

Date performance report due: 30 September 2013

Date of receipt of report: 30 September 2013

National Headline Indicators

- Your Development Plan Scheme is on track and your replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) is now nearing adoption. However, all your local plans were considerably older than 5 years at the end of the reporting period, ranging from 8 to 17 years. An up to date LDP is essential to provide a clear lead and certainty for future investment in development. It is therefore important that your next LDP is project managed, avoids slippage and is adopted within the statutory 5-year timescale.
- Your effective housing land supply appears to be very high at 48 years. We note this is taken from your LDP, and that the footnote explains how you arrived at this figure.
- We note that you are putting measures in place to enable the future reporting of data for employment and commercial land. There remain some issues around a standard definition for consistently measuring employment and commercial land supply, which we are working with HOPS to address.
- You have made good progress in reducing decision making timescales for major, local (non-householder) and householder developments. This is especially so for major developments, where average timescales are well below the national figure. We would be interested to hear more about how the addition of a case management module to your UNiform database has improved timescales, as this is something that you could share with other authorities.
- Your average decision making timescale for applications subject to legal agreements has dropped but still remains over one year. We note that you recently introduced tighter timescales and we look forward to hearing about progress in your next report. Your next report should also provide a description of the actions you have taken to reduce the number of legacy cases, including applications that are more than one year old.
- We welcome the provision of figures for applications subject to pre-application advice and note that a reasonable proportion of applications have used this service. This demonstrates a strong commitment to an open for business approach which provides increased certainty for applicants. Given that the majority of pre-application advice is focused on major developments, you should consider what measures can be introduced to increase take-up for other categories of development.

- While none of your 10 major developments decided within the year were subject to a processing agreement we note that you have started to offer them for major developments and have published guidance. Following recent legislative changes, you may also wish to consider using processing agreements for more substantial local developments.
- We note that it has now been over 2 years since your enforcement charter was updated and that a revised version is currently awaiting committee approval. You should ensure that future updates are completed within the required 2-year cycle.
- Your enforcement figures show a good record of resolving planning breaches, with a significant number of cases being resolved during the period.

Defining and measuring a high-quality planning service

- You have described a range of customer-focused activities that applicants and developers will find helpful, which are delivered in a manner that is open for business and recognises the important role of the planning service in delivering sustainable economic growth. This includes the publication of on-line guidance, pre-application advice, and officer availability.
- Your well established links with the Scottish Cities Alliance, City Plan and Community Plan demonstrate a service that has close working relationships with internal and external stakeholders. Future reports should aim to explain how your working relationships support the pre-application and planning application process by ensuring that early engagement is achieved and information requests are clear and proportionate.
- Your commitment to promoting high quality design is supported by your LDP, guidance and involvement in regeneration projects. In order to demonstrate this further you should consider monitoring and reporting where you have added value to the planning application process. Future reports would benefit from the inclusion of examples that have been subject to design improvements.
- Future reports should describe in more detail how your Supplementary Guidance on developer contributions and affordable housing support the delivery of development by ensuring that requests are clear and proportionate. Where possible, this should be supported by feedback from applicants and developers.
- The emphasis on providing information on your website is welcomed, as this can contribute to greater certainty and enhance overall customer experience of your planning service. We note that you have produced guidance on what is expected to validate a planning application, in order to measure success and identify further improvements; do you hold any data on validation of applications at the first attempt?
- We are pleased to see that you place a strong emphasis on engagement with a wide range of stakeholders, including community groups, developers and key agencies. Your Planning Users Forum appears to be an effective way of gaining customer feedback to help identify service improvements. This approach could perhaps be shared more widely for the benefit of other planning authorities.

- Future reports would benefit from some stronger evidence on what your customers think of your engagement and service provision, perhaps with use of quotes/testimonies. Many authorities have commissioned customer satisfaction surveys as a means of gaining feedback on the standard of service provision and this may be something you may wish to consider.
- You have internal structures in place which contribute towards a culture of continuous improvement for staff development through appraisals, monthly meetings and comprehensive training. We are pleased to see that you are delivering training to other Council services and teams as this can help develop stronger working relationships and improve communication.
- You appear to have effective decision making structures in place to support efficient decision making and this is supported by flexible approaches to workforce to enable you to respond to priorities. Future reports could provide some examples of how this is achieved.
- We note that your staff regularly share good practice by attending external events, but it was not clear from your report whether you benchmark with other authorities in order to share knowledge, skills and approaches to issues.

Service improvements 2012-13: delivery

- It is pleasing to note that most of your service improvements have been delivered, although some that relate to your LDP are ongoing.

Service improvement commitments 2013-14

- You have identified a good range of service improvements that are geared towards continuous improvement and reflect the needs identified in your report. We look forward to following progress.
- The continuous reduction of decision making timescales is important and we are therefore pleased to see that you have identified a number of service improvements to further improve performance, including processing timescales and protocols/concordats.

Conclusion

- We welcome the progress you have made towards improved performance, service delivery and the development of staff under the Planning Performance Framework. This has been supported by the improvements you have taken to manage workload and process planning applications. You should continue to identify ways to continue to improve and seek feedback on your services wherever possible.
- The improvement in the timescales to determine major applications is particularly encouraging, as is your intention to further reduce timescales for planning applications subject to legal agreements. The promotion and use of processing agreements and protocols should help improve working relationships with internal and external stakeholders and contribute towards improved performance.

- Given that your Local Plans are now beyond the statutory 5-year cycle, it is important that you take all possible steps to adopt your LDP as soon as possible. You should reflect on the process to ensure that potential issues are identified early and slippages are avoided in the production of future LDPs.
- Future reports would benefit from obtaining and producing more feedback from customers to provide a clearer picture of their satisfaction levels from the service they receive.

The feedback in this report is based solely on the information provided to us within your Planning Performance Framework Report covering the period April 2012 to March 2013.

If you need to clarify any aspect of the report please contact us on 0131 244 7148 or email sgplanning@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

We hope that this feedback will be of use to you in the preparation of your next report which covers the period April 2013 to March 2014. Please note that we are in discussions with HOPS and COSLA about the potential benefits of bringing the submission date forward, closer to the end of the reporting period. We will let you know as soon as a decision has been made.

PERFORMANCE MARKERS REPORT 2012-13

Name of planning authority: Perth and Kinross Council
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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	Average timescales have reduced for all development categories – major, local (non-householder) and householder.
2	Processing agreements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer to all prospective applicants for major development planning applications; and availability publicised on website 	Amber	Processing agreements offered for all major developments, as of April 2013 (outwith reporting period). No processing agreements entered into to date. Guidance on processing agreements published on website and template available.
3	Early collaboration with applicants and consultees <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 	Amber	Pre-application service offered, with relatively high proportion (22%) of applications subject to advice. Planning application checklist provided on website which provides information on what to submit alongside application. Report would have benefited from more detail on how early collaboration ensures that information requests are clear and proportionate.
4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from last reporting 	Amber	Good progress made on decreasing timescales for applications subject to legal agreements, but still over one year to decide (64.9 weeks average). Report contained no information on legacy cases. Tighter timescales introduced in April 2013, so

	period)		further improvements anticipated for next reporting period.
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published within last 2 years	Red	Enforcement charter over 2 years old. Has recently been revised, but not yet published.
6	Continuous improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators; and • progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report 	Amber	<p>Good progress made on reducing decision making timescales for major, local and householder applications, and applications subject to legal agreements.</p> <p>Good activity on improvement actions through the year, although some carried forward.</p> <p>Local Development Plan not yet adopted, so local plans outdated. Enforcement Charter not updated within 2-year requirement.</p>
7	Local development plan less than 5 years since adoption	Red	Local plans range from 8 to 17 years since adoption.
8	Development plan scheme – next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on course for adoption within 5 years of current plan(s) adoption; and • project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale 	Red	<p>Local Development Plan not yet adopted.</p> <p>Development Plan Scheme on track, but no mention of whether LDP is project planned.</p>
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i>	N/A	
10	Cross sector stakeholders* engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation – <i>if plan has been at pre-MIR stage during reporting year</i> <i>*including industry, agencies and Scottish Government</i>	N/A	
11	Regular and proportionate policy advice produced on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information required to support applications; and • expected developer contributions 	Amber	Guidance produced for applicants on what information to submit alongside a planning application. Future reports would benefit from more detail of how authority ensures that information requests are reasonable and proportionate.

			Developer contributions and affordable housing supplementary guidance published. No evidence provided as to how the authority ensures contribution requests are proportionate.
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	<p>Good evidence of corporate working, supported by management structures, joint training events and close working relationships which have developed through the community planning and local development plan process.</p> <p>More evidence needed in future reports of how collaborative working benefits customers. Inclusion of case studies would help demonstrate this further.</p>
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Amber	Some evidence provided of this with involvement with Scottish Cities Alliance and through staff attending events. No reference or evidence provided of whether authority uses benchmarking.
14	Stalled sites / legacy cases: conclusion or withdrawal of old planning applications and reducing number of live applications more than one year old	Red	<p>No details provided on stalled sites or legacy cases, this needs to be covered in future reports.</p> <p>Reduction in timescales for applications subject to planning/legal agreements, but still over 1yr to determine (64.9 weeks average).</p>
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 	Amber	Reference made in report that pre-application advice and Supplementary Guidance on developer contributions and affordable housing provides certainty for developers. Future reports should provide more details of how this guidance and pre-application discussions are used to ensure contribution requests are clear and proportionate.