

Planning Performance Framework 2019/20

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report contains recent feedback from the Scottish Government in relation to our Planning Performance Framework (PPF). **Appendix A.**
- 1.2 Our PPF is the principal performance measure for Planning Services (*Development Management and Development Policy – within Planning and Regulatory Services*) and is submitted to the Scottish Government annually for scrutiny and scoring. The Council's 2019/20 PPF was submitted in July 2020 and was independently reviewed by the Scottish Government. A copy of the submitted document was submitted to the PPSL for noting at their meeting of 19th August 2020.
- 1.3 Overall the feedback report is considered to be a highly positive response registering ten 'green', three 'amber' and no 'red' outcomes across the thirteen performance indicators assessed.
- 1.4 The positive feedback response supports our 'open for business' ethos and is warmly welcomed in the current economic climate. Whilst the Scottish Government have not identified any improvement actions for ABC this year, the service must not be complacent with the focus being year on year continuous improvement. The PPF for 2020/21 is due to be submitted in July 2021.
- 1.5 It is recommended that the Committee:-
- (a) Agree the content of the report and publicise (*press, Twitter, Facebook and website release*) the positive feedback from the Scottish Government.

Planning Performance Framework 2019/20

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report contains recent feedback from the Scottish Government in relation to our Planning Performance Framework (PPF). **Appendix A.** The Executive Summary (above) provides further background information.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-
- (a) Agree the content of report and publicise (*press, Twitter, Facebook and website release*) the positive feedback from the Scottish Government.

4.0 DETAIL

What is the Planning Performance Framework?

- 4.1 This was Planning Services 9th Annual Planning Performance Framework (PPF) and is our 'balance scorecard' of performance which all Local Authorities must submit to the Scottish Government for review and scrutiny.
- 4.2 The PPF aims to be a holistic and easy read document that encapsulates statistical performance indicators as well as more qualitative information and case studies of good practice for the previous financial year. The basic structure of the document is stipulated by the Scottish Government but the character, tone, style and content is all shaped by the individual Authority. The Scottish Government has suggested that Authorities use the PPF as more than a means of simply reporting performance but utilise the document as an opportunity to promote their service and local area, to incorporate customer feedback and to provide updated narrative on case study items from previous years. The PPF seeks to focus on the Council being 'open for business' and the positive economic contribution that Planning Services have made within Argyll and Bute. The PPF presents case studies and examples of good practice which demonstrates the ability of the Service to facilitate the delivery of high quality development on the ground, to provide certainty to developers and investors, to consult and engage with customers effectively and to ensure that appropriate management and service delivery structures are in place to work efficiently.

Review and Feedback

- 4.3 The review of the PPF was carried out by the Scottish Government and considered by the Minister for Local Government and Housing – Kevin Stewart MSP.
- 4.4 Within our PPF We managed to showcase a variety of good quality projects and initiatives that demonstrate our ‘open for business’ and service improvement ethos.
- 4.5 The covering letter and feedback from Kevin Stewart MSP is contained in full at **Appendix A**, however some pertinent points are highlighted below:-
- **PM 1 Decision Making (Green):** This marker was previously identified as Green in 2018/19. Performance in the determination of planning applications has not been significantly affected by the Coronavirus pandemic during the reporting period; however the effects of lockdown and service disruption will be evident in performance reported for 2020/21. During the 2019/20 reporting period performance improved from the previous reporting period on two of the three performance markers with Local and Householder developments being processed on average faster than the National average. Performance on the determination of Major applications was decreased from the previous reporting period but was only 0.4 weeks longer than the National average.
 - **PM 4 Legal Agreements (Green):** This marker was previously identified as Green in 2018/19. The feedback commentary notes that the time period for handling applications subject to legal agreements was faster than the previous reporting period and faster than the National average.
 - **PM 6 Continuous Improvement (Amber):** This marker was previously identified as Amber in the previous two reporting periods. The Planning Service received positive feedback for the wide range of service improvements delivered during 2019/20, these are detailed in Part 3 of the PPF and include Customer Service Excellence status, completion of 2 Conservation Area Appraisals, and update of the Enforcement Charter. The feedback acknowledges that a number of service improvements have been put on hold as a result of Covid-19 and Scottish Government review of Permitted Development Rights. It was also noted that the preparation of LDP2 progressed to plan during the reporting period. The performance marker was however graded as an ‘Amber’ on the basis that the number of legacy cases (as detailed in PM 14 below) was not improved from the last reporting period, that determination of Major Applications slipped behind the National Average, and that the next LDP will not be delivered within the required 5 year timescale.
 - **PM 8 Development Plan Scheme (Amber):** This marker was previously identified as Amber in 2018/19. Whilst confirmation that the LDP will not be replaced within the 5 year cycle flags as Red, this is balanced against the fact that the Council had recognised that the project was behind time within an updated Development Plan Scheme and amended the project plan for delivery accordingly.
 - **PM 14 Stalled Sites / Legacy Cases (Amber):** This marker was previously identified as Amber in 2018/19. The feedback commentary identifies that whilst 13 legacy cases were cleared during the reporting period 13 new cases reached legacy status during the same time period with a total of 34 undetermined applications as of 31st March 2020.

Focus on Performance / Resources / Impact of Covid-19

- 4.6 The cover letter from the Minister for Local Government and Housing, Kevin Stewart MSP has taken the opportunity to thank the Council and its staff “for enabling planning services to continue to operate during the Covid-19 pandemic”, and acknowledges the role of Planning in Scotland’s green recovery.
- 4.7 It is highlighted that the 2019-20 PPF reporting period has seen progress made Nationally by Scotland’s planning authorities with an overall increase in the number of green ratings and reduction in red ratings awarded this year.
- 4.8 The Minister also reaffirms that the Scottish Government remain committed to ensuring that planning authorities are properly resourced and confirms that the stalled workstream looking at Planning Performance and Fees will be recommenced at an appropriate time.
- 4.9 Finally, it is recognised that the impact of Covid-19 upon service delivery and performance will be more evident in the next PPF reporting period and commitment has been provided that authorities will not be unfairly criticised for circumstances outwith their control; and that it is expected that PPF 10 will “provide an opportunity to recognise the vital actions taken by planning authorities to maintain the planning system and its contribution to recovery”.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The 2019/20 PPF demonstrates strong performance against National statistics and agreed PPF Performance Markers and showcases a number of our high quality projects and outcomes.
- 5.2 Feedback from the Scottish Government has been highly positive and has confirmed that the Planning Service has an ‘open for business’ approach to delivering sustainable economic growth throughout Argyll and Bute.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Policy:** None
- 6.2 **Financial:** None
- 6.3 **Legal:** None
- 6.4 **HR :** None
- 6.5 **Fairer Scotland Duty:**

6.5.1 **Equalities Protected Characteristics:** None

6.5.2 **Socio-Economic Duty:** None

6.5.3 **Islands:** None

6.6 **Risk:** Reputational of being identified as a poor performing authority if next year's PPF performance is substandard.

6.7 **Customer Service:** The PPF report provides Customers with an overview of the statistical and qualitative performance of the Council as the planning authority in a format that can be benchmarked with other authorities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Planning Performance Framework 2019/20 Feedback