

Appendix A

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agus Beartas Còimhearsnachd
Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community
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Pippa Milne
Chief Executive
Argyll and Bute Council

22 December 2022

Dear Pippa Milne

I am pleased to enclose feedback on your authority's eleventh Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report, for the period April 2021 to March 2022.

The reporting period which these reports cover has continued to present challenges for people working within planning, in the development sector and across Scotland's communities.

Ensuring the system is appropriately resourced is key to improving the performance of planning, which is why in April I implemented the biggest change to planning fees in 8 years, with fees for most types of development increasing by between 25% and 50%. At the time I said I would expect to see this additional money invested in delivering improvements in Planning Services. It is too early to know whether that has occurred, however, I have heard positive feedback from some authorities who have managed to recruit or retain staff as a result of the additional income. I also committed to working with Heads of Planning and COSLA to identify how we could move planning fees closer to covering the full cost of their determination. That work is ongoing and I expect to receive some conclusions/recommendations early in the new year.

I am also encouraged to see the fees for applications made under the Electricity Act also increasing on 13th December and the voluntary contribution of 50% of the fee, for certain types of application, being passed to planning authorities being maintained.

However, I recognise that resourcing is about more than just money and having a pipeline of knowledgeable and skilled planners is essential to delivering on our ambitions set out in NPF4. This is why I supported the RTP1 and Heads of Planning Scotland's Future Planners Project which looked at proposals to help increase the numbers of people entering the planning profession. We recognise the importance of delivering on this vision and the resourcing and skills challenges for planning authorities, which we are taking steps to address.

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Work is also progressing on

- the introduction of mandatory training for elected members in the planning system;
- the implementation of statutory annual reports by planning authorities; and
- the appointment of a Planning Improvement Coordinator for Scotland.

Turning to the 2021-22 PPF reporting year, although, as expected, there have been some minor changes overall in the markings awarded, the figures indicate that performance has remained relatively stable. This is a testament to the hard work and flexibility of authorities during challenging times and I believe that overall, good progress continues to be made by Scotland's planning authorities.

If you would like to discuss any of the markings awarded below, please email chief.planner@gov.scot and a member of the team will be happy to discuss these with you.



TOM ARTHUR

CC: Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development and Strategic Transportation

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PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2021-22

Name of planning authority: **Argyll & Bute Council**

The High Level Group on Performance agreed a set of performance markers. We have assessed your report against those markers to give an indication of priority areas for improvement action. The high level group will monitor and evaluate how the key markers have been reported and the value which they have added.

The Red, Amber, Green ratings are based on the evidence provided within the PPF reports. Where no information or insufficient evidence has been provided, a 'red' marking has been allocated.

No.	Performance Marker	RAG rating	Comments
1	Decision-making: continuous reduction of average timescales for all development categories [Q1 - Q4]	Red	<p>Major Applications Your timescales of 40.8 weeks are slower than the previous year but faster than the Scottish average of 44.6 weeks. RAG = Amber</p> <p>Local (Non-Householder) Applications Your timescales of 13.6 weeks are slower than the previous year and slower than the Scottish average of 13.5 weeks. RAG = Red</p> <p>Householder Applications Your timescales of 10.3 weeks are slower than the previous year and the Scottish average of 8.7 weeks. RAG = Red</p> <p>Overall RAG = Red</p>
2	<p>Processing agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and availability publicised on website 	Green	<p>You encourage processing agreements to applicants for all major and locally significant developments through pre-application discussions, user forums and online. RAG = Green</p> <p>Processing agreement information is available through your website. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>
3	<p>Early collaboration with applicants and consultees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications; and clear and proportionate requests for supporting information 	Green	<p>You provide a pre-application advice service which is promoted through the website, user forums and by staff engaging with prospective applicants. RAG = Green</p> <p>You have a proportionate and clear process for requesting supporting information including engaging with consultees and other council services to identify issues/constraints prior to the application being submitted. During the 2021/22 reporting period you updated and published guidance on the submission and processing of applications under S64 of the planning act. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>

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4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting period)	Amber	Your average timescales of 33.6 weeks for applications with legal agreements is slower than last year and slightly slower than the Scottish average of 33.2 weeks. You state that applications which are subject to a legal agreement are regularly reviewed to ensure progress and completion within 6 months.
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published within last 2 years	Green	Your enforcement charter was reviewed and updated in March 2022.
6	Continuous improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report 	Amber	Out of 12 service improvement commitments, 1 was delivered, 6 are progressing, 4 are on hold and 1 has been discontinued. You have identified a good range of further commitments for the coming year.
7	Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption	Red	Your development plan was more than 5 years old at the time of reporting (adopted in 2015).
8	Development plan scheme – next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale 	Amber	The LDP2 was expected to be completed in 2022 according to the 20/21 reporting period. The LDP2 is currently at Examination Stage and scheduled for adoption in 2023.
9 & 10	LDP Engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stakeholders including Elected Members, industry, agencies, the public and Scottish Government are engaged appropriately through all key stages of development plan preparation. 	N/A	
11	Policy Advice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of relevant and up to date policy advice 	Green	Relevant supplementary guidance is reviewed and updated regularly including publishing guidance on S64 submissions and Local Place Plans during 2021/2022 reporting period.
12	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact arrangements; joint pre-application advice)	Green	A number of your case studies demonstrate your approach to corporate working such as the Shopfront Improvement Scheme, Dunbeg Masterplan and CCDC Masterplan for Scalasaig.
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Green	Your PPF report, including the case studies, set out a number of examples of benchmarking and knowledge sharing. Planning officers attend a number of forums, such as HopS, the LA Aquaculture Forum, and Clyde Marine Planning Partnership. Officers have engaged with other rural authorities to review and update procedures for handling prior notification/approval submissions.
14	Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	Amber	You have cleared 27 cases during the reporting year which is an increase from last year however, 65 cases remain which is an increase from 57. This is an increase on the number which remained at the end of last year.

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15	<p>Developer contributions: clear and proportionate expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); and • in pre-application discussions 	Green	<p>Your LDP, supported by supplementary guidance, sets out expectations for developer contributions and sets out how contributions are proportionate to the scale, nature and impact of the proposed development.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p> <p>Expectations for developer contributions are established in pre-application discussions or where no pre-application engagement is sought then established during the assessment process.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>
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ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
Performance against Key Markers

Marker		13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22
1	Decision making timescales									
2	Processing agreements									
3	Early collaboration									
4	Legal agreements									
5	Enforcement charter									
6	Continuous improvement									
7	Local development plan									
8	Development plan scheme									
9 & 10	LDP Early Engagement	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
11	Regular and proportionate advice to support applications									
12	Corporate working across services									
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge									
14	Stalled sites/legacy cases									
15	Developer contributions									

Overall Markings (total numbers for red, amber and green)

	Green	Amber	Red
2013-14	8	5	0
2014-15	11	2	0
2015-16	10	3	0
2016-17	11	3	1
2017-18	11	3	1
2018-19	10	3	0
2019-20	10	3	0
2020-21	8	2	3
2021-22	7	4	1

Decision Making Timescales (weeks)

	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	2021-22 Scottish Average
Major Development	59.1	14.1	23.3	22.1	37.9	28.3	33.9	40.4	40.8	44.6
Local (Non-Householder) Development	13.1	10.8	10.3	12.4	12.6	10.8	10.2	12.5	13.6	13.5
Householder Development	7.2	6.9	7.0	7.5	7.9	7.1	7.2	9.1	10.3	8.7

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