

**“DELIVERING PLANNING REFORM – PLANNING SERVICES IMPROVEMENT
PLAN (2011 – 2012)”**

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Scottish Government’s programme of Delivering Planning Reform includes the commitment that planning authorities will produce a Service Improvement Plan (SIP) on an annual basis. Planning authorities are required to identify areas for service improvement and how best they be tackled. This is Argyll and Bute’s 3rd SIP and will reflect on our performance against our goals over the past 12 months as well as looking forward to 2011 -2012.
- 1.2 This Report presents Argyll and Bute Council’s Improvement Plan for 2011-2012 (see attached appendix) for Members comments prior to submission to the Scottish Government. It should be noted that the Improvement Plan has been the subject of internal consultation with staff and has been informed by stakeholder consultation through our customer satisfaction surveys and user forums.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members approve the Planning Services Improvement Plan for 2011-2012 and agree to its formal submission to the Scottish Government as part of the delivering planning reform agenda.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In October 2008, the Scottish Government announced at a Planning Summit a wide-ranging package of improvements (in a document called Delivering Planning Reform) to make Scotland’s planning system leaner and fitter. The reforms are designed to build on work to improve efficiency and ensure planning is geared towards supporting increased sustainable growth – particularly important in the current economic climate. The reforms have been developed in partnership with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), Agencies (e.g. SNH, SEPA, Scottish Water etc) and the

development industry (e.g. the Scottish Property Federation, Homes for Scotland)

- 3.2 As part of the reform agenda Council's are now required to produce an annual improvement plan which should be reflective of views of stakeholders, elected Members and staff. The document before Members for approval sets out this Council's commitment to continuous improvement in service delivery (particularly in areas such as developing skills, improving performance and outcomes on the ground, effective and efficient business processes, better and more effective public engagement and proportionate and practical planning policies and advice) and our determination to speed up reform of the planning system.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 To unlock planning's potential, positive changes to processes and behaviours will be required of all organisations and individuals that operate and interact with the system.
- 4.2 The foundations of a new planning system were laid in The Planning (Scotland) Act 2006. To support this, a major programme of secondary legislation was enacted in 2009. But legislation alone will not deliver reform and as such this plan for service improvement is seen as a key part of the reform agenda, particularly in the area of more effective and efficient planning processes.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy: None
- 5.2. Financial: None, already covered by existing service plan/budget appeals.
- 5.3 Personnel: Implemented by existing service plan/budget approvals
- 5.4 Equal Opportunity: None
- 5.5. Community: None

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List of Background Papers.

1. Scottish Government – Delivering Planning Reform