

Agenda Item	8
Report No	EDI 43/19

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Environment, Development and Infrastructure

Date: 15 August 2019

Report Title: Planning Performance Framework and Quarter 1 Performance Review

Report By: Director of Development and Infrastructure

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 All Planning Authorities in Scotland are required to submit an annual Planning Performance review to the Scottish Government, setting out how they have performed over the previous financial year. This report seeks approval for our submission. The report also advises Members on the delivery and performance of the Planning and Environment Service (Development Management, Building Standards, Development Planning, Transport Planning, Performance and Environment team) for the first Quarter of 2018/2019.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. approve the Planning Performance Framework (PPF) for submission to Scottish Government; and
- ii. note the performance updates for the Planning and Environment Service.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource - the delivery of the services outlined within this report are contained within the overall Service budget.

3.2 Legal, Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural), Climate Change / Carbon Clever, Risk, Gaelic – There are no implications arising as a result of this report.

4. Planning Performance Framework

- 4.1 The draft Planning Performance Framework for 2018/19 was submitted to the Scottish Government for assessment on 31 July 2019 as this was the deadline set across Scotland and is available [here](#).
- 4.2 This Framework reflects the good work of the Service over the course of the last year, illustrated through case studies, and highlights some key improvements the teams will be progressing during this year. The Planning performance Framework (PPF) outlines our continued commitment to improving performance, meeting customer needs, trialling innovative approaches and helping deliver high quality development across the Highlands.

5. Development Plans

- 5.1 In Q1, the Fort William 2040 Masterplan and Delivery Programme was published, and ongoing engagement will be arranged for later this year including liaison with project leads, public workshops and community representatives working alongside the Lochaber Committee Members to help steer future development decisions. Reporters published their examination report for the associated West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan which can now proceed to Council approval and thereafter adoption. The review of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan commenced with a Call for Sites process and a workshop with elected Members, feedback from which will form part of the evidence base for the Main Issues Report.
- 5.2 The Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief was approved for publication by Committee to tie in with the imminent construction of Stage 2 of the West Link. The team jointly led the preparation of a Development Brief for Uig which was published in June. A draft CaSPlan Town Centres Strategy was published for consultation in June and will conclude in August. We also provided assistance in the preparation of a Local Place Plan for Applecross which was undertaken by the Community Company and Applecross Trust. The team has assisted in consultation events for a World Heritage Site bid for the Flow Country.

6. Development Management (Appendix 1)

- 6.1 During Q1 71.8% % of **all** local applications were dealt with within two months against a target of 70%. This represents a slight increase on the previous quarter (67.4%). Local Householder applications for Q1 were 88.7%, a slight decrease on the previous quarter of 91% of all applications dealt with within 8 weeks. The average timescale for the determination of Householder application fell slightly from 7.97 weeks for Q4 in 2018/19 to 7.7 weeks in Q1 of 2018/19. Whereas the non householder applications showed an improvement from 15.5 for Q4 in 2018/19 to 13.4 for 2019/20. The performance figures are generally encouraging however, taken as a whole, they reflect the increased pressures and challenges faced arising from staff changes and departures encountered with ongoing vacancy control over a sustained period of time.
- 6.2 Major applications - four applications were determined within this time period, all of which had a processing agreement in place.
- 6.3 With reference to enforcement the level of activity remains high with 173 complaints received. 147 of which were taken up. In total 29 notices were served during Q1, 5 cases were resolved formally although 29 cases were resolved informally

7. Building Standards (Appendix 2)

- 7.1 Performance for responding to warrant applications and completion certificates remains good (88% and 85% respectively) for Quarter 1, if slightly below target (90%). The slight dip reflects the changing emphasis of the team to site inspection in line with feedback from Scottish Government. The KPI outputs over the 6 internal indicators averaged at 95%; consistent with last quarter. Target is 90%.
- 7.2 The number of Building Warrant applications received was 879; a 7% increase on last quarter. The number of warrants determined was 786; a 17% increase on last quarter.
Building warrant fee income for quarter was £711k; 1% above budget target.
- 7.3 Two new Graduate Apprentice Building Standards Surveyors have been appointed and will commence with the Council on 29 July, both are school leavers; one will be based in the Dingwall area office; the other in Inverness.
- 7.4 The Building Standards Management Team (BSMT) continues to work with Scottish Government (BSD) to ensure the seamless re-appointment of Highland Council as Verifier in 2020.

8. Transport Planning

- 8.1 Transport Planning issued 238 planning consultation responses in Q1 (in comparison with 240 in Q1 2018/19) sustaining the high level of activity experienced last year. The team delivered over 70% of the local and major planning application responses within the requested timescales, meeting the local indicator. The number of single and small housing development consultations reviewed and responded to continues to increase with 45 issued in Q1 compared to 31 in the same period of 2018/19.
- 8.2 Ongoing liaison with HITRANS and Transport Scotland has taken place across a range of strategic transport initiatives (e.g. A9 Dualling; A96 Dualling; Longman Interchange improvements; Far North Line Review; West Highland Lines Review; Skye Air Services; Fort William STAG). A number of feasibility and design studies for active travel schemes were completed providing detailed design to enable construction when funding becomes available. The team is also engaged in major schemes such as the £6.5m Community Links Plus scheme in Inverness.

9. Environment (Appendix 3)

9.1 Planning and Advice

In Q1 specialist planning advice has been provided in relation to:

- 315 Planning applications (relating to archaeology, forestry, building conservation and access) and 23 Listed Building Consent applications. The figures represent the number of applications that can be assessed with the resources currently available, rather than the number of applications that would benefit from specialist input;
- 23 Tree Work Applications; and
- 1 Access Exemption Order was granted for the MTB World Cup Fort William.

9.2 Strategy, Policy and Guidance

- 9.2.1 Work on the Wick: Pulteneytown Conservation Area appraisal and management plan is now underway with a public drop-in event to be held in July.

- 9.2.2 A number of Tree Preservation Orders are in the process of being served, or at early stages of being prepared.
- 9.2.3 The Caithness and Sutherland Core Path Plan (amended and modified) is now complete and with Scottish Government for approval. The draft West Highland and Islands Core Path Plan is currently out to statutory 12 week public consultation. Work started on amended Core Path Plan for the Inner Moray Firth area.
- 9.3 **Consultancy**
- 9.3.1 The Team is on profile to meet its annual target of £61,259 with £14,663 of income generated in Q1. A modest additional Q1 income of £1,658 was generated through provision of archaeological advice to statutory undertakers and provision of data to commercial consultants
- 9.3.2 Whitebridge replacement has been completed with successful outcomes for tree protection and protected species. Final otter surveys have been completed and new planting will go in soon. The team is providing specialist advice for a number of large-scale Council projects, including Inverness West Link Phase 2, Longman waste plant, Peffery Flood Scheme and Plockton School ASN unit extension. Ecologists undertaking bat surveys to support the Council's ongoing programme of roof repairs.
- 9.3.3 Dutch Elm disease continues to be a significant concern. Following discussions with the Roads Operation Manager for Ross, Skye and Lochaber it has been agreed that the team will develop a methodology for dealing with the issue in Dingwall.

10 Performance/Systems

10.1 IDOX System Re-procurement

The Systems Team will be starting work on a re-procurement exercise at the beginning of October.

10.2 Business Support Virtual Team - delivery of Planning and Environment Service

The systems Team has been working with Business Support to achieve more consistent and resilient approach to the delivery of the services business support provides for Planning and Building Standards, particularly the virtual distribution and management of workload.

10.3 Satisfaction/Discharge of Conditions

In June the Service re-introduced a new value added service for the satisfaction and discharge of planning conditions in a reduced timescale of 6 weeks. The service is aimed at Major or significant local developments but is open to any applicant who may wish to pay for the service. More information can be found on the [new web page](#) that has been created to promote the service.

10.4 Review of Pre-application Advice Service

The Systems Team is currently working with staff in the Service to review and improve the existing [Pre-application Advice Service](#). This review is focussing on making the existing submission and allocation process more efficient and consistent with how other applications are received, and work flowed in the service. The pre-application advice Service is currently available for Local (small) and Major developments but the review intends to make the service available to a wider range of developments such as housing developments of between 4-49 houses and adapt pre-application advice responses accordingly.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 29 July 2019

Authors: Nicole Wallace, Acting Head of Planning and Environment
Dafydd Jones, Acting Head of Development Management

Performance Statistics

Highland Quarter 1 2019/20

Planning Applications			
Category	Total Number of Decisions	% Within Agreed Timescales	
Processing Agreements (Majors)	4	100.00	
	Total Number of Decisions	% within timescales*	Average Time (Weeks)
All Major Developments	5	20.00	49.6
All Local Developments	698		11.7
Local: less than 2 months	501	71.78	
Local: more than 2 months	197	28.22	
Local developments (non-householder)	485		13.4
Local: less than 2 months	312	64.33	
Local: more than 2 months	173	35.67	
Local developments (householder)	213		7.7
Local: less than 2 months	189	88.73	
Local: more than 2 months	24	11.27	
Other Consents	73		7.9
Other : Less than 2 months	68	93.15	

Enforcement Activity

	Number
Cases Taken Up	147
Complaints Received	173
Complaints Founded	68
Complaints Not Founded	15
Breaches Resolved Informally	29
Breaches Resolved Formally	5
Cases Outstanding	143
Notices Served	29
Direct Action	0
Report to Procurator Fiscal	0
Prosecutions	0
Interdict	0

Pre-Application Advice

	100.0
Major Packs within 4 weeks	0
Local Packs within 6 weeks	62.31

* 4 months for major developments and 2 months for local developments and other consents

Building Standards Performance 2019/20 Q1

	% Warrants responded to within 20 days	% of Warrants determined within 6 days	% Completion Certificates responded to within 10 days	% of Completion Certificates issued within 3 days	Target
2019/20 Q1	88	100	85.1	98.6	90
2018/19 Q4	88	100	82	99.4	90
2018/19 Q3	90.2	100	78.2	97.8	90
2018/19 Q2	94.1	100	88.5	99.2	90

Building Standards Volumes and Income (Last 4 Quarters)

	2018/19 Q2	2018/19 Q3	2018/19 Q4	2019/20 Q1
Warrants Decided	709	717	656	786
Compl. Certs	1186	796	677	894
Income (£000)	768	737	815	711

Appendix 3

Q1 Environment Consultations

ENVIRONMENT TEAM PLANNING WORK

	Planning Applications / PNOs	Listed Building Consent Applications	Conservation Area Consent Applications	Tree Work Applications	TOTAL
Archaeology	90	0	0	-	90
Forestry	113	-	-	23	136
Conservation	64	23	1	-	55
Access	48	-	-	-	48
TOTAL	315	23	1	23	362