

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Planning Performance Framework

ANNUAL REPORT

2016-2017



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Introduction

Welcome to the annual performance report for our Planning Service which provides details of our performance during 2016/17. This sixth Planning Performance Framework (PPF) annual report shows the continuous improvements within our Planning Service in delivering high quality outcomes for our businesses and communities.



Cllr Archie Dryburgh

Cllr Andrew Wood

One of the highlights of this year was our success in having key areas of work recognised through the Scottish Quality Awards for Planning where we won awards for our improvements to householder planning application performance, Dark Skies park Friendly Lighting Guide, and design quality improvements. An important milestone was also reached in our Local Development Plan 2 programme with the publication of the Main Issues Report in January 2017. The “Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design” was marked locally with our first ever Design Awards competition for new developments which attracted high quality submissions, many of which are featured within this report.

2016/17 saw a decline in planning application numbers, which were 13% down, and a sharp fall in fee income which was 22% down on previous years. These are signs of the continued fragile state of the local property sector. The key priority for our Council is to grow the local economy and the Planning Service has an important role to play in supporting investment in our regional economy. The planned improvements outlined for next year within this report will help it to better deliver that role.

Cllr Archie Dryburgh, *Chair* and **Cllr Andrew Wood, *Vice Chair***

Environment, Economy and Infrastructure Committee

Dumfries and Galloway Council

Part 1: Defining and Measuring a High-Quality Planning Service

1.1 Quality of outcomes

1.1.1 Continuing on from the increased focus on improving design quality during 2015/16, the Council celebrated the 'Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design' during 2016 by holding the inaugural Dumfries and Galloway Council Design Awards Scheme to raise awareness of design quality and to provide excellent examples in the region. We were delighted by both the quantity and quality of submissions which were received. Awards and Commendations were given in each of the 3 categories: New build residential; New build non-residential; and Works to existing buildings.

[For further details, please see the relevant case study.]

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15856/Design-Awards-2016>

1.1.2 The Council made 3 submissions to the Scottish Government's Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning in 2016 and all 3 gained Awards, this being the greatest number obtained to any planning authority. The 3 submissions were, in the Plans category, the 'Dark Skies Friendly Lighting Guidance' and 'Raising Design Standards Across The Region' and, in the Process category, the 'Householder Application Performance Improvement Project'.

[For further details, please see the relevant case study.]

<https://saqp2016.com/>

1.1.3 In December 2016, the Scottish Government confirmed that a joint bid by the Council and Architecture + Design Scotland (A+DS) to develop a pilot scheme for the use of Simplified Planning Zones (SPZs) for residential properties had been successful and would receive £30,000 funding. The concept is to find suitable areas of land which could be progressed for self-build proposals without the need for going through the normal full planning process. A 'plot passport' approach will be used which will comprise a simplified spatial structure plan and design code for this form of

development, co-created with site owners and communities using the Place Standard. It will be communicated in simple language, embedded in local policy and site development agreements, to improve the quality of this form of development, and extend housing choice in rural areas. This project will be further developed through 2017/18 as one of our service improvements and will involve continuing to work collaboratively with other stakeholders, both internally (roads, building standards, legal services) and externally (land owners, key agencies, utilities).

<https://beta.gov.scot/publications/simplified-planning-zones-pilots/>

1.2 Quality of service and engagement

1.2.1 As LDP2 moved into the Main Issues Report (MIR) phase of the process, we undertook a significant amount of pre-MIR engagement with both Members and communities. There were a total of 5 Member seminars at the pre-MIR stage, covering both an overview of the process and specific topics (economic and rural development; renewable energy; housing). The LDP team liaised with the key agencies (SEPA, SNH, Transport Scotland) and the Scottish Government during this stage. We also wanted to engage with as many people in the general public as possible early in the process so their views could help inform the MIR. We were keen to explore new ideas and methods for doing this so we used the Place Standards Tool and approached PAS and the Council's Community Planning Team to help deliver a number of workshops across the region. Overall, we delivered 6 workshops which were attended by around 120 individuals or organisations. A report called 'Community Placemaking Workshops in Dumfries and Galloway' was produced, reflecting the outcomes.

[For further details, please see the relevant case study.]

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/16513/Local-Development-Plan-2---Main-Issues-Report>

1.2.2 In terms of the actual MIR consultation, in addition to the required statutory notices, the Local Development Plan team undertook neighbour notification for identified sites and continued to make use the GovDelivery system for notifying interested parties who have signed up to receive targeted emails. We currently have over 1,700 parties on our mailing list.

1.2.3 For pre-application meetings for Major and other significant applications, the Council continues to invite all the key stakeholders to meetings, in order to try to provide a 'one stop shop' service. Details of the current pre-application service is provided on the Council's website (see link below). Developer contribution requirements are always explained during these meetings. The Council's developer contributions policy is set out in one of the 3 overarching policies in the Local Development Plan, Policy OP3, and this is supported by Supplementary Guidance. Revised Supplementary Guidance was adopted during 2016 to include education contributions. However, following some concern about the impact this was having on small scale housing developments, this was reviewed. A further revision of the Supplementary Guidance is expected to be adopted during 2017/18.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15327/Planning-advice-and-enquiries>

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15342/Supplementary-guidance>

1.2.4 Reflecting the 'channel shift' to both greater use of the internet for information and the greater use of tablet and mobile platforms to access the internet, the Council's website was completely updated and relaunched in June 2016. The planning pages were rewritten in simple plain English and restructured so as to be easier to access. They provide links to the eDevelopment portal and clearly signpost that this is the preferred method for the submission of applications. Our various Charters (including the Enforcement Charter), the LDP and all the related Supplementary and other Guidance are available online using the links below.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/planning>

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/ldp>

1.2.5 There are strong links between the Council's Planning Service and Economic Development Service. They fall within the same Directorate and the 2 respective Heads of Service attend the Departmental Management Team (DMT) together. A Strategic Projects Leadership Board (chaired by the Director of Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Committee and including the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services and the Head of Economic Development) operates to ensure that major projects within the region are suitably prioritised and a joined-up approach is taken.

1.2.6 One of our commitments for 2016/17 was to produce customer guidance / advice notes for small to medium sized business proposals. This was produced and made available on the Council's website. It is a 20 page document which covers all aspects of planning and related processes relevant to SMEs in plain English. It also sets out the level and type of supporting information which we would expect to see submitted with such planning applications.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15327/Planning-advice-and-enquiries>

1.2.7 Another commitment for 2016/17 was to review our pre-application enquiry service (PAES). This was done and from a survey of local agents, it was clear that there was a willingness to pay for a PAES on a graded scale provided that the service was properly resourced and delivered the promised outcome on time. We will be taking this forward during 2017/18.

1.2.8 The annual Agents' Forum meeting was held on 4 October 2016 and used the workshop format which had proved successful in 2015/16. The focus this year was on the LDP instead of Development Management issues. It sought the agents' experiences with the policies in the 2014 LDP and the related guidance to that plan so as to try and address any issues which had arisen.

1.2.9 In terms of our Development Management customer satisfaction results, our survey rating reduced from 75% to 69% this year. Concerns appeared more related to speed of response / decision than the quality of customer care received. This can in part attributed to the issues set out in Part 5 - D : Context below. Another issue, identified

at HOPS meetings as being a Scotland-wide concern, is the difficulty in obtaining a statistically meaningful / representative number of responses to customer surveys. As more and more companies and bodies seek customers' opinions, 'survey fatigue' is becoming a factor, with people only being likely to respond if they have had either a particularly good or a particularly bad experience. However, an exception to this issue is the Council's Archaeologist, who is based within the Development Planning team. He was involved in a recent significant find of a Viking hoard and his talks around the region on this subject have regularly been the subject of unsolicited letters of thanks.

1.3 Governance

1.3.1 The Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers for Planning continues to operate effectively, with 95.0% of decisions being made under delegated powers in 2016/17.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15336/Planning-decisions>

A very similar percentage of applications (95.4%) were approved over the period. This represents a 1% increase in the approval rate during 2015/16.

1.3.2 In terms of Committees, there are 12 Planning Applications Committee meetings each year and also 10 scheduled Local Review Body meetings (although during 2016/17, only 6 meetings were called). All Development Planning matters are reported to the Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Committee, which meets every 2 months. Key Local Development Plan decisions are made by the Full Council, which meets every 3 months.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15143/Committee-meetings>

1.3.3 The Development Management structure which was introduced in 2014/15 remained mostly unaltered during 2016/17 and has continued to allow the Council to provide the appropriate and proportionate level of skill and expertise for each respective application i.e. the Major Projects team includes more experienced planners with specialist knowledge. There was however one notable change. Following the retirement of the Service Manager Building Standards, a Planning and Building Standards Manager post

was created, bringing together all the aspects of planning (development planning and development management) and building standards under a single service manager, allowing for greater consistency and integration between these services.

1.3.4 A project management approach is undertaken for Major applications and indeed large Local applications, best exemplified where a processing agreement is used. Our pre-application form for Major application expressly states:- "Dumfries and Galloway Council will promote a partnership protocol, or project plan, for all Major developments... It is requested that developers approach the partnership protocol in a positive and collaborative manner." However, despite our active promotion of the benefits to both parties in entering into Processing Agreements and a better uptake for Local applications, some developers remain unwilling to enter into such agreements.

<http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15327/Planning-advice-and-enquiries>

1.3.5 19 legacy cases were determined during 2016/17. There remained 31 active cases of more than a year old as of 31 March 2017. (There were 37 outstanding legacy cases at the end of 2015/16.)

1.3.6 The Project Board for Local Development Plan 2, which was established last year, continues to hold meetings every 2 months and this has helped provide scrutiny from outwith the Planning Service and has ensured that the programme will meet the target set out in the Development Plan Scheme. Importantly, representatives from Community Planning are now included on the Board, again, emphasising the increasingly closer links between the 2 disciplines.

1.3.7 The Dumfries and Galloway Council Planning Service continues to face significant budget pressures due to both wider Council funding efficiencies and continuing low levels of planning fee income, which has never returned to pre-2008 levels. Stringent budget monitoring processes have been put in place to monitor and report on budget pressures.

1.3.8 Budget and efficiency measures are considered at management team meetings of all levels and reports are made regularly to the Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Committee.

1.4 Culture of continuous improvement

1.4.1 Analysis of the Development Management performance is set out in Part 5 - D : Context below.

1.4.2 We have continued to see an increase in the use of ePlanning for submissions year on year. In 2014/15, 37.1%, of applications were submitted online. During 2015/16, this figure rose to 58.8%. The figure rose again to 61.7% in 2016/17. This increase is expected to continue as more agents use the eDevelopment website for submitting both building warrants and planning applications.

1.4.3 The Development Planning team continued with the monitoring of identified sites in the current Local Development Plan and with the contacting of landowners of allocated sites to establish just how effective their sites were (e.g. was the site being actively marketed and promoted for development?). This, combined with the 2 Call for Sites exercises which were undertaken, should ensure that any demonstrably ineffective sites are not allocated in LDP2.

1.4.4 One of our commitments for 2016/17 was move from our previous back-office system, Acolaid, to Uniform, the product used by the vast majority of Scottish planning authorities. The system chosen was a hosted service i.e. one which used IDOX's data centre at Milton Keynes instead of servers maintained by the Council's Business and Technology Solutions department. It was recognised last year that it would be challenging to ensure that the setting up and data transfer was complete by the e-Building Standards 'go live' date of 24 August 2016 (especially given that much of the preparatory work was to be undertaken by Planning staff in addition to their normal roles). Unfortunately, this proved to be the case, with significant technical difficulties being encountered which were outwith the direct control of the Planning Service. The Development Management system was operational just shortly after the target date with only minimal disruption to external users of the ePlanning website but internally, it remains an ongoing 'work in progress' with some of the previous functionality still not available and / or slower than before. The Development Planning

modules were not operational during 2016/17 and it is one of our commitments in 2017/18 to resolve this matter.

1.4.5 The Council continues to operate a practice of requiring all staff to have an annual Professional Development Review (PDR). This formalised process allows staff development needs to be identified and for useful 2 way feedback to be facilitated and recorded. 100% of Development Management and Development Planning staff received PDRs during 2016/17. The current format of PDR is being reviewed corporately during 2017/18.

1.4.6 Team meetings are used as a method of ensuring that all staff are aware of relevant changes both at a national and local level. Each of the managers holds regular meetings with their Team. There is a cascade process of information from the Corporate Management Team to the Departmental Management Team, the Service Management Team and the Planning Management Team meetings. These meetings are however a 2 way process, where staff are encouraged to provide feedback. 1-2-1 meetings are also held.

1.4.7 Benchmarking has been used as a method of sharing best practice between authorities and among staff. Meetings with Scottish Borders Council on wind energy matters of joint interest are regularly attended. The Planning and Building Standards Manager attended all the Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) Development Management Sub-Committee meetings during 2016/17 and is also a Vice-Chair of HoPS Energy and Resources Sub-Committee. During 2016/17, the Head of Planning and Regulatory Services was the Chair of HOPS and attended all meetings of the HOPS Executive and the High Level Group meetings with the Cabinet Minister.



Part 2: Supporting Evidence

Part 2 of this report was compiled, drawing on evidence from the following sources:

- Dumfries and Galloway Council Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Committee Reports and Minutes
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Full Council Reports and Minutes
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Planning Performance Framework 2015/16
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Economy, Environment and Infrastructure Business Plan 2016-18
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Development Management Customer Charter 2014
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Service Customer Guidance Note 2016
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Planning Enforcement Charter (Revised December 2015)
- Dumfries and Galloway Council Local Development Plan Project Board Minutes
- Planning Services Structure Charts
- Dumfries and Galloway Council website
- Reports from IDOX Acolaid and Uniform (Development Management back-office systems)
- Reports from Scottish Government ePlanning portal
- Heads of Planning Scotland Meeting Minutes
- Scottish Government Planning website

[NB - Wherever possible, weblinks have been included within Part 1 above, in order to give direct online access to the relevant evidence and thus avoiding unnecessarily duplication in the PPF. Case studies of key elements have been also provided within the PPF.]

Case Study 1

Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning

Dumfries and Galloway Council made 3 submissions for the Scottish Government's Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning in 2016. 2 of these were in the Plans category and covered the Supplementary Guidance on Dark Skies Friendly Lighting, and also the attempts to Raise Design Standards Across the Region. A 3rd submission, in the Process category, focused on efforts made to improve Householder Application Performance.

All 3 submissions were shortlisted (requiring presentations to be made to the judging panel) and at the Awards Ceremony on 8 November 2016, all 3 received Awards, the most obtained by any Scottish planning authority.

Presentation of the awards was made by Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government and Housing.



Part 3:

Service Improvements 2017-18

In the coming year we will:

- Commit the time and resources to further develop the Uniform back office system, with particular focus on getting the Development Plan Monitoring module operational
- Following the review of our pre-application enquiry service which was undertaken during 2015/16, we will implement a revised service which will include a banded scheme of charges
- In conjunction with A+DS, we will progress the development of the SPZ Plot Passport scheme for self-build residential developments
- Introduce enhanced Member engagement for the Proposed Plan stage of LDP2
- Review and update as necessary all our Customer Charters
- In conjunction with Building Standards, review our engagement with customers through the agents' forum (format / frequency / location of meetings)



Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2016-17:

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
<p>Commit the time and resources to introducing a new back-office computer system, moving from Acolaid to the Uniform system across the entire of Planning and Regulatory Services, allowing integration of property data with other services such as Building Standards, Environmental Health and Trading Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable time and resources committed to the project • Data migrated successfully, connection to hosted system made and Uniform installed throughout Planning and Building Standards • Development Management system operational along with e-planning https://eaccess.dumgal.gov.uk/online-applications/ • Due to delays in the project and priority being given to producing the MIR, full implementation of the Development Planning system was put on hold 	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Restructure the management of Planning and Building Standards under a single Service Manager, allowing for closer working between the services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post created and filled (see 1.3.3 and Part 6) 	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Hold our inaugural Dumfries and Galloway Design Awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Awards held (see 1.1.1 and case study) 	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Pursue closer engagement with the Community Planning team to ensure that the objectives of the Community Plan and the Local Development Plan are better aligned and positioned to deliver beneficial outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Planning involved in Pre-MIR engagement(see 1.2.1 and case study) • Community Planning included on LDP2 Project Board (see 1.3.6) 	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Produce customer guidance / advice notes for small to medium sized business proposals and also for self-build and small scale housing proposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance for Small to Medium Sized Businesses produced and available on the Council's website (see 1.2.6) • Self-build and small scale housing guidance will be completed and published in summer 2017. 	<p>Partial</p>
<p>Review our pre-application advice forms and processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review undertaken and local agents surveyed on proposals (see 1.2.7) • Implementation of proposals identified as a Service Improvement for 2017/18 	<p>Yes</p>

Committed improvements and actions

Complete?

Establish cross-service working on SUDS with a view to getting Council-wide agreement on standards, implementation and adoption

- A number of cross-service meetings were held. However, in the absence of nationally agreed procedures for who should adopt SUDS, the topic proved too difficult for any firm measures to be agreed and taken forward.

Partial

Set up a working group with roads colleagues to explore better aligning planning permission and Roads Construction Consent processes and outcomes, in line with the recent letter from the Chief Planner.

- The Roads Hub continues to function well in this regard.
- The SPZ Pilot Scheme is being used as a 'live' example to test how planning and RCC processes can be better aligned. (see 1.1.3)

Yes

Case Study 2

DGC Design Awards

As part of its efforts to raise design standards across the region and also to celebrate the 2016 Year of Innovation, Architecture and Design, the Council held its first Design Awards Scheme. There was both a high quality and quantity of submissions for an inaugural event. A judging panel comprising Mark Douglas (Lead Officer, Built Heritage and Design at Scottish Borders Council), Diarmaid Lawlor (Director of Urbanism at Architecture and Design Scotland) and Volkmar Nix (former Conservation Officer at DGC) shortlisted and then visited the sites. At an Awards Ceremony on 5 July 2016, the winners were announced as follows:-



New Build Residential - Lane's End, Thornhill (John Murray Architect);

New Build Non-Residential - Kirroughtree Visitor Centre, Newton Stewart (jmachitects); and

Works to Existing Buildings - Killylour, Shawhead (Simon Winstanley Architects).



Part 4: National Headline Indicators (NHIs)

Key outcomes	2016-17	2015-16
Development Planning:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> age of local development plan at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i> 	2 years 6 months	1 year 6 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? 	Yes	Yes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? 	No	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year? 	Yes	Yes
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established housing land supply 	9,246 units	9,496 units
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-year effective housing land supply 	3,299 units	3,890 units
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-year housing supply target 	2,707 units	2,594 units
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place) 	6.1 years	7.5 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing approvals 	295 units	397 units
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing completions over the last 5 years 	1,964 units	2,189 units
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketable employment land supply 	225.78 ha	258.71ha
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment land take-up during reporting year 	32.93 ha	0.0ha
Development Management		
Project Planning		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice 	61.4% (736)	56.1% (N/A)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement 	16.7% (1)	14.3% (1)
Decision-making		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application approval rate 	95.4%	94.4%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delegation rate 	95%	94.5%
Validation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of applications valid upon receipt 	30%	N/A

Key outcomes	2016-17	2015-16
Decision-making timescales		
Average number of weeks to decision:		
• Major developments	34.0	31.6
• Local developments (non-householder)	12.9	12.8
• Householder developments	6.5	5.8
Legacy Cases		
• Number cleared during reporting period	19	20
• Number remaining	31	37
Enforcement		
• time since enforcement charter published / reviewed Requirement: review every 2 years	15 Months	3 months

Case Study 3

Pre-MIR Engagement

The Council’s Development Planning team was keen to explore new ideas and methods of trying to engage communities early in the plan making process so their views could help inform the Main Issues Report (MIR). The Place Standard Tool was identified as a good device to use. The team approached PAS and the Council’s Community Planning team to help deliver a total of 6 workshops across Dumfries and Galloway. Approximately 120 people and organisations attended.

PAS facilitated the workshops with help and assistance from the Development Planning and Community Planning teams. Using the Place Standard Tool, people discussed and recorded what they thought about where they lived in relation to the various Place Standard categories and what could be done to shape how their town / village will operate over the next 20 / 30 years. The workshops also enabled the team to explain the planning process and outline why input from communities was important especially at the pre-MIR stage.



4.1 Development Planning

4.1.1 The current LDP was adopted in September 2014. During the course of the reporting period, the Development Planning team began work on preparing LDP2. This involved undertaking 5 Member seminars, running 2 Call for Sites exercises, and holding 6 pre-MIR workshop sessions across the region in conjunction with PAS using the Place Standard tool.

4.1.2 The Main Issues Report was published for 12 weeks' consultation at the end of January 2017. The Council made the decision to send out neighbour notification letters to all neighbours of sites included in the MIR. This meant the 12 drop-in sessions that took place across the region were well attended.

4.2 Effective Land Supply

4.2.1 The effective housing land supply figures contained in this year's return are based on the adopted Local Development Plan. The figures in this year's return cover the full reporting period. There continues to be more than adequate housing land supply across all market areas.

4.2.2 A rigorous assessment has been made of all the allocated housing sites in the adopted LDP to assess their effectiveness. This assessment along with completions has resulted in a reduced effective land supply.

4.3 Employment Land

4.3.1 The effective employment land supply figures contained in this year's return are based on the adopted Local Development Plan. Whilst there were no completions during the previous reporting period, 32.93 hectares have been developed during this reporting period. This includes the development of a number of sites including a site on the edge of Dumfries for a new district hospital. Planning permission was also granted for a total of 10.05 hectares during the reporting period.

4.4 Development Management

4.4.1 The Development Management service continued with the same 3 hierarchy-based teams which were introduced in 2014/15, namely Major Developments, Local Applications, and Minor Applications and Enforcement. Commentary on performance is provided under Part 5 - D: Context below.



Part 5: Official Statistics

A: Decision-making timescales (based on 'all applications' timescales)

Category	Average timescale (weeks)		
	2016-2017	2016-2017	2015-2016
Major developments	6	34.0	31.6
Local developments (non-householder)	602		
• Local: less than 2 months	245 (40.7%)	6.7	6.6
• Local: more than 2 months	357 (59.3%)	17.2	18.1
Householder developments	355		
• Local: less than 2 months	316 (89.0%)	5.8	5.4
• Local: more than 2 months	39 (11.0%)	11.6	13.1
Housing developments			
Major	0	-	-
Local housing developments	197		
• Local: less than 2 months	46 (23.4%)	7.3	7.1
• Local: more than 2 months	151 (76.6%)	20.3	20.5
Business and industry			
Major	1	25.6	-
Local business and industry	23		
• Local: less than 2 months	12 (52.2%)	6.9	6.8
• Local: more than 2 months	11 (47.8%)	20.1	19.7
EIA developments	1	223.2	85.0
Other consents	142	10.3	9.9
Planning/legal agreements	16		
• Major: average time	2	54.4	84.1
• Local: average time	14	37.4	50.7
Local reviews	17	17.9	17.0

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2016-17		2015-2016	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	17	12	70.6	8	80.0
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	15	7	46.7	5	55.6

C: Enforcement activity

	2016-17	2015-16
Cases taken up	155	173
Cases resolved	131	126
Notices served	9	8
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	1	0
Prosecutions	0	0

D: Context

1. In terms of Development Management, after a number of years of continuous improvement, there was a slight increase in average time taken to process planning applications in comparison to 2015/16. Major applications took 34.0 weeks on average (31.6 in 2015/16), Local applications (non-householder) took 12.9 weeks (12.8 in 2015/16) and Householder applications took 6.5 weeks (5.8 in 2015/16). However, it should be noted that both the latter 2 categories still remain quicker than was the case 2 years ago in 2014/15 (13.0 and 7.0 weeks respectively).

2. This increase in 2016/17 can mainly be attributed to 2 factors. Firstly, during the year, the Council migrated to a new back-office computer system (see 1.4.4). This process was more complicated than anticipated and involved several weeks downtime last summer where no applications could be registered or issued. The new Development Management system is however now operational. Secondly, there has been a shortage of administrative staff in the 2 offices (Dumfries and Stranraer) which the service shares with Building Standards. During the year, 3 members of staff retired and 3 were on maternity leave and none of these vacancies were back-filled.

3. Where a legal agreement is required, it has been our standard practice for several years now for us to recommend to the Planning Applications Committee that approval is "subject to the successful completion of the appropriate legal agreements within 6 months of the date of the decision or any extended timescale as agreed by the appointed officer". This ensures that legal agreements are concluded promptly (applications can be refused under delegated powers where this is not the case) but allows flexibility where conclusion is still going to be achieved within a reasonable timescale. Examples can be found in the Minutes of the Planning Applications Committee on the webpage below (e.g. Item 6 on the 24 May 2016 meeting):-

<http://egenda.dumgal.gov.uk/aksdumgal/users/public/admin/kab12.pl?cmte=PLNandmeet=83andarc=71>

4. Appeals and Local Review Body - There was a drop in both the number of Local Review Body and DPEA appeal decisions compared to the previous year. There were 17 Local Review Body decisions in 2016/17 (7 more than the previous year, a 70% increase) and 70.6% of the original decisions were upheld (80% were upheld the previous year). 15 appeals were determined by the Scottish Ministers within the period (9 in 2015/16).

5. Consultations received by ourselves regarding applications made to the Scottish Government under Section 36 and 37 under the Electricity Act 1989 are not captured in the PPF statistics but have a very significant impact on Dumfries and Galloway Council. These type of consultations require a considerable amount of time and resources to be dedicated to them, especially where the Council decides to object, as this automatically generates a Public Local Inquiry. The Council provided responses on 2 S36 consultations during this period, both requiring comments from a number of internal consultees and the production of a lengthy Committee report. The volume of EIA screening requests (15) and scoping requests (7) also has an impact on workload.

6. Although the strategic reinforcement project to upgrade the existing electricity powerline from Auchencrosh in South Ayrshire to Harker in Cumbria, right across Dumfries and Galloway, which was proposed by Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) during 2015/16, did not proceed, officers have been involved in discussions regarding a revised element of part of the original proposal. This involves a new powerline along the north-south axis from Kendoon to Tongland.

7. 155 Enforcement cases were taken up during 2016/17 and 131 breaches were resolved, a slight increase on the previous year despite a reduced resource. 2 High Hedge applications were determined in 2016/17 and notices were served in both cases.

Case Study 4

Theatre Royal - Queen Street

Built in 1792, the Theatre Royal Dumfries is the oldest theatre in Scotland that still operates as a theatre today. The building was recently the subject of a £2M refurbishment and expansion, creating a more modern theatre for the 21st Century internally and improving its external appearance significantly.

At the same time, the Council has implemented a scheme of public realm works in the nearby Queen Street area, complementing the rejuvenated Theatre and enhancing the quality of the built environment in this historic part of the town.



Part 6: Workforce Information (as on 31 March 2017)

	Tier 1 Chief Executive	Tier 2 Director	Tier 3 Head of Service	Tier 4 Manager
Head of Planning Service			•	

		DM	DP	Enforcement	Other
Managers / Team Leaders	No. Posts	3	1	See DM	1 Planning and Building Standards Manager
	Vacant	0	0	0	0
Main grade posts	No. Posts	9 (7.9 FTE)	6 (5.2 FTE)	0	4 (3.8 FTE)
	Vacant	0	0	0	0
Technician	No. Posts	6	3 (2.9 FTE)	2 (1.7 FTE)	0
	Vacant	0	0	0	0
Office Support / Clerical * pro-rata - shared with Building Standards	No. Posts	Clerical / administrative* 3.9 FTE Registration Team 2.5 FTE	0	0	0
	Vacant	0	0	0	0

Committee and Site Visits	Number per year
Full council meetings	0 (for planning applications)
Planning committees	12
Area committees (where relevant)	N/A
Committee site visits	7
LRB	6
LRB site visits	3

Part 7: Performance Markers

Driving Improved Performance				
Performance Marker	Measure	Source/ Evidence	Policy Support	PPF
1 Decision making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types	Evidence of continuous improvement	Statistics and National Headline Indicators	Official Statistics and PPF reports	NHIs Part 5: Official Statistics and D - Context 1-7 Paras 1.4.1; 1.4.2; 4.4.1
2 Project management: offer of processing agreements (or other agreed project plan) made to prospective applicants in advance of all major applications and availability publicised on planning authority website	Y/N	PA to provide	Modernising the Planning System (Audit Scotland); SG website / template	NHIs; Quality of Service and Engagement; Paras 1.2.3; 1.3.4
3 Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications: - availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications clear and proportionate requests for supporting information	Y/N Examples	PA to provide	White Paper; Delivering Planning Reform; Planning Reform Next Steps	NHIs; Quality of Service and Engagement Paras 1.2.4; 1.2.6; 1.2.7
4 Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications within 6 months of 'resolving to grant	Reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant (from same time last year)	PA to provide	Official statistics; PPF reports; evidence of delays to major developments	Quality of Service and Engagement; Governance Part 5: D - Context 3

Driving Improved Performance

Performance Marker	Measure	Source/ Evidence	Policy Support	PPF
5 Enforcement charter updated / re-published	Within 2 years	PPF report	Planning Act (s158A)	NHIs Part 4 Para 1.2.4 Part 3: Service Improvements 2017-18
6 Continuous improvements: - show progress/ improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators - progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report	Progress on all commitments	PPF report	Delivering Planning Reform; PPF Report	Culture of Continuous Improvement; Service Improvement Plan Part 5: Official Statistics and D - Context 1-2 Paras 1.4.1; 1.4.2

Promoting the Plan-Led System

Performance Marker	Measure	Source/ Evidence	Policy Support	PPF
7 LDP (or LP) less than 5 years since adoption	Y/N	PPF report	Planning Act (s16); Scottish Planning Policy	NHIs; Quality of Outcomes; Quality of service and engagement Para 4 - 4.1
8 Development plan scheme demonstrates next LDP: - on course for adoption within 5-year cycle - project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale	Y/N Y/N	PPF report	Planning Act (s16); Scottish Planning Policy	NHIs; Quality of Outcomes; Quality of service and engagement Paras 1.2.1; 1.3.6
9 Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	Evidence of activity	PA to provide		Quality of Service and Engagement Governance Para 1.2.1

Promoting the Plan-Led System

Performance Marker	Measure	Source/ Evidence	Policy Support	PPF
10	Cross-sector stakeholders, including industry, agencies and Scottish Government, engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation	Evidence of activity	PA to provide	Quality of Service and Engagement Governance Para 1.2.1; 1.2.8
11	Production of regular and proportionate policy advice, for example through supplementary guidance, on information required to support applications	Evidence of activity	PA to provide	Quality of Service and Engagement Paras 1.2.3;1.2.4; 1.2.6

Simplifying and Streamlining

Performance Marker	Measure	Source/ Evidence	Policy Support	PPF
12	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (e.g. protocols; joined-up services; single contact; joint pre-application advice)	Examples from the year	PA to provide	Quality of Service and Engagement Governance Paras 1.1.3; 1.2.5; 1.3.3; 1.3.6
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities	Evidence of activity to pass on and adopt good practice	PPF report	Delivering Planning Reform; Planning Reform Next Steps Culture of continuous improvement Para 1.4.7

Delivering Development

Performance Marker	Measure	Source/ Evidence	Policy Support	PPF
14 Stalled sites/legacy cases: conclusion/ withdrawal of planning applications more than one-year-old	Reducing number of applications more than one-year-old (from same time last year)	Statistics from SG Analytical Services		Governance NHIs Paras 1.3.5; 1.4.3
15 Developer contributions: clear expectations - set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan,) and - in pre-application discussions	Y/N Examples	LDP PA to provide		Quality of service and engagement Paras 1.2.3; 1.2.4



