted development legislation and planning fee regulations will be required if the Scottish Government's aspiration for full cost recovery for Development Management is to be achieved and will be utilised to inform the Council's response to any upcoming consultations on these matters.



Cost per Productive hour



Case Study 9 Elected Member Training

The Scottish Government's proposals on the future of the Scottish planning system, "[Places, People and Planning](#)" included a requirement to focus on "developing skills to deliver outcomes" recognising that "a strong and effective planning system requires to be operated by skilled and knowledgeable people".

Argyll and Bute Council have long recognised the importance of ensuring that parties participating in the decision making process have the appropriate skill sets and seek to achieve this not only by ensuring that its professional planning staff are appropriately qualified and eligible for RTP1 membership (or are supported in attaining this level) but has also supported quality in decision making through the delivery of a regular series of short training events for elected Members, and training events for Community Councils.

During May 2017 the Planning Service delivered a half day induction session on planning, and the planning process which was open to all elected members but mandatory for those sitting on the Planning, Protective Services and Licensing (PPSL) Committee. Since 2014 the Planning Service has also delivered a programme of monthly planning and related training sessions which are primarily geared toward the development requirements of elected Members sitting on the PPSL Committee. Training sessions are open to all elected members but are usually delivered in bite sized sessions of between 30-60 minutes prior to the commencement of the monthly PPSL committee meeting although on a couple of occasions throughout the year the format is expanded to provide for half day workshops and site visits to developments of interest. The training events are usually delivered by Council officers or by representatives from Statutory Consultees and other stakeholders in the planning process in order to minimise costs; however during 2017/18 Argyll and Bute Council took advantage of funding provided by the Scottish Government to deliver a consultant led, half day training session on flooding.



A [training programme](#) is prepared on an annual basis following input from both the Head of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services and the Chair of PPSL. The proposed programme is [reported](#) to and approved by PPSL. During 2018/19 training included an insight into the planning application process and procedures which govern this activity, Local Review Bodies, Minerals, Simplified Planning Zones, an update on the Planning Bill, and a joint presentation on the historic environment by Historic Environment Scotland and the Council's Conservation and Design Officer.

In addition to delivering training to the elected members of Argyll and Bute Council, during September 2018 the Planning Service also delivered planning induction training for Community Council representatives following elections earlier in the year. The training events were delivered over a period of two weeks at five separate venues across Argyll and Bute with afternoon and evening sessions being run to maximise accessibility.

The training sessions were attended by over seventy Community Councillors and received very positive feedback on the delivery of sessions that covered an introduction to the Council's Planning Service, an overview of the Local Development Plan process and key dates for engagement in LDP2; an overview of the Development Management process and the role of the Community Council as a Statutory Consultee, an overview of Enforcement and Monitoring, and an update on the key elements of the Planning Bill and how Community Councils could engage in its development.

Case Study 10

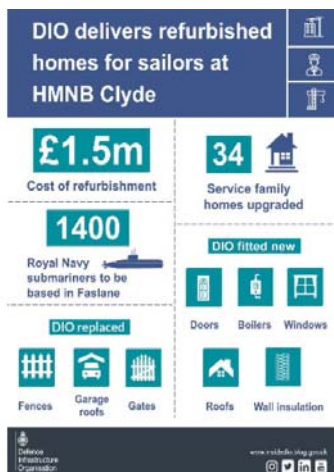
HMNB Clyde Strategic Development and Delivery Framework

In Feb 2017, the Secretary of State for Scotland (endorsed by SofS Defence) along with the Naval Base Commander and the CEO of Argyll & Bute Council signed the [Strategic Delivery and Development Framework \(SDDF\)](#), a joint agreement authorising direct working-level cooperation across the two branches of Government and also OGD, Third Sector and the Private Sector. The SDDF agreed a simple mission statement to: “Provide the framework for an enduring and mutually supportive relationship between HM Naval Base Clyde and Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership to achieve maximum benefit for the Base and the wider community of Argyll and Bute.”

The SDDF arrangements are now firmly entrenched. A board meeting at senior level (Chief Executive, Commodore of the Base) has been held twice a year, and subsidiary senior management team meeting is held quarterly feeding reports back to the board meeting. The arrangements have helped to secure a regular communication framework between the NMNB Clyde, the Council and other stakeholders, and is particularly useful in providing continuity over time.

Following work over the previous two years to discuss housing demand and delivery in the Helensburgh area, the Future Accommodation Model pilot goes live in September 2019 and will give all forces personnel at HMNB Clyde a grant to buy and rent in the private sector. It is anticipated that this will encourage staff to invest in permanent accommodation for themselves within the local area, thus reducing the demand for on-base accommodation provided by the MoD, and crucially integrating staff and their families within the local communities. Going forwards every effort is being made to work in a coordinated fashion with the MoD, Navy, private and public housing sector to ensure there is a free and detailed flow of information made available to Navy personnel helping them to make informed choices within the local housing market. This is partly being delivered by establishing single points of contact for information both on the web, and physically on-base.

Customer Feedback:
The Royal Navy were happy to attend our Customer Service Excellence independent evaluation panel held in January 2019, and reported the invaluable assistance the Council's input and commitment to the SDDF has made in influencing MoD and Whitehall decisions to pursue HMNB Clyde as the pilot for the Future Accommodation Model.



Despite the Future Accommodation Pilot, the joint research carried out by the SDDF has shown there will be a shortfall in what is termed Single Living Accommodation on the base between now and 2022 because of the numbers of navy personnel being relocated to HMNB Clyde. The SDDF is working in a partnership approach to address this challenge. Some [initial conversions of existing married quarters](#)’ stock have been carried out, and feasibility studies are underway to identify suitable sites off-base to deliver the required Single Living Accommodation. It is anticipated the shortfall in accommodation will be temporary in nature, and the SDDF in combination with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation is exploring a variety of delivery mechanisms including private sector provision through rent or sale, converting MoD property to alternative uses when it is surplus to requirement, and utilisation or upgrading of existing empty private rentals.

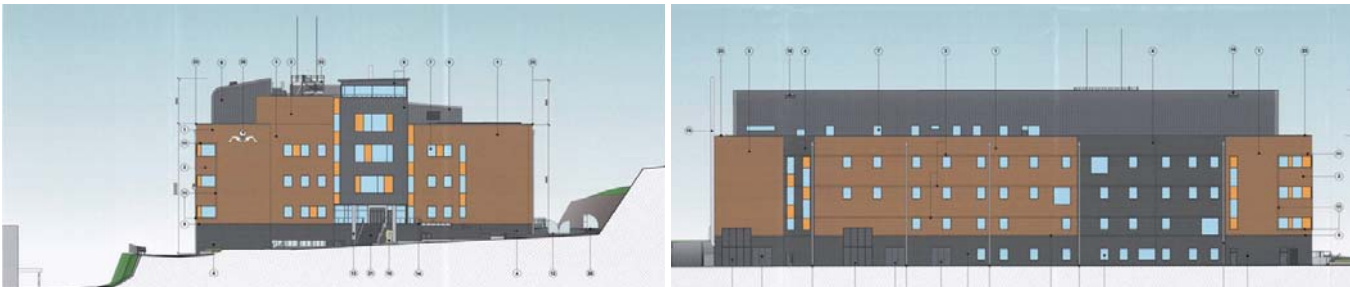
Supporting the work to ensure adequate housing supply in the area, Scottish Government Housing representatives are now attending the SDDF to ensure early communication regarding any emerging affordable needs.

A survey on the MoD estate has been carried out in partnership with the SDDF in order to establish the best utilisation of existing business and office space on the base, and identify any existing or projected shortfalls as new civilian support staff are also relocated to the base. In turn this will filter in to work carried out by Scottish Enterprise in partnership with the SDDF to identify future employment



opportunities and business land requirements, which will also be fundamental to drawing benefit from the base to the local community. It is anticipated Scottish enterprise will report back to the SDDF during the summer.

The SDDF continue to be engaged with consideration of the emerging demand for leisure, community and social needs resulting from the increasing size of the base population, and discussions are ongoing to deliver improved leisure and community facilities within the town. The MoD have recently re-opened a refurbished community centre within Helensburgh.



On-base continuing developments are occurring to facilitate the increased activity required. The new [Submarine Training Facility](#) was granted consent during the year and is now on site, and preparations are underway for a new multi-storey car park.

Part 2: Supporting Evidence & Performance Markers

Wherever possible weblinks have been provided within the body text of the report.

This report was compiled drawing on evidence from a variety of sources including:

- [Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan 2013-2023](#)
- [Argyll and Bute - Economic Development Action Plan 2016 - 2021](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2015](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2 Development Plan Scheme Feb 2019](#)
- [Argyll and Bute - Main Issues Report 2017](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Council Website](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Council Enforcement & Monitoring Charter 2018](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Houses in Multiple Occupation Technical Working Note 2019](#)
- [Argyll and Bute Council PPF 2017/18](#)
- Argyll and Bute Council, PPSL Committee Minutes
- [Argyll and Bute Council Scheme of Administration and Delegation](#)
- Argyll and Bute Council, Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services Service Plan
- A range of committee reports
- Customer feedback
- Reports from IDOX UNiform

Further Background Information on Case Study Submissions:

Case Study 1: APAGs

- https://www.eas.org.uk/en/home-energy-efficiency-programmes-for-scotland-heeps_50558/
- http://www.underoneroof.scot/articles/1542/Private_Landlord_Seminar_Resources/The_HEEPS_Equity_Loan_Scheme

Case Study 2: The Hill House: The Big Box Project

- <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/the-hill-house/highlights/hill-house-box#>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-48461850>
- <https://www.carmodygroarke.com/hill-house/>

Case Study 3: The Winter Gardens Discovery Centre

- <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/news/2019/mar/rothesay-winter-gardens-discovery-centre-reopens-after-renovation-works>
- <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/highlands/1690914/rothesay-gardens-centre-reopens-after-500k-renovations/>

Case Study 4: Customer Service Excellence Standard

- <http://www.customerserviceexcellence.uk.com/>
- https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/planning_regulatory_cse_accreditation_2018.pdf

Case Study 5: Dunbeg Masterplan Update

- https://www.urbanrealm.com/news/6598/Elder_%26_Cannon_head_Dunbeg_corridor_masterplan.html
- <https://publicaccess.argyll-bute.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=OI9YRJCH0FM00>
- <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s129350/18-00375-PP%20V4%20Dunbeg.pdf>
- <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/news/2018/jan/first-phase-dunbeg-masterplan-set-begin>
- <https://www.scottishconstructionnow.com/article/green-light-for-300-affordable-homes-in-dunbeg>

Case Study 6: Adapt Northern Heritage Project

- <http://adaptnorthernheritage.interreg-npa.eu/>
- https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/sites/default/files/inveraray_caa_august_2017.pdf
- <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/icars/guide-homeowners-inveraray>

Case Study 7: Examples of High Quality Design

- <https://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk/details/928679>
- <http://l-m-a.co.uk/work/play/premier-inn-oban/>
- <https://www.hfm.co.uk/projects/queens-hall-dunoon/>
- <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/dunoon-regeneration-queens-hall-project>
- <https://hudsonarchitects.co.uk/our-work/the-machrie-hotel-1>

Case Study 8: Costing the Planning Service in Scotland

- <https://hopsotland.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/hops-costing-the-planning-service-action-report-220219.pdf>
- <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s138769/Cost%20of%20Planning%202018%20Covering%20Report%20v%203.1%20PPSL%20finalised%20230519.pdf>

Case Study 9: Elected Member Training

- <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s125558/Member%20Training%20Report.pdf>
- <https://www.gov.scot/publications/places-people-planning-consultation-future-scottish-planning-system/>

Case Study Topics	Issue covered by Case Study No.	Case Study Topics	Issue covered by Case Study No.
Design	2, 5, 7	Interdisciplinary Working	1
Conservation	2, 3, 6, 7	Collaborative Working	5, 6, 10
Regeneration	1, 3, 7	Community Engagement	4
Environment	6	Placemaking	5, 7
Greenspace		Charrettes	
Town Centres	7	Place Standard	
Masterplanning	5	Performance Monitoring	8
LDP & Supplementary Guidance		Process Improvement	8
Housing Supply	10	Project Management	
Affordable Housing	5, 10	Skills Sharing	9
Economic Development		Staff Training	9
Enforcement		Online Systems	
Development Management Processes		Transport	
Planning Applications	2, 3, 5, 7	Active Travel	
Other: please note:			

PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2018/19

	PERFORMANCE MARKER	EVIDENCE / COMMENTS
1.	Decision-making: Authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types.	Part 4—Table B & Part 5—Table A. Contextual commentary setting out factors affecting performance on decision-making are set out under Part 5 C.
2.	Project management: Offer of processing agreements (or other agreed project plan) made to prospective applicants in all major applications <u>and</u> availability publicised on planning authority website.	Part 1—1.3.11 Processing Agreements for major and 'locally significant' developments are promoted through pre-application discussion, user forums and online. Argyll and Bute Council - Processing Agreements
3.	Early Collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability and promotion of pre-application discussion for all prospective applications. • Clear and proportionate requests for supporting information. 	Part 1—1.2.12 Case Studies 1, 2, 3, 7 The Development Management Service provides a <u>pre-application advice service</u> . This is promoted on the Council website, through user forums, and by officers when engaged by prospective applicants. Pre-application assessment of proposals seeks to identify all relevant issues which will be material to the determination of a subsequent application, and will involve engagement with consultees where appropriate. The report template issued to applicants was revised during 17/18 to include a dedicated section identifying the requirement for supporting information - this list is populated following a review of relevant planning constraints and the advice of consultees (including other Council Services) to ensure that any request for further information is specific and proportionate to the development proposed. Where applicants do not engage at pre-application stage a similar approach is undertaken to identify issues and any requirement for further information at an early stage in the handling of the application. Applications are validated against the <u>National Validation Standard</u> published by HoPS to ensure that submissions and requirements for supporting information are quality checked on a consistent basis. This document is also promoted and published on the Council website to assist applicants in the preparation of their application.
4.	Legal agreements: Conclude (or reconsider) applications within 6 months of 'resolving to grant'.	Part 1—1.3.13 & Part 5—Table A Applications subject to legal agreements were determined with an average time period of less than 6 months during 2018/19 with improved performance on the previous reporting period. Applications requiring a legal agreement are reviewed regularly and are highlighted on officers outstanding items case lists.

	PERFORMANCE MARKER	EVIDENCE / COMMENTS
5.	Enforcement charter: updated / republished.	Planning Enforcement and Monitoring Charter was been reviewed and updated in March 2018 to reflect revised service arrangements and subsequently adopted by the Council in June 2018. Planning Enforcement and Monitoring Charter 2018
6.	Continuous improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; Progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report. 	Part 4—Tables A, B, C and Context D Part 3 details previous and committed Service Improvements. Contextual commentary on delivery/identification of improvements is included within: Part 1—1.1.4, 1.2.4, 1.2.15,1.4.10, 1.3.9, 1.3.11, 1.3.13, 1.3.14, 1.4.15, Case Study 4, Part 5 Table A
7.	Local Development Plan: Less than 5 years from adoption.	The Local Development Plan was adopted in 2015. Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan 2015
8.	Development plan scheme: Demonstrates next LDP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On course for adoption within 5 year cycle. Project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale. 	LDP2 is project planned with careful management and reporting of any adjustments, and is currently scheduled for adoption in early 2021. Argyll and Bute Local Development Plan Scheme 2019
9.	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation:	During 2016 and 2017 all Members were engaged in the pre-MIR process through a series of seminars and workshops including Senior Management, which considered potential strategic options and identified and agreed Main Issues which would be presented in the MIR . Engagement has been ongoing in 2018/19 with Member and Senior Management seminars and business days considering potential allocations and content of draft LDP2.
10.	Cross sector stakeholders, including industry, Agencies and Scottish Government, engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation.	The Council chose to hold a call for sites exercise over a six month period in an attempt to engage all developers, landowners and other stakeholders pre-MIR. It consulted widely on the results of this exercise including with Key Agencies and Scottish Government. The Council has used the Place Standard Tool with the assistance of Scottish Government and collaboratively with Community Planning Partners as part of the pre-MIR consultation and engagement process and particularly targeting hard to reach groups.

	PERFORMANCE MARKER	EVIDENCE / COMMENTS
11.	Production of regular and proportionate policy, advice, for example through supplementary guidance, on information required to support applications.	<p>The Council website provides applicants with information that they need to consider before making an application.</p> <p>Argyll and Bute - Planning Application Info</p> <p>The Central Validation Team contributed to the development of and have subsequently adopted the National Validation Standard published by HoPS in 2017.</p> <p>HoPS National Validation Standard</p> <p>Technical Working Notes relating to Houses in Multiple Occupation, covering both planning and licensing regimes, were developed during 2018/19.</p> <p>Argyll and Bute Houses in Multiple Occupation Technical Working Note 2019</p>
12.	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined up services; single contact; joint pre-application advice.)	Part 1—1.1.5, 1.2.1, 1.2.4, 1.2.5, 1.2.6, 1.2.9, 1.2.10, 1.2.11, 1.2.13, 1.2.14, 1.3.5, 1.3.6, 1.3.7, 1.4.3, 1.4.5, 1.4.6, 1.4.9, 1.4.12, 1.4.16, & Case Studies 1, 3, 4, 5 & 9
13.	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities.	Part 1—1.3.8, 1.4.2, 1.4.7, 1.4.8, 1.4.11 & Case Studies 6, 8 & 10
14.	Stalled sites / legacy cases: Conclusion / withdrawal of planning applications more than one year old.	<p>Part 1—1.3.13, & Part 4—Table B.</p> <p>During 2018/19 16 legacy cases were cleared. At 31st March 2018 there were 34 'live' legacy applications remaining to be concluded.</p>
15.	Developer contributions: Clear expectations set out in development plan and in pre-application discussions.	<p>The adopted Local Development Plan sets out expectations in respect of Developer Contributions for affordable housing and green / play space and is supported by Supplementary Guidance which sets out that the Council will seek appropriate elements of planning gain proportionate to the scale, nature, impact and planning purposes associated with the development.</p> <p>Where Developer Contributions are required these will be flagged up at pre-application stage where applicable, or where no pre-application engagement is sought then officers will seek to make the developer aware of the requirement and justification for any developer contribution as soon as such a requirement is identified in the assessment process.</p> <p>The Council is continuing to review its approach to Developer Contributions in the production of LDP 2 and included consultation during 2017/18 on this issue within the Main Issues Report (Q11).</p>

Part 3: Service Improvements

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS TO BE DELIVERED IN 2019/20

COMMITTED SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS
1. Retain Customer Service Excellence (annual review required to retain award)
2. Deliver 2 pilot Simplified Planning Zones
3. Prepare 2 Conservation Area Appraisals
4. Engagement with regular customers and promotion of National Validation Standards to improve proportion of applications valid upon receipt.
5. Review and Update Customer Charters
6. Production of Hill Tracks Guidance
7. Implement improved workflow and performance management systems within the Development Management Service.
8. Run Sustainable Design Awards
9. Deliver LDP 2

DELIVERY ON SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS ACTIONS FOR 2018/19

SERVICE IMPROVEMENT	STATUS
1. Attain Customer Service Excellence	Complete
2. Deliver 2 pilot Simplified Planning Zones	Ongoing
3. Prepare 2 Conservation Area Appraisals	Complete
4. Engagement with regular customers and promotion of National Validation Standards to improve proportion of applications valid upon receipt.	Ongoing
5. Review and Update Customer Charters	Ongoing
6. Production of Hill Tracks Guidance	Ongoing
7. Improve Planning Application Timescales at Consideration Stage - Implement Project Management Approach for 'Major' and 'Locally Significant' developments and encourage increased use of Processing Agreements.	Complete / Ongoing
8. Run Sustainable Design Awards	Ongoing
9. Deliver improvements to the reliability of the Public Access system.	Complete

Part 4: National Headline Indicators (NHI's) 2018/19

A: KEY OUTCOMES—DEVELOPMENT PLANNING	2018/19	2017/18
Local and Strategic Development Planning		
Age of local / strategic development plan(s) at end of reporting period. <i>Requirement: less than 5 years.</i>	4 years	3 years
Will the local / strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	No	Yes
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	Yes	No
Were development plan scheme engagement / consultation commitments met during the year?	Yes	Yes
Effective Housing Land Supply		
Established housing land supply ¹	5387units	5471 units
5-year effective housing land supply ¹	3742 units	3808 units
5-year effective land supply total capacity ¹	5106 units	4419 units
5-year housing supply target ¹	3725 units	3725 units
5-year effective housing land supply (<i>to one decimal place</i>) ¹	5.0 years	5.1 years
Housing approvals	909 units	539 units
Housing completions over the last 5 years	1080 units	1088 units
Marketable employment land supply	88.7 ha	88.7 ha
Employment land take-up during the reporting period	0 ha ²	0 ha
B: KEY OUTCOMES—DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT		
Project Planning		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	14.7% (191)	17.7% (229)
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	0.8% (1)	0%
Decision Making		
Application approval rate	97.4%	97.6%
Delegation rate	97.7%	98.1%
Validation	23.4%	25.4% ³
Decision-making Timescales		
Major Developments	28.3 weeks ⁴	37.9 weeks
Local Developments (non-householder)	10.8 weeks	12.6 weeks
Householder Developments	7.1 weeks	7.9 weeks
Legacy Cases		
Number cleared during reporting period	16	20
Number remaining	34	23

C: KEY OUTCOMES—ENFORCEMENT	2018/19	2017/18
Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed	9 months	34 months ⁵
Complaints lodged and investigated	248	241
Breaches identified - no further action taken	123	139
Cases Closed	238	246
Notices served	48	36
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

D: NHI KEY OUTCOMES COMMENTARY:

1. Figures derived from finalised HLA 2018 as the most up to date audit available.
2. It is noted that this NHI is not wholly reflective of the uptake of employment land within Argyll and Bute where the rural nature of the Council area and local economy stimulates demand for development in locations that are not readily addressed through take up of allocated land. The Council's settlement strategy seeks to promote sustainable economic development and focuses allocation of employment land in and around existing key settlements where there is demand of employment, existing housing provision and infrastructure to support new development. The LDP does however recognise that the requirements of traditional rural industries, particularly those which are island based including the whisky industry and aquaculture, will give rise to occasional demand for development in countryside locations - our settlement strategy is sufficiently flexible to accommodate this demand as is evidenced in Case Study 5 but also means that take up of land for employment purposes is not wholly captured in the NHIs.
3. It is noted that the Council adopted the [National Validation Standard](#) published by HOPS during 2017/18.
4. It is noted that the data subset for 'major' applications is small and easily skewed. Contextual commentary on other factors affecting decision-making timescales are set out within Part 5 C of the report.
5. It is noted that during 2017/18 the Enforcement Service staff has been reduced by a further 1fte, previously 1fte was also deleted in 2016/17. The Council delayed the planned review of the Enforcement Charter in FQ1 2018 in order to review the effectiveness of revised service delivery arrangements before finalising revised standards for handling of enforcement matters. The Enforcement Charter was reviewed and updated in March 2018 and formally adopted by the Council in June 2018.

Part 5: Official Statistics

A: DECISION-MAKING TIMESCALES (based on 'all applications' timescales)						
Timescales	2018-19		2018-19		2017-18	
	No of Cases (%)		Weeks		Weeks	
Overall						
Major developments	7		28.3		35.7	
Local developments (non-householder)	660		10.8		12.6	
• Local: less than 2 months	378 (57.3%)		6.8		6.8	
• Local: more than 2 months	282 (42.7%)		16.1		19.5	
Householder developments	355		7.1		7.9	
• Local: less than 2 months	284 (80.0%)		6.0		6.3	
• Local: more than 2 months	71 (20.0%)		11.5		15.3	
Housing Developments						
Major	2		18.1		33.4	
Local housing developments	339		10.9		13.6	
• Local: less than 2 months	181 (53.4%)		6.9		7.0	
• Local: more than 2 months	158 (46.6%)		15.4		20.2	
Business and Industry						
Major	1		7.3		32.7	
Local business and industry developments	22		10.0		12.1	
• Local: less than 2 months	14 (63.6%)		6.5		6.9	
• Local: more than 2 months	8 (36.4%)		16.0		18.0	
EIA Developments						
EIA Developments	3		9.3		-	
Other Consents	251		6.5		8.4	
Planning / Legal Agreements						
• Major: average time	0		-		-	
• Local: average time	6		18.5		25.9	
B: DECISION-MAKING: LOCAL REVIEWS AND APPEALS						
Type	Total Number of Decisions	Original Decision Upheld				
		2018-19		2017-18		
		No.	%	No.	%	
Local reviews	10	6	60.0	4	40.0	
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	5	2	40.0	4	57.1	

C: Context

Development Management Service:

Argyll and Bute Council's Development Management Service continues to process planning applications with the aspiration to deliver positive outcomes in all cases. This approach is reflected in our high approval rates but is often achieved by providing applicants with additional time beyond prescribed statutory determination periods where this is required to negotiate and address resolvable deficiencies in their submissions. Whilst it is recognised that this approach can have a negative impact upon performance in decision-making time periods it is contended that this is outweighed by the economic benefits of delivering on improved development proposals which might not otherwise have obtained permission had the Council sought to determine within prescribed statutory time periods; additionally resources required to handle amended applications, appeal and LRB work is minimised.

Overall 2018/19 has proven to be a year of improved performance for the Development Management Service and were reflective of increased capacity within the team compared to the previous reporting period where the service operated with a number of vacant professional positions for an extended period of time in order to minimise budget shortfalls arising from lower than expected planning fee income. Whilst planning fee income returned to expected levels during 2018/19 the Development Management Service required to deliver substantial budget savings of £169k and have undergone a Service Redesign which has rationalised the area management structure in order to deliver a further saving of £105k during 2019/20.

An improved staffing situation has been integral to the delivery of improved time periods for determination of planning applications in 2018/19 with there being a notable jump in performance across all categories of Major, Local and Householder developments.

Development Policy Service:

Production of LDP2 has been re-scheduled during the first six months of 2019. More time has been allocated for production of the Proposed PLDP2 in order to ensure greater confidence in the deliverability of housing land supply; allow for an enhanced detailed engagement with members and senior management in the development of the PLDP; and to schedule a PLDP consultation which avoids the summer months and therefore enhances the opportunities for maximising public engagement. The PLDP2 adoption is planned for early 2021. Re-scheduling of the PLDP2 has been reported through an agreed exception reporting system within the Council and to senior members. The 2019 Development Plan scheme was adjusted accordingly.

Part 6: Workforce Information (at 31.03.19)

	Tier 1 <i>Chief Executive</i>	Tier 2 <i>Director</i>	Tier 3 <i>Head of Service</i>	Tier 4 <i>Manager</i>
Head of Planning Service			☑	

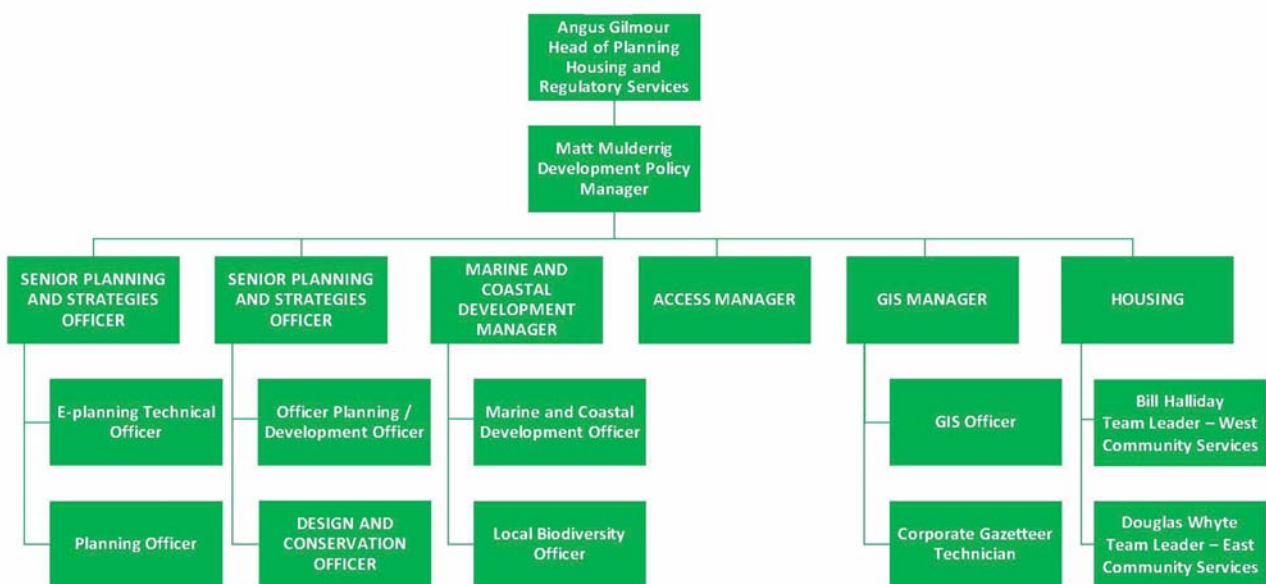
RTPI Qualified Staff	Number	Staff Age Profile	Number
Development Management	15	Under 30	1
Development Policy	4	30 - 39	7
Enforcement	2	40 - 49	10
Other	1	50 and over	21

Planning Services sit within the Development and Infrastructure Services Department, and within the portfolio of the Head of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services.

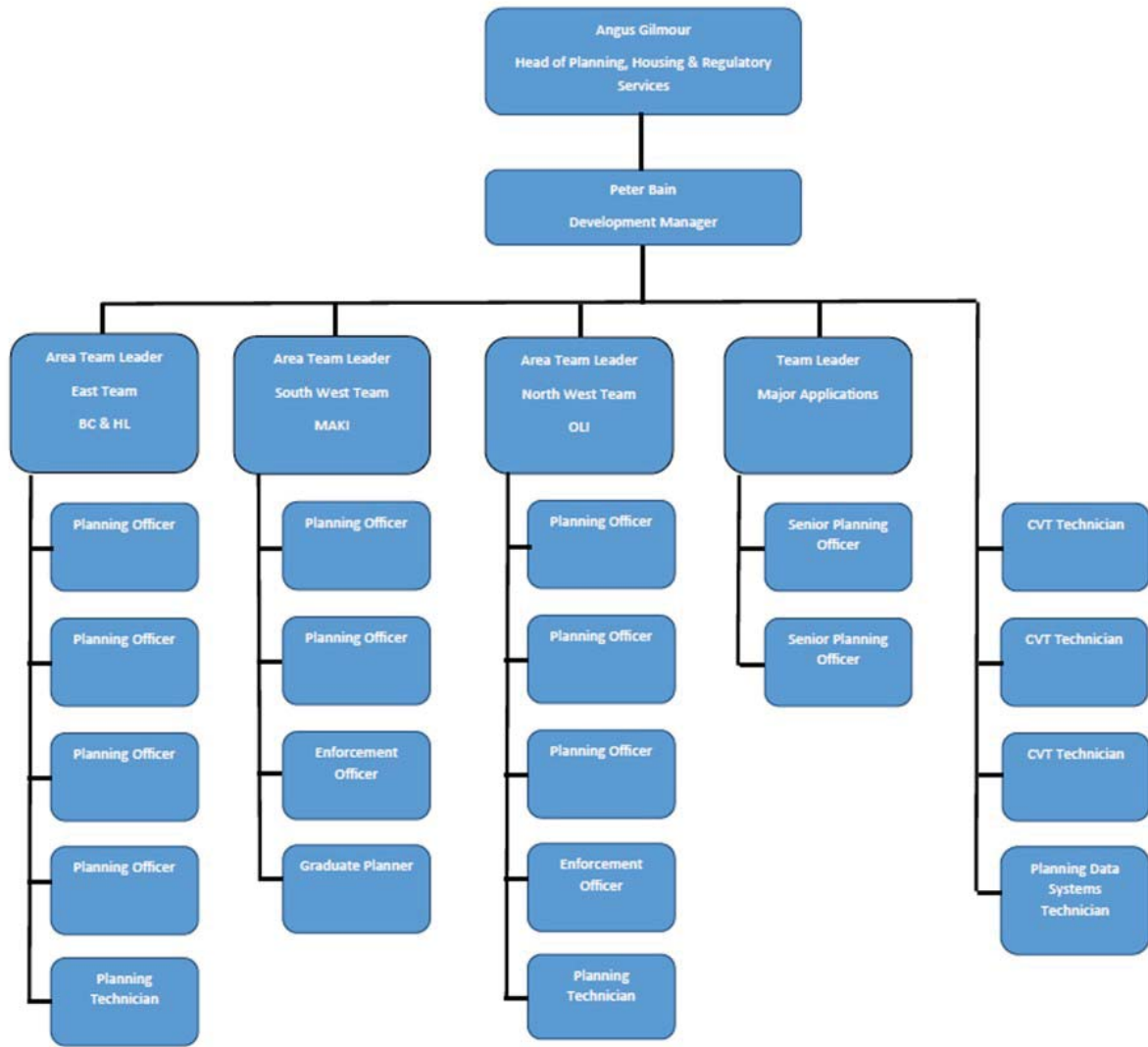
The service structure of the key teams which deliver the planning function are set out below, and on the following page.

Staff Structure diagrams as at 31.03.19

Development Policy & Housing



Development Management



Part 7 : Planning Committee Information

Committees & Site Visits	Number
Full Council Meetings	8
Planning Committees	14
Area Committees	20
Local Review Body	23
LRB Site Visits	1



Argyll and Bute Council
Development and Infrastructure Services
Director: Pippa Milne
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Chomhairle Earra-Ghàidheal is Bhòid



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