

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**15 May 2012**

Agenda Item	6
Report No	PED 31/13

**AUDIT SCOTLAND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOURTH QUARTERLY REVIEW 2012/13**

**Report by Director of Planning and Development**

**Summary**

This report advises Members on the delivery of the Development Management, Building Standards and the Development Plan services for the 4th Quarter of 2012/2013 and provides an overview of performance over the whole year.

The Report also includes information on Sickness Absence within the Planning and Development Service for Quarter 4 2012/13. This is also a statutory performance indicator.

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Key performance indicator information is reported to committee every Quarter and the outturn figures for the fourth Quarter of 2012/13 are now available.

**2.0 Development Management**

2.1 The total number of applications received during 2012/13 was 4466, which compares to a total of 3761 received in 2011/12.

2.2 It was pleasing to note that the 2012/13 Q4 performance figures maintained the improved performance demonstrated over the last year. The year end figure showed that 65.4% of all planning applications were determined within the 2 month period (Appendix 1). This was a 2% improvement on performance in 2011/12, and is the best performance seen in many years. It also meant that the improvement target set out within our Service Improvement Plan was met.

2.3 The Service Improvement Plan was reported to this Committee in August 2012, and Appendix 2 provides an overview of the key actions contained within it. It shows that progress has been made on the majority of actions, and allows the Service to move forward on a number of other actions that will be reported to this Committee in August 2013.

2.4 Improved performance will continue to be a key theme, particularly in the context of the 20% increase in planning fees that has been agreed by Scottish Government and came into force from April 2013. At the national level, statistics

are not yet available for the 2012/13 year, but based on the results of quarter 3, the Council is delivering average times for determining planning applications for both major and local planning applications which are better than the Scottish average.

### **3.0 Building Standards**

- 3.1 It is pleasing to report KPIs 1 – 6 continue to deliver above target performance levels, averaging at 93%, where target is 80%. All KPIs other than KPI 1 indicate an improvement on Q4 11/12 performance. The Festive Break and staffing issues account for a 5% drop in KPI 1 performance. The number of building warrant applications received during Q4 was 637. This represents 81 fewer applications (11%) than in Q4 11/12.
- 3.2 The number of building warrant applications determined during Q4 was 663. This represents 43 fewer applications (6%) than in Q4 11/12. The number of completion certificates accepted during Q4 was 536, a drop of 98 (15%) from last year. Fee income for building warrants was £439k, an increase of £26k (6%) from last year.
- 3.3 In the first quarter of this year the team will have completed their annual PDPs and a training plan for 2013/14 will be created. The team will undergo a series of Health and Safety training courses, some carried out by the Employee Development team and other more specialised ones e.g. on Asbestos Awareness, by external providers. A Balanced Scorecard for 2013/14 will be submitted to Scottish Government Building Standards Division (BSD) for acceptance.

### **4.0 Development Plans**

- 4.1 The first half of Q4 was dominated by preparing and running the Wick and Thurso Charrettes where officers from Development Plans collaborated with a specialist team of consultants and local communities to draw up a new vision for the future of each town. These new visions will be reflected in a new Local Development Plan for the wider Caithness & Sutherland area. Uniquely, it was the first time that the Charrette format had been used to inform Local Development Plans in Scotland.
- 4.2 The team is making good progress with the preparation of the Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief incorporating proposals for creating high quality development and a new gateway to the City alongside the proposed West Link Road.
- 4.3 The team is focussed on the goal of taking the next stage of the Plan (the Proposed Plan) to PED Committee in August this year. The Plan will show where development will be focused, what it might look like, and the type of places we are trying to create in the Inner Moray Firth, reflecting on its distinct characteristics. A number of improvements are being made to our Uniform software that will streamline the plan preparation process in the future. The team will also be looking at how to take forward the outcome of the Wick and Thurso

Charrettes including further discussion with local communities and other Council services.

- 4.4 Following a successful bid for funding, a project to analyse the cumulative impact of onshore wind turbines, with a focus on Caithness and Ardrross, has been initiated. A report will be brought to PED Committee in due course.

## 5.0 Absence Management

- 5.1 Sickness Absence is a statutory performance indicator which is based on the average number of working days per employee lost through sickness absence. The absence statistics for each Area and HQs within P&D for the four quarters of 2012/13 are set out below together with the full year's figures (with a comparison to 2011/12 statistics).

Quarter	RAG	Average FTE		2011/12				2012/13			
		11/12	12/13	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
B&S	R	9.0	4.6	1.3	0.9	4.3	0.9	13.8	16.1	13.8	3.7
Caithness	R	9.0	8.5	5.1	1.3	1.6	2.1	1.0	2.0	1.5	3.6
HQ	G	139.5	133.9	1.1	1.8	1.1	1.4	0.7	1.7	2.1	2.4
Inverness	R	26.5	24.2	1.2	1.3	0.8	1.4	0.6	2.5	3.7	3.1
Lochaber	G	10.0	7.9	0.8	0.5	0.5	1.4	3.8	0.0	0.0	1.0
R&C	G	18.7	12.6	0.8	1.4	1.3	1.3	3.5	2.0	2.3	2.2
Skye & Lochalsh	G	7.0	6.0	2.6	0.1	0.6	1.1	0.4	1.0	0.2	0.7
Sutherland	G	14.0	13.0	0.8	1.3	1.1	1.1	0.4	0.7	1.9	0.1
<b>Overall</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>233.7</b>	<b>210.6</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.2</b>

ytd	RAG	Average FTE		2011/12				2012/13			
		11/12	12/13	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
B&S	R	7.5	4.7	1.3	2.1	7.4	7.9	13.8	29.8	43.6	47.6
Caithness	G	9.0	8.5	5.1	6.4	8.1	10.2	1.0	3.0	4.5	8.2
HQ	G	140.4	130.7	1.1	3.0	4.1	5.5	0.7	2.3	4.5	6.9
Inverness	G	26.5	24.7	1.2	2.6	3.4	4.8	0.6	3.0	6.8	9.8
Lochaber	G	10.5	7.6	0.8	1.2	1.7	3.1	3.8	3.8	3.9	5.0
R&C	G	18.0	13.1	0.8	2.7	4.0	5.3	3.5	3.3	5.6	7.8
Skye & Lochalsh	G	7.5	5.5	2.6	2.6	3.2	4.3	0.4	1.4	1.5	2.2
Sutherland	G	13.3	12.3	0.8	2.1	3.2	4.3	0.4	1.1	3.0	3.0
<b>Overall</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>232.5</b>	<b>207.1</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>7.8</b>

Absences in Q4 have decreased overall compared to Q3 and are within the overall corporate target of 2.5. Three Areas – B&S, Caithness and Inverness are showing as being over the corporate target. This is because there were known long term sickness in these offices and the small numbers skew the statistics.

Looking at the annual figures, the 12/13 average FTE figures have improved compared to the 11/12 position and only B&S is above the corporate target because two members of staff were off long term sick but are now both back at

work.

- 5.2 Service Managers will continue, with support as required from Personnel and Occupational Health, to actively implement the Council's Absence Management Policy.

**6.0 Recommendation**

1. That the Committee notes the encouraging improvements in performance across both Development Management and Building Standards and the ongoing work of the Development Plans team.
2. That the Committee notes the sickness absence levels for the Service

Designation: Director of Planning and Development

Author: Malcolm Macleod, Head of Planning and Building Standards (Ext: 2506)

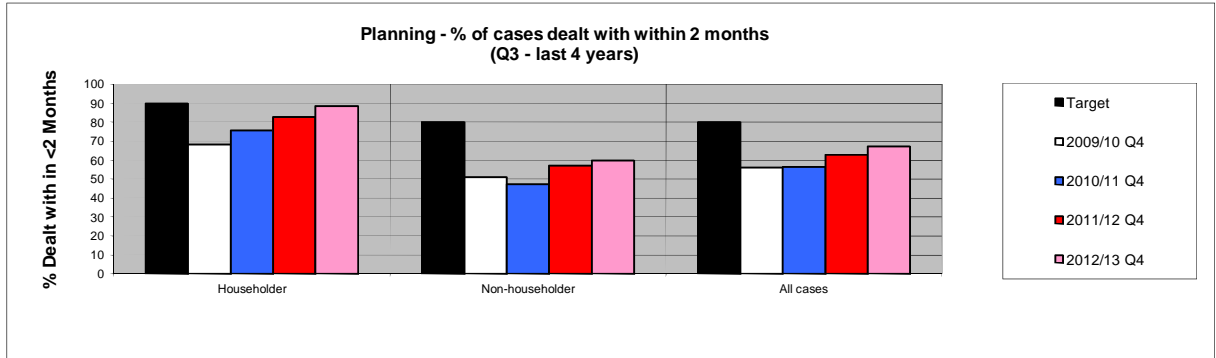
Date: 1 May 2013

**APPENDIX 1  
PLANNING AND BUILDING STANDARDS**

**Development Management Performance**

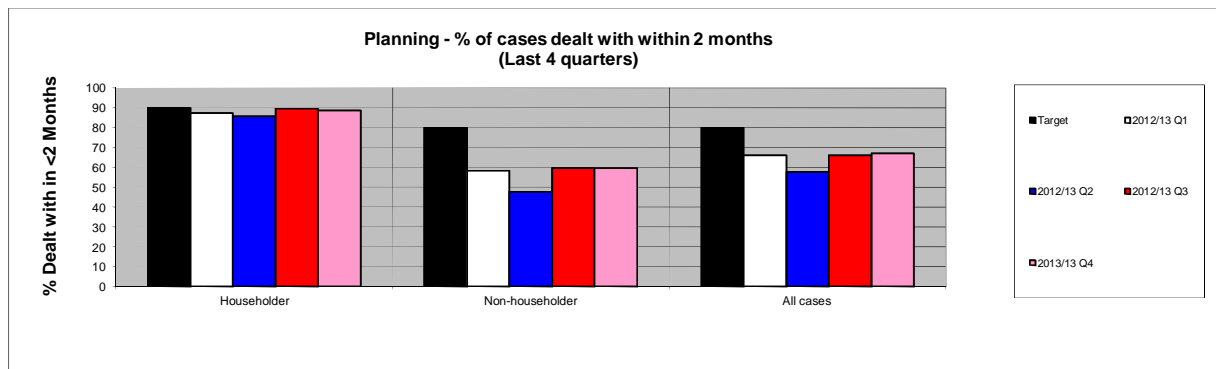
i) **Percentage of Cases Dealt with Within 2 Months, Quarter 4, last 4 years:-**

	Target	2009/10 Q4	2010/11 Q4	2011/12 Q4	2012/13 Q4
Householder	90	68.33	75.61	82.90	88.67
Non-householder	80	51.10	47.26	57.10	59.84
All cases	80	56.18	56.38	62.90	67.12



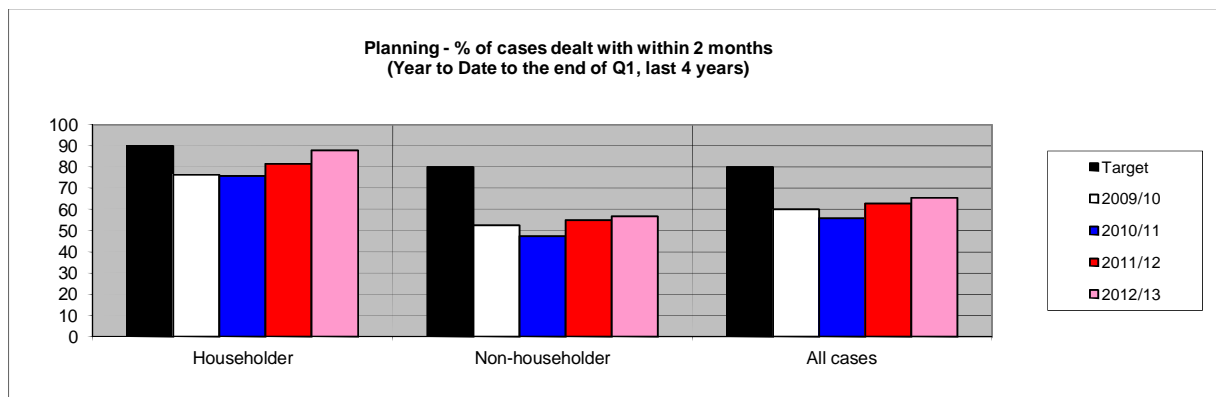
ii) **Percentage of Cases Dealt with Within 2 Months (last 4 Quarters):-**

	Target	2012/13 Q1	2012/13 Q2	2012/13 Q3	2013/13 Q4
Householder	90	87.40	85.70	89.57	88.67
Non-householder	80	58.60	47.91	59.70	59.84
All cases	80	66.30	57.67	66.20	67.12



iii) **Percentage of Cases Dealt with Within 2 Months (Annual):-**

	Target	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Householder	90	76.26	75.83	81.40	87.76
Non-householder	80	52.43	47.32	54.80	56.66
All cases	80	59.92	55.91	62.80	65.49



---

iv) **Development Management Volumes and Income (Last four Quarters)**

	21012/13 Q1	2012/13 Q2	2012/13 Q3	2012/13 Q4
<b>Applications</b>	1173	1120	1054	1119
<b>Income (£000)</b>	422	458	443	510

## Appendix 2 - Progress against actions from the Service Improvement Plan

### Planning Performance - Service Improvement Plan

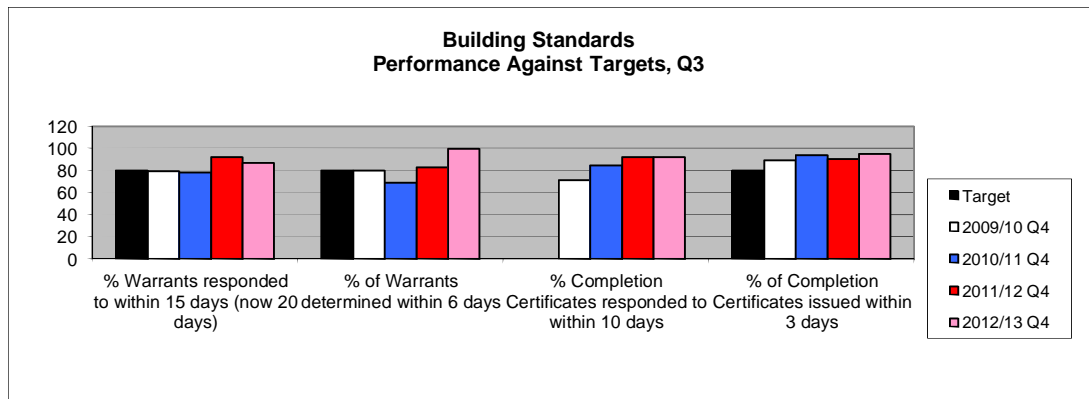
	Q4 Update and Year End Update
<b>Open for Business</b>	
Deliver to the timescales set out within the Development Plan Scheme	Progress with Development Plans is good with various items of Supplementary Guidance progressing towards adoption and/or consultation. Work on the Wick and Thurso Charrettes as part of the Caithness & Sutherland Local Development Plan has been successful. The timescales for the Inner Moray Firth Plan has been pushed back by a few months but it is hoped that time can be saved later in the process.
Improve our processes and procedures to continue to deliver 100% of Major Development Pre-application advice service within 4 weeks	During 2012/13, 100% of major application pre-application packs were delivered within 4 weeks.
Improve our processes and procedures to deliver 90% of local Pre-application advice packs within 6 weeks (and work towards a 4 week determination timescale for implementation 2013/14)	The figures for pre-application packs at the end of the year stood at 74% delivered within a 6 week period. Further discussion required in respect of whether 4 week target should be implemented in 2013/14
Improve our processes and procedures to determine 65% of all Planning Applications determined within 2 months	Performance against this target has been reached for the year as a whole with 65% being delivered within 2 months - an improvement of 2% on last years performance and a 9% improvement on the 2010/11 figure..
Improve our processes and procedures to determine 85% of householder planning applications within 2 months	Performance is well above target in respect of this measure with the year end figure standing at 88%, an improvement of 7% over the 2011/12 total and a 12% improvement from the 2010/11 period.
<b>High Quality Development on the Ground</b>	
Work with partners to ensure the effective operation of the PLACE Design Review Panel in Inverness	The PLACE Review panel has recently met to discuss a Council development scheme, and it is hoped that this will reinvigorate the process.
Provide evidence of high quality designs being approved and implemented	The year end achievements include a range of good examples.
Carry out a formal review of the Enforcement Charter and put in place processes and procedures to support implementation.	This review is now underway. A revised charter is being considered by the May 2013 PED Committee. Further resources have been agreed by Council to ensure that this part of the Service is fully staffed.
<b>Certainty</b>	
Implement the protocols for Enterprise Areas and assist in the delivery of development on the ground in these areas	The protocols are being actively implemented, with development interest on all three sites at pre-application stage.
Ensure that all Major Development proposals are accompanied by Processing Agreements by end of 2012	This work has not been completed, and there is a revised timescale of end of March 2013.
Develop a Protocol with other services/agencies for delivery of joint consents e.g. Road Construction Consent or Hydro Scheme CAR Licence applications	No progress to date.
Provide better information to developers on the standards of information expected to accompany planning applications (validation checklist)	This is being actively progressed, and will be the subject of further discussion amongst the team leaders prior to implementation.
Monitoring database to be further developed for employment and commercial developments	No progress to date.
<b>Communications, engagement and customer service</b>	
Increase number of planning applications submitted electronically by actively promoting the e-planning system	Numbers of planning applications being submitted electronically stands at 63%
Provide evidence of efforts to engage with hard to reach groups	The protocols for working with access panels have been produced and are being implemented.
Deliver Focus Groups for Planning across the Highland area during 2012/13	Focus Groups were held during 2012/13
<b>Financial Management and Local Governance</b>	
Put in place a procedure for time recording of 5% of planning applications to be implemented in last quarter of 2012/13	No progress to date, although the lead on this may be taken at a national level.
<b>Culture of continuous improvement</b>	
Ensure that all staff have PDPs delivered and the Service Training Plan produced and implemented.	All staff have been given up to date PDPs and a training plan is being implemented.

**APPENDIX 3**

**Building Standards Performance**

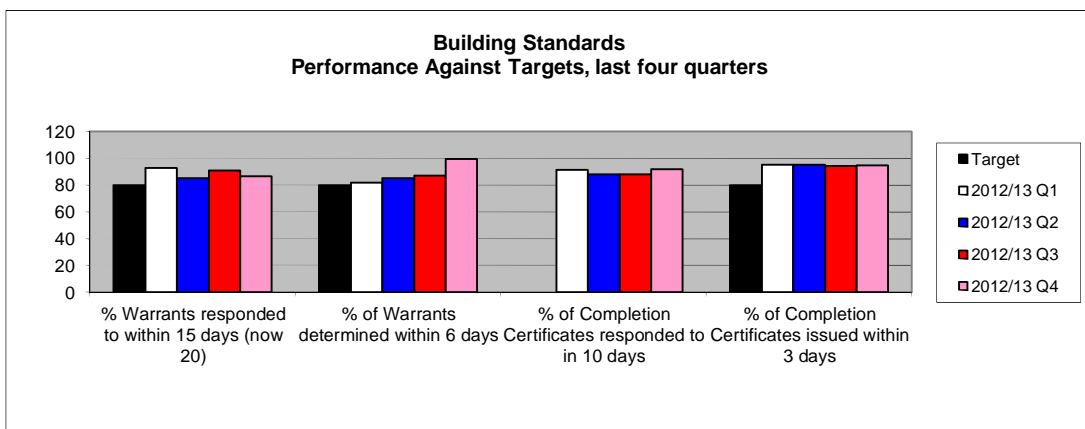
i) **Performance against targets, fourth quarter**

	Target	2009/10 Q4	2010/11 Q4	2011/12 Q4	2012/13 Q4
% Warrants responded to within 15 days (now 20 days)	80	79.40	78.10	92.00	86.80
% of Warrants determined within 6 days	80	79.80	68.70	83.00	99.30
% Completion Certificates responded to within 10 days	n/a	71.30	84.50	92.00	91.80
% of Completion Certificates issued within 3 days	80	89.20	93.50	90.00	94.80



ii) **Performance against targets, last four quarters**

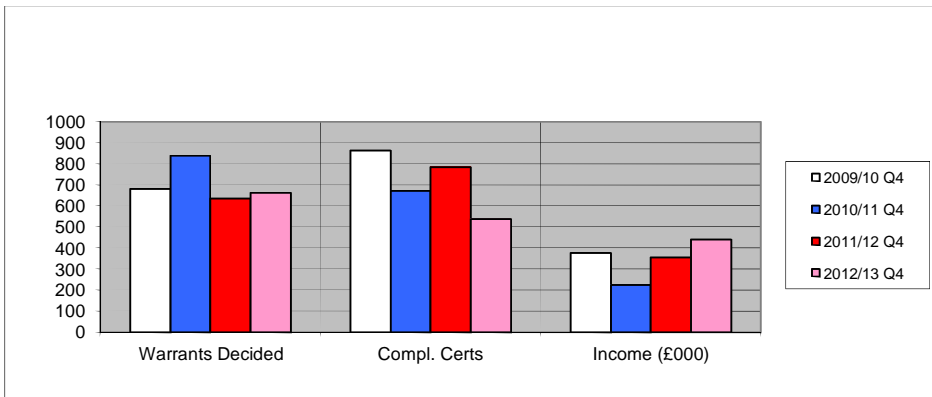
	Target	2012/13 Q1	2012/13 Q2	2012/13 Q3	2012/13 Q4
% Warrants responded to within 15 days (now 20)	80	93.00	85.00	91.00	86.80
% of Warrants determined within 6 days	80	81.90	85.00	87.00	99.30
% of Completion Certificates responded to in 10 days	n/a	91.20	88.00	88.00	91.80
% of Completion Certificates issued within 3 days	80	95.20	95.00	94.00	94.80





iii) **Building Standards Volumes and Income (Q4 last 4 years)**

	2009/10 Q4	2010/11 Q4	2011/12 Q4	2012/13 Q4
Warrants Decided	680	838	635	663
Compl. Certs	864	671	785	536
Income (£000)	375	223	354	439



iv) **Building Standards Volumes and Income (Last four quarters)**

	2011/12 Q1	2012/13 Q2	2012/13 Q3	2012/13 Q4
Warrants Decided	866	738	700	663
Compl. Certs	678	844	768	536
Income (£000)	419	390	392	439