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Pippa Milne
Chief Executive
Argyll and Bute Council

17 December 2020

Dear Pippa,

PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK FEEDBACK 2019-20

I am pleased to enclose feedback on your authority's ninth Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report, for the period April 2019 to March 2020.

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your staff for enabling planning services to continue to operate during the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been a difficult year for so many, and our planning system has a vital role to play in Scotland's green recovery. The impact which the pandemic has had, has demonstrated how valuable planning is from ensuring that businesses can operate flexibly to the contribution that it can make to the Places that are so important for our communities in terms of having access to the services they need, to greenspace and other areas where families can walk, wheel and cycle safely.

Turning to the 2019-20 PPF reporting year, I believe that good progress continues to be made by Scotland's planning authorities. Overall, there has been an increase in the number of green ratings awarded this year, with a subsequent reduction in red ratings, however, there remains some variation across some authorities and markers. I have been particularly pleased to see improvements in the speed of determination of major planning applications in some authorities.

When I wrote about performance reporting last year, I indicated that a consultation on Planning Performance and Fees was underway, including preparations for the new performance arrangements being introduced through the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019; with our intention at that time being that the proposed changes would be implemented in Summer 2020. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has required a rethink about the timing and a wider reprioritisation of our work programme.

I would like to reassure you that, while we have paused the changes to the fees and performance legislation, I am committed to ensuring that planning authorities are properly resourced and that planning fee levels are proportionate. We will pick this up again when the timing is more appropriate.



Finally, although the Covid-19 pandemic will have impacted on the tail end of the 2019-20 reporting year, I appreciate the impacts on service delivery will show through more in the 2020-21 reporting year. The Planning statistics for the first 6 months of the reporting year are due to be published in January, which will provide the first indications of how the pandemic has affected the ability of authorities to determine applications. I would like to reassure you that I will consider, in liaison with the High Level Group on Planning Performance, how next year's reports will be assessed, so that authorities are not unfairly criticised due to circumstances outwith their control. It could also provide an opportunity to recognise the vital actions taken by planning authorities to maintain the planning system and its contribution to recovery.

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.

Yours sincerely



KEVIN STEWART

CC: Fergus Murray

PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2019-20

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]	Green	<p>Major Applications Your timescales of 33.9 weeks are slower than the previous year and are slower than the Scottish average of 33.5 weeks. RAG = Red</p> <p>Local (Non-Householder) Applications Your timescales of 10.2 weeks are faster than the previous year are are faster than the Scottish average of 10.9 weeks. RAG = Green</p> <p>Householder Applications Your timescales of 7.2 weeks are slower than the previous year but are faster than the Scottish average of 7.3 weeks and the Statutory timescale. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</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 significant local developments through pre-application discussions. 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. RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Green</p>
4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission	Green	Applications subject to a legal agreement during the reporting year were determined faster than last year and faster than the Scottish average. You state that applications which are

	reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting period)		subject to a legal agreement are regularly reviewed to ensure progress and completion within 6 months.
			Your enforcement charter was revised in March 2020.
			<p>Your LDP is up-to-date and clear timescales exist for adopting the next LDP however, this will be not be within the required 5 year timescale. Your decision making timescales for major developments is slower than last year and the Scottish Average however Non-householder and Householder are faster than last year or the statutory timescale. Your enforcement charter is up-to-date. However, the number of legacy cases you have has remained the same as last year even though you have managed to clear 13.</p> <p>RAG = Amber</p> <p>You have completed 3 out of 9 of your improvement commitments with the remaining to be continued over the next reporting year. It is noted that some of your improvement commitments were put on hold due to Covid-19 or awaiting the outcome of SG review of PD. You have identified a good range of improvement commitments for the coming year.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Amber</p>
			Your development plan was 5 years old at the time of reporting.
			<p>Your LDP will not be replaced within the 5 year cycle.</p> <p>RAG = Red</p> <p>LDP2 is project planned with management and reporting processes in place to ensure adoption in 2021.</p> <p>RAG = Green</p> <p>Overall RAG = Amber</p>
		N/A	Although you have provided information in your PPF this section only refers to the pre-MIR stage.
		N/A	
			You have a “make a planning application” section on your website which contains information for applicants to consider before making an application. As noted last year you have adopted the national validation standards published by HOPS in 2017. Guidance is reviewed and updated regularly.
			You engage with other council services during pre-application discussions. A number of your case studies demonstrate you approach to corporate working such as the Dunbeg Masterplan and regeneration of Campbeltown.

	services; single contact arrangements; joint pre-application advice)		
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Green	You continue to explore the delivery of shared services for example the council's Conservation and Design Officer providing advice to LLTNP. You also visited D&G and Glasgow to learn from their experience in the development and roll out of IDOX Enterprise workflow systems. You also continue to participate and contribute to HOPS and other forums.
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 13 cases during the reporting year, with 34 cases still awaiting conclusion. This is the same number which remained at the end of last year.
15	Developer contributions: clear and proportionate expectations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan); and • in pre-application discussions 	Green	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. RAG = Green Expectations for developer contributions are established in pre-application discussions. RAG = Green Overall RAG = Green

ARGYLL AND BUTE COUNCIL
Performance against Key Markers

Marker		12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20
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	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			N/A	N/A
10	Stakeholders engaged early (pre-MIR)	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
2012-13	0	4	9
2013-14	0	5	8
2014-15	0	2	11
2015-16	0	3	10
2016-17	1	3	11
2017-18	1	3	11
2018-19	0	3	10
2019-20	0	3	10

Decision Making Timescales (weeks)

	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	2019-20 Scottish Average
Major Development	88.2	59.1	14.1	23.3	22.1	37.9	28.3	33.9	33.5
Local (Non-Householder) Development	14.0	13.1	10.8	10.3	12.4	12.6	10.8	10.2	10.9
Householder Development	8.9	7.2	6.9	7.0	7.5	7.9	7.1	7.2	7.3