

Minister for Local Government Empowerment and  
Planning  
Ministear airson Cumhachdachadh is Dealbhachadh  
Riaghaltas Ionadail  
Joe FitzPatrick MSP  
Joe Mac Giolla Phádraig BPA



Pippa Milne  
Chief Executive  
Argyll and Bute Council

20 October 2023

Dear Pippa Milne,

I am pleased to enclose feedback on your authority's twelfth Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report, for the period April 2022 to March 2023.

Across the country, performance against the key markers continues to be stable and there has been little variation in the overall total of green, amber and red markings awarded this reporting period compared with previous periods. It is clear that each of you continue to put in considerable effort to ensuring our planning system continues to run efficiently. I have been particularly pleased to see there has been a marked improvement on speed of determination for major applications across some authorities.

Resourcing remains a key priority which I will continue to discuss with the High Level Group on Planning Performance, which I jointly chair with COSLA. I also have asked officials to bring different parties together to talk about resourcing in the autumn, to identify practical solutions. We need options that work for all sectors, and I think it would be really beneficial to discuss a variety of issues including full cost recovery, the local setting of fees, charges for additional services and approaches which could enable authorities to access the skills and expertise at the time they require.

Finally, I am delighted that we have recently announced the appointment of the National Planning Improvement Champion (NPIC), Craig McLaren, who took up this new post in early September. Craig will play a pivotal role in supporting improvement and will also be looking at how we can improve the way we measure and assess the performance of the planning system in the future.

If you would like to discuss any of the markings awarded below, please contact us at [chief.planner@gov.scot](mailto:chief.planner@gov.scot) and a member of the team will be happy to discuss them with you.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**  
We invest in people Silver



Joe Fitzpatrick

**JOE FITZPATRICK**

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

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™**  
We invest in people Silver



## PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2022-23

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	<b>Decision-making:</b> continuous reduction of average timescales for all development categories [Q1 - Q4]	Red	<p><b>Major Applications</b> Your average timescale is 43.1 weeks which is slower than the previous year and slower than the Scottish average of 39.5 weeks. <b>RAG = Red</b></p> <p><b>Local (Non-Householder) Applications</b> Your average timescale is 16.3 weeks which is slower than the previous year and slower than the Scottish average of 14.4 weeks. <b>RAG = Red</b></p> <p><b>Householder Applications</b> Your average timescale is 12.7 weeks which is slower than the previous year and slower the Scottish average of 8.9 weeks. <b>RAG = Red</b></p> <p><b>Overall RAG = Red</b></p>
2	<p><b>Processing agreements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and</li> <li>availability publicised on website</li> </ul>	Green	<p>You note that you offer processing agreements for all major developments however this was not taken up by any prospective applicant. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p>You provide information on processing agreements on your website and you also highlight this as an option in all your pre-application reports. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p><b>Overall RAG = Green</b></p>
3	<p><b>Early collaboration</b> with applicants and consultees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications; and</li> <li>clear and proportionate requests for supporting information</li> </ul>	Green	<p>You continue to offer a pre-application service and are looking to undertake a review of the service to help provide follow up advice in 2023/24. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p>Your pre-application service provides advice to applicants on the supporting information required in advance of a formal application process. <b>RAG = Green</b></p> <p><b>Overall RAG = Green</b></p>
4	<b>Legal agreements:</b> 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)	Red	<p>Your average timescale for determining applications with legal agreement is 49.5 weeks which is slower than the previous year and slower than the Scottish average of 41.1 weeks.</p> <p>It is noted that you have a process in place to flag up underdetermined applications subject to legal agreements however due to staff resources the availability to undertake this activity has reduced.</p>

	<b>Enforcement charter</b> updated / re-published within last 2 years	Green	Your enforcement charter was reviewed and updated in March 2022 which is within the last 2 years.
6	<b>Continuous improvement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report</li> </ul>	Green	You have completed 2 out of 12 service improvement commitments with a further 7 progressing. You have noted that 2 commitments were put on hold, one due to awaiting Scottish Government review of permitted development rights and the other commitment revised for the 2023/24 reporting period.  You have identified a good range of service commitments for the coming year, with 8 carried over from the previous year and 4 new actions identified.
7	<b>Local development plan</b> less than 5 years since adoption	Red	Your LDP was 8 years old at the end of the reporting period which is more than 5 years since adoption.
8	<b>Development plan scheme</b> – next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale</li> </ul>	Green	Your next LDP is currently at examination and is expected to be adopted in the coming year. This is in line with your most recent development plan scheme adopted in March 2022.
9 & 10	<b>LDP Engagement:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>stakeholders including Elected Members, industry, agencies, the public and Scottish Government are engaged appropriately through all key stages of development plan preparation.</li> </ul>	N/A	Your next LDP is currently at examination stage and therefore no engagement has been carried out during the reporting period.
11	<b>Policy Advice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Production of relevant and up to date policy advice</li> </ul>	Green	You continue to produce up to date policy including updated guidance on both S64 submissions and Local Place Plans. You have also clearly signposted to applicants where to access all relevant policy advice on your website.
12	<b>Corporate working across services</b> to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (for example: protocols; joined-up services; single contact arrangements; joint pre-application advice)	Green	You have highlighted a range of joint up services including the merging of housing with development policy and having the planning service and roads and infrastructure team sit under one executive director. It is also noted that you have set up an internal working group to tackle key housing issues, which includes bringing senior officers from across various council services together.
13	<b>Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge</b> between authorities	Green	You have provided a good example of how you've shared good practice in relation to aquaculture applications by providing assistance to colleagues in other authorities. You also take up the role as Chair in the Local Authority Aquaculture-working group.
14	<b>Stalled sites / legacy cases:</b> conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	Red	You have cleared 18 cases during the reporting period. The number of cases remaining have nearly doubled from 65 last year to 125 this year.
15	<b>Developer contributions:</b> clear and proportionate expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); and</li> <li>in pre-application discussions</li> </ul>	Green	It is noted that expectations for developer contributions are set out in the current LDP which is supported by supplementary guidance. You have also highlighted that the upcoming LDP has a proposed policy relating to an updated approach on developer contributions. <b>RAG = Green</b>  You note that developer contributions requirements are highlighted during the pre-application stage and provide justification to the prospective applicant on reasoning for the requirement. <b>RAG = Green</b> <b>Overall RAG = Green</b>

**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	22-23
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	N/A
11	Regular and proportionate advice to support applications										
12	Corporate working across services										
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge										
14	Stalled sites/legacy cases										
15	Developer contributions										

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

	Red	Amber	Green
<b>2013-14</b>	0	5	8
<b>2014-15</b>	0	2	11
<b>2015-16</b>	0	3	10
<b>2016-17</b>	1	3	11
<b>2017-18</b>	1	3	11
<b>2018-19</b>	0	3	10
<b>2019-20</b>	0	3	10
<b>2020-21</b>	3	2	8
<b>2021-22</b>	1	4	7
<b>2022-23</b>	4	0	10

**Decision Making Timescales (weeks)**

	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	2022-23 Scottish Average
Major Development	59.1	14.1	23.3	22.1	37.9	28.3	33.9	40.4	40.8	43.1	39.5
Local (Non-Householder) Development	13.1	10.8	10.3	12.4	12.6	10.8	10.2	12.5	13.6	16.3	14.4
Householder Development	7.2	6.9	7.0	7.5	7.9	7.1	7.2	9.1	10.3	12.7	8.9