

South Ayrshire Council Planning Performance Framework

Annual Report

2016-17



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South Ayrshire Council shares with its community planning partners a vision for the area which seeks:

“To make South Ayrshire the most dynamic, inclusive and sustainable community in Scotland”.

As a Council we are committed to “working with our partners and communities to make life better in South Ayrshire”

To support these aspirations the spatial strategy for the area aims to:

- Support development that encourages sustainable economic growth, improves the quality of the environment and creates sustainable communities;
- Guide development to appropriate places;
- Provide the right conditions to help regenerate South Ayrshire’s town centres and keep them vibrant, while conserving their historic character;
- Encourage renewable- energy developments without damaging the landscape and countryside;
- Promote tourism while protecting the coastline and other assets on which tourism is based; and;
- Help the development of Glasgow Prestwick Airport and the area’s seaports as well as support the principles of sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the sixth in the series of Planning Performance Frameworks which have been prepared by the Planning Service of South Ayrshire Council.

Last year the service reported a continued and sustained performance against a number of key indicators and this year's report highlights continued improvements, in the advice provided to developers, in innovation, in early collaboration on development proposals, promoting economic priorities identified within the LDP Action Programme and in promoting a framework for housing investment

However it was also recognised in the feedback we received there were a number of areas where further improvements could be made. These included working more closely with council services to support the delivery of corporate objectives, working with community planning partners to strengthen the links between spatial planning and community planning, ensuring robust project management for progressing the new local development plan and in determining major applications. These are aspects addressed in this year's annual report.

Among the key successes of last year have been:

- Supporting the regeneration of Ayr Town Centre through the adoption of a single issue local development plan on retailing and town centres;
- Supporting the delivery of high quality homes

- Supporting the development of Prestwick aerospace cluster and development of an Airport Master Plan to support future space growth aspirations and Ayrshire Growth Deal;
- Commencing a review of the current LDP
- Introducing modernised monitoring of strategic developments to monitor risk ;
- Completing a review of mineral permissions and introducing modern conditions to a number of quarry operations;
- A further reduction in the average time taken to process planning applications;
- Designating new Conservation Areas for Prestwick and Tarbolton and extending the Ayr Central Conservation area to include Low Green.
- Winning two national awards for the innovative use of ESRI Story Mapping software.

The Planning Service continues to work closely with partners on a range of economic initiatives and partnerships and during the year this has included supporting:

- The development of an "Ayrshire Growth Deal" to lever future funding to support investment in key infrastructure within Ayrshire;
- The regeneration of Ayr town centre;
- The development of the Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, including supporting the delivery of a Strategic Plan for 2017-2022

- Supporting the establishment of the Clyde Marine Planning process.

As highlighted in last year report there has been a major review of the planning system in Scotland. The findings from this review have been [considered by Government](#) and they challenge planning services to:

- Promote strong flexible development plans that lead and inspire;
- Promote the delivery of more homes.
- Create better places in which to live
- Promoting better co-ordination of infrastructure planning.;
- Ensure adequate resources are in place to ensure efficient and transparent development management;
- Provide strong leadership, smarter resourcing and sharing of skills;
- Increase the collaboration and empowerment of local communities in the planning process.
- Promote innovation in the use of new technology

As demonstrated in this annual report these are outcomes which the planning service of South Ayrshire is committed to achieving and working toward



Development Management

South Ayrshire determined 859 applications in 2016/17. This can be broken down as 643 planning applications and 216 other consents (e.g. listed building, advertisements and others). This was a drop by 13% in volume of planning applications/consents from 2015/16 in which period 988 applications were decided. Comparatively, there was also a drop in the number of planning applications decided nationally; 6% of 'local' applications and 8% for 'major' applications. South Ayrshire however remains one of the busier planning authorities of its type in Scotland in terms of the volume of planning applications/consents.

There was a reduction in the number of 'major' planning applications decided; from 5 in 2015/16 to 3 in 2016/17. All 3 'major' planning applications decided in the period 2016/17 were subject to processing agreements and all were determined within the agreed timescales of the agreements.

The number of 'local' developments decreased from 687 in 2015/16 to 640 in 2016/17. The overall average time taken to determine 'local' applications in 2016/17 was 6.8 weeks; a figure significantly below the national average of 9.2 weeks. 89.8% of 'local' planning applications in 2016/17 were determined within 2 months; which again is significantly above the national average of 75.4%. The time taken to determine 'local'

applications (non-householder) has decreased from 7.5 weeks to 7.1 weeks; representing continuous improvement in successive years and in terms of householder applications this has increased from 5.9 weeks to 6.6 weeks. This is not considered to represent a significant increase and is below the national average of 7.3 weeks.

Whilst there has been a decrease in the number of applications decided in the last year there have been a number development management case officer posts vacated within the planning service over the same period.

The approval rate of applications fell slightly from 93.3% in 2015/16 to 92.5% in 2016/17

Pre-application advice

The Council implemented a pre-application scheme on the 1st April 2016. Enquirers are able to access a free pre-application service. The figure quoted relates solely to the number of formal pre-application enquiries. It therefore excludes a significant number of pre-application enquiries. Having recently reviewed its pre application service South Ayrshire Council is intending to provide a single tier pre-application service. It is anticipated following this introduction that the number of pre-apps will increase.

During the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 the Planning Service provided pre-app Category 2 advice to 90 enquires. 41 Planning applications were received following the submission of this application advice. This is 6.4% of all planning application(643) received during this period.

Processing Agreements

The Council encourages the use of processing agreements for; all major development applications; larger renewable energy applications and for complex or potentially contentious local applications within smaller communities. The benefits of using processing agreements include:

- Greater transparency in decision-making for everyone involved in the process;
- Greater predictability and certainty over the timing of key stages;
- Faster decision-making;
- Clearer lines of communication between the Council and applicant;
- More effective and earlier engagement of key stakeholders;
- Ensure that information requirements are proportionate and reasonable

Ten processing agreements were put in place during this year, with 100% of them meeting the agreed timescale. This is on par with the previous year where there were also ten, and again they all met the agreed timescale. The council provides guidance and a draft agreement for developers [online](#). Processing agreements are published with application details on the E-planning website.

Legacy Cases

South Ayrshire has no applications which were validated prior to 3rd August 2009. There are 4 applications which have been validated for more than a year (as of March 2017) 6 were cleared within the 2016/17 period. Those outstanding are subject to processing agreements agreed with the applicant.

Enforcement

The Planning Services deals with around 200 enforcement cases annually. In 2016/17 the number of breaches identified was 207 and the number resolved was 154. [A total of 14 notices were served](#). This is an increase from 2015/16 when 174 cases were taken up, 199 resolved and 7 notices were served. The increase in notices is attributed to the introduction of a new [Enforcement Charter](#) and the increasing use of Section 33A notices. As outlined in the previous PPF's the Enforcement Charter was adopted in January 2016 with the next review due in January 2018. A major workstream is being progressed in 2016/17 to inform the next charter and includes a spot check of Notices of Initiation of Development and Certificates of Completion and to review them against the relevant planning permission.

Enforcement

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Cases taken up	246	174	207
Notices served	8	7	14
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0	0
Breaches Resolved	216	199	154

“May I take this opportunity to formally record my thanks to and appreciation of your colleague....., for his handling of the matter which I recently raised with your department.dealt with me promptly, courteously, informatively and at all stages kept me advised of progress”.

National Headline Indicators

Key Outcomes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
<p>Development Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • age of local/strategic development plan(s) (years and months) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i> • Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme? (Y/N) • Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year? (Y-earlier/Y-later/N) • Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year? (Y/N) 	<p>6 months</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>18 months (LDP adopted September 2014)</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>2 years and 6 months (LDP adopted September 2014)</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established housing land supply • 5-year effective housing land supply • 5-year housing supply target • 5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place) • Housing approvals • Housing completions over the last 5 years • Marketable employment land supply • Employment land take-up during reporting year 	<p>9137 units</p> <p>2925 units</p> <p>2545 units</p> <p>5.7 years</p> <p>202 units</p> <p>867 units</p> <p>Availability of employment land: 141ha, representing 21% of total land 2014-15</p>	<p>9010 units</p> <p>2899 units</p> <p>2545 units</p> <p>5.7 years</p> <p>268 units</p> <p>1002 units</p> <p>Not surveyed</p> <p>Not surveyed</p>	<p>8337 units</p> <p>2694 units</p> <p>2545 units</p> <p>5.3 years</p> <p>75 units</p> <p>1047units</p> <p>Not surveyed</p> <p>Not surveyed</p>

Key Outcomes	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Development Management Project Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice Number of major applications subject to processing agreement Number of applications subject to other project plan Percentage planned timescales met Decision-making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application approval rate Delegation rate 	5% 8 XX 100% 92.7% 95.5%	23% 10 0 100% 93.3% 97.5%	6.4% 10 0 100% 92.2% 96.5%
Decision-making timescales Average number of weeks to decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major developments Local developments (non-householder) Householder developments 	26.0 8.7 7.1	42.6 7.0 5.9	All timescales for “major” applications were met through the use of Processing Agreements 7.1 6.6
Legacy Cases (see text) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number cleared during reporting period Number remaining 	0 0	0 0	0 0
Enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> time since enforcement charter published / reviewed (months) <i>Requirement: review every 2 years</i> number of breaches identified / resolved 	19 months 246/216	2 months (charter updated and approved January 2016) 174/199	14 months (charter updated and approved January 2016) 207/154

QUALITY OF OUTCOMES

South Ayrshire Council is committed to offering an effective Planning Service that supports sustainable economic growth and promotes high quality development.

To achieve these outcomes engaging with the public and the development industry on an ongoing basis is seen as a vital part of the service offered.

As part of this commitment the Planning Service has recently reviewed and refocused its [pre-application enquiry service](#). Pre application advice is offered in a bid to allow applications to be fine-tuned prior to submission- saving time and money for all parties whilst also ensuring development plan criteria can be met.

High quality development is also guided through the Local Development Plan policies and Supplementary Guidance.

[Supplementary Guidance](#) and planning policy advice notes. prepared by the Planning Service now provide developers with a range of advice which includes standards for Rural Housing, the Historic Environment, the Alteration and Extension to Houses, wind energy development and protection of Dark Skies. All represent significant progress in guidance designed to capitalise and maintain the environmental quality of South Ayrshire, a key asset on which the economy is based.

In the last year the Council increased the number of [Conservation Areas](#) within South Ayrshire with the designation of Prestwick & Tarbolton conservation areas

During the year the Planning Service has introduced new arrangements with the Council's Housing Service in relation to the process of bringing forward the development of new sites for local authority housing. The process is designed to facilitate discussion and communication between the Housing and Planning service from the outset, to ensure all Council house new build applications achieve both Planning and Housing service aspirations and are processed timeously and efficiently. (Case Study 1)

"We very much welcome the priority given to promoting place making design by South Ayrshire Council planning officers and the strong endeavour of SAC to improve the quality of outcomes from the development process through active engagement. Officers have involved A&DS in a partnership approach with a view to improving outcomes from a number of development projects over the past couple of years."

"The main vehicle for this involvement has been through participation in A&DS Design Forum workshops. The council have advocated Design Forum workshops as a means of facilitating improved dialogue with developers and designers in connection with design and place making issues. Officers have been effective and active participants in a well-resourced cross –service approach to engaging with the Design Forum workshop process."

"Projects taken forward in this way have included the development of a masterplan for the regeneration of Ayr Waterfront, a new protocol for delivering council procured housing at Ayr Whitletts and a recent re-engagement with a new team taking forward the extension of southeast Ayr at Corton."

[Johnny Cadell- Architecture and Design Scotland](#)

Case Study 1- Place Making Collaboration-Inter Departmental Protocol

The Council's Housing Service has embarked on a programme of Council house construction and refurbishment, underpinned by a capital allocation of £75m over the next 5 years. To ensure the most efficient delivery of new Council housing through the planning process and to create places that meet with the Government's place making agenda and objectives for health; the Planning Service undertook a project to deliver a joint processing protocol across the Council's Planning, Housing and Roads services, setting out an agenda for place-making and its delivery mechanisms. This was facilitated by Architecture and Design Scotland who chaired a Design Forum around proposals for Council house building at a cleared site of a former primary school in Whitletts, Ayr. The Forum focused on place-making and assisted the Council to understand how the site could be best delivered in terms of Designing Streets and Creating Places. A significant outcome of the Forum was to agree an inter-departmental protocol that established the design process in Housing Services bringing forward future sites, making use of the Place Standard and having a design agenda focusing on place-making and healthy lives. The process underpins a wider corporate objective for early engagement facilitated by the Place Standard tool and thereby improving outcomes for South Ayrshire residents. Having a robust design process can benefit the earliest deliverability of schemes for new housing, where appropriate, through deemed planning permissions.



Case Study 2- LDP- Action Programme delivery Symington Residential Development-

The proposed development at Townhead Symington was identified as a housing release in the Local Development Plan with an indicative capacity of 100 units. Mactaggart and Mickel applied for full planning permission for 134 dwelling houses on the site that occupies a prominent position at the edge of Symington.

The site is in a sensitive location adjacent to the Conservation Area and as a result the detail of the scheme required careful consideration to take account of its surroundings. A high standard of design ensured that the development integrated well and represented a sensitive transition between the built environment and the rural area.

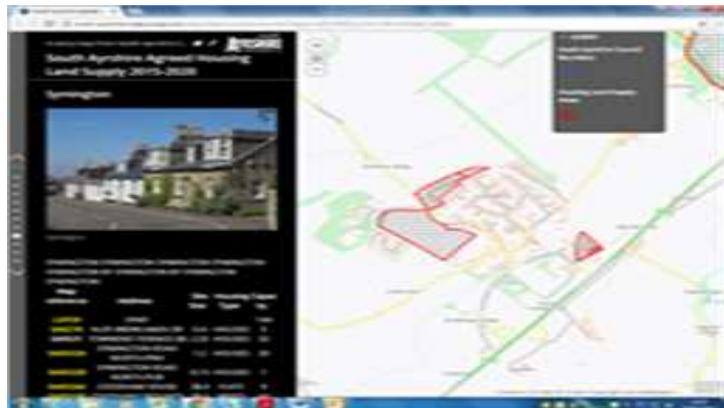
Pre-application discussions took place regarding the layout and the design of the houses, as well as the application process. Designed to accord with the Scottish Government policy statement "Creating Places" it followed the principles of the guidance given in Designing Places, Designing Streets and PAN 44: Fitting New Housing Development into the Landscape

The Planning Service has worked closely with the applicant to ensure the creation of an attractive and commercially viable place to live

The application was highly commended by the members at the Regulatory Panel.

This was a major application and is a good example of the use of a processing agreement. The agreement sought to identify key milestones in the planning application process and the necessary information required to process the application and conclude legal agreements. The applicant commented that :

“



“The Pre-application stage was a positive process and the advice received was clear, concise and consistent with the LDP and Council guidance.

The submission and validation process was equally positive as the team were courteous and helpful in ensuring that the application was of the required standard.

A processing agreement was offered and swiftly put in place which provided a clear tracker for the application and as a result, there were no delays.

The Development Plan Team have evidently worked hard on the development of the online version of the LDP, which resulted in a concise and user-friendly LDP.

SAC worked closely with M&M, resulting in a scheme that all parties were satisfied represented an improvement on the original permissions, with negotiation clearly adding value to the quality of the scheme.”

the decision making was both efficient and timeous, with updates to the processing agreement provided throughout the process as necessary.

In terms of the project management of our application, the processing agreement, pre-application discussions and consistent advice issued by the planning team ensured a smooth planning process”.

Jess Powell- Colliers

QUALITY OF SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT

Project Management

During the year the Planning Service project-managed the preparation of the Council's Town Centre LDP review through the establishment of an LDP Project Board and stakeholder involvement. The process sought to build on the previous experience gained during the preparation of the LDP.

The [review](#) also had the advantage in that it could take into account a number of emerging corporate strategic issues and provide an opportunity to create a clear vision and strategy for the regeneration of Ayr Town Centre, including modelling of traffic and the development work of Ayr Renaissance. The Council approved a challenging development plan scheme timetable for the preparation and adoption of a Town Centre LDP in March 2015.

The proposed LDP was submitted to the Scottish Ministers for examination on 29 April 2016. It was adopted in April 2017.

In the last year the Council has also begun preparation of a new local development plan ([LDP2](#)) and early discussions on the future issues has begun. This has taken advantage of the existing member working group to steer the process and has benefited from [early stakeholder](#) involvement through a series of workshops and topic group meetings. The

project is managed internally through project management software (Gant Chart software) and through the [Local Development Plan Scheme](#) published on the Council's web site.

Action Programming

The original Action Programme was published in 2015 and was prepared after significant consultation with other Council Services, including economic development, housing, education, Ayrshire Roads Alliance, Ayr Renaissance and the Maybole & Girvan regeneration teams and government agencies such as Transport Scotland, SEPA, Scottish Water, Historic Environment Scotland and SNH. The [LDP Action Programme](#) sets out their shared priorities for South Ayrshires. These actions support the delivery of economic opportunities centred on the delivery of housing, the development of Prestwick Airport, transport improvements and the development of the assets on which the rural economy of South Ayrshire. To accord with government guidance and national legislation the programme is reviewed updated every two years. The recent review in March 2017 showed good progress against a number of actions.

Pre Application Advice & Legal Agreements

The planning service reviewed and refocused its [pre-application enquiry service in 2015/16](#). To provide greater certainty for prospective applicants a chargeable pre-application service is now available that enables to ensure a more rigorous and detailed preliminary assessment of tentative planning proposals, including site meetings. However to continue an open door approach to the Service, prospective applicants still have access to a freely available pre-app service without charge.

The council continues to work with applicants to decrease the time spent on applications with associated legal agreements. The council has begun to roll out the use of standard templates in conjunction with legal services. The use of standard definitions is also being developed. Furthermore, with the review of the pre-application process, advice on the consideration of legal agreements can be given at the earliest opportunity and undertaken within agreed timescales for all parties involved.

Innovation – LDP Storytelling

The brief was to develop an [online development plan](#) that would be engaging, novel and interesting to users. The project from concept and scoping stage through development and review proved ground breaking. The project went live in March 2016 and has subsequently been met with enthusiasm and recognition. During the year online viewing of the LDP has been exceptional. Since winning the ESRI (UK) Customer Services Award 2016, in June and the Scottish Overall Award for Quality in Planning in November 2016 the format has been taken up and adopted by a number of Councils within Scotland.

Since winning the SAQiP award, the Planning Service has further developed the application of the StoryMap format (Refer Case Study 5), by employing it in its [Vacant and Derelict Land return](#) to the Scottish Government, commended as an exemplar of best practice, its [Housing Land Audit 2015](#), and the [Maybole Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#). Its application has also been further developed across other Council services

Communications & Customer Service

Customer Service Charter

It is the Council's aim to deliver an excellent level of customer service across all Council services. The [Council's Customer Charter](#) sets out the standards employees are required to provide to customers of the service. The charter focusses on providing open communication with applicants as they engage with the planning process within South Ayrshire whilst also ensuring any complaints they may have are dealt with timeously and satisfactorily.

The Planning Service operates the Council's Comments and Complaints Management Policy. It does not consider there to be a need to devise a service specific complaints policy. In 2016/17, the Planning Service received 9 complaints, 4 of the complaints were partially upheld and 5 were not upheld. This is a rise of three from the previous year, 2015/16. The four complaints that were partially upheld were assessed to establish if service improvements could be made to avoid any reoccurrence, one resulted in the preparation of an internal procedure note, all the remaining cases involved unique issues so no further improvement actions were identified as a result of these complaints.

Architects' Forum

The Architects Forum is an open network of Architects and agents that operate within South Ayrshire. The forum is to disseminate information and encourage discussion. It has been active since 2003 but interest has been in decline since 2010. This could be due to more effective use of the Council's website.

Planning Forum

The Planning Forum is a group of residents of South Ayrshire which the Planning Service consults on the development of planning policy. Through a series of workshops and meetings, Forum members have provided feedback, which has helped identify key issues and influence policy direction for the Local Development Plan and Supplementary Guidance, as well as providing commentary on the quality of the Planning Service.

A major project was undertaken in 2016/17 to refresh the Planning Forum., who are contacted directly to gauge opinion and comment at key stages in the local development

It was intended that this mechanism would be used again for LDP2. All members were contacted and asked if they would be willing to continue their involvement.

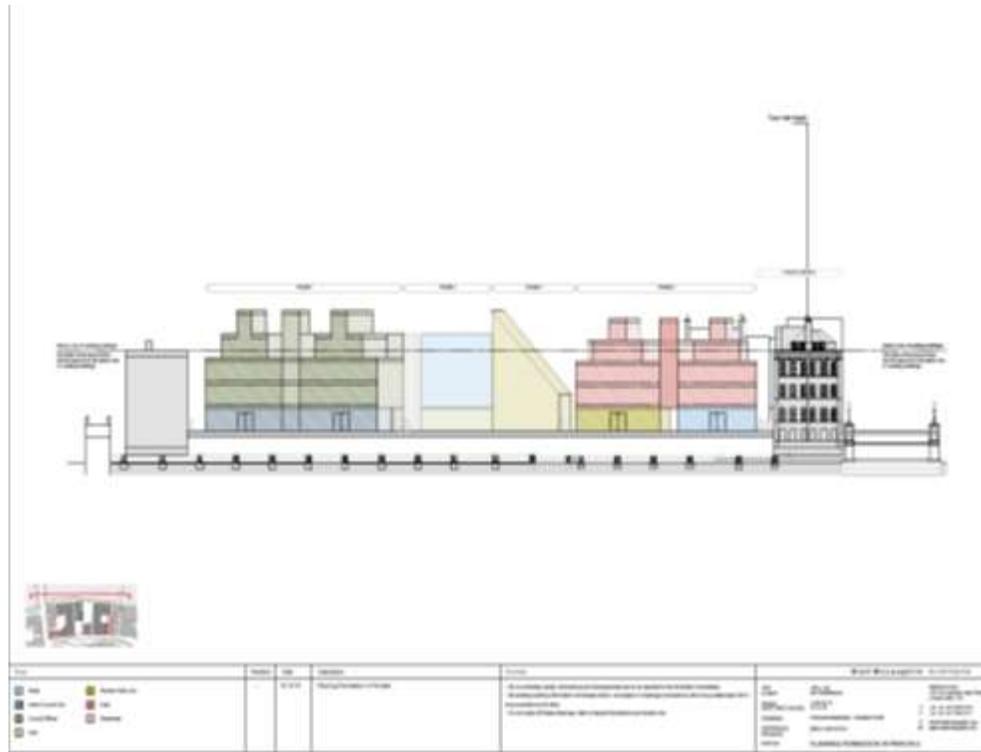
However in the light of feedback from this consultation the consultation strategy for LDP2 was changed to have a greater focus on new formats for consultation, particularly with regard to a user friendly online consultation system called "Questionwhere", which was developed partly in-house. In addition, conjoined pre- main issue consultation events were held with Community Planning and Community Justice Teams to broaden the appeal and reach of early engagement

Customer feedback

A customer experience survey recorded that 95% of applicants were very satisfied or satisfied with the planning application service that was provided. 90% of respondents, who had experience of other planning authorities, rated the Planning Service of South Ayrshire Council as excellent or good to deal with. Over 80% of developers expressed the view that the Planning Service offered positive support to them.

Case Study 3: Place Making

Riverside Development, Ayr



The proposal for the redevelopment and the regeneration of the riverside within Ayr town centre presented a major and complex application which was the subject of detailed pre-application engagement and advice. The Planning Service encouraged early and active engagement with Architecture and Design Scotland and Historic Environment Scotland. This significantly assisted the application process. The application was validated in November 2016 and a decision was issued in February 2017, well within the statutory 4 month period.

“We very much welcome the priority given to promoting placemaking design by South Ayrshire Council planning officers and the strong endeavour of SAC to improve the quality of outcomes from the development process through active engagement. Officers have involved A&DS in a partnership approach with a view to improving outcomes from a number of development projects over the past couple of years.”

Johnny Cadell- Architecture and Design Scotland

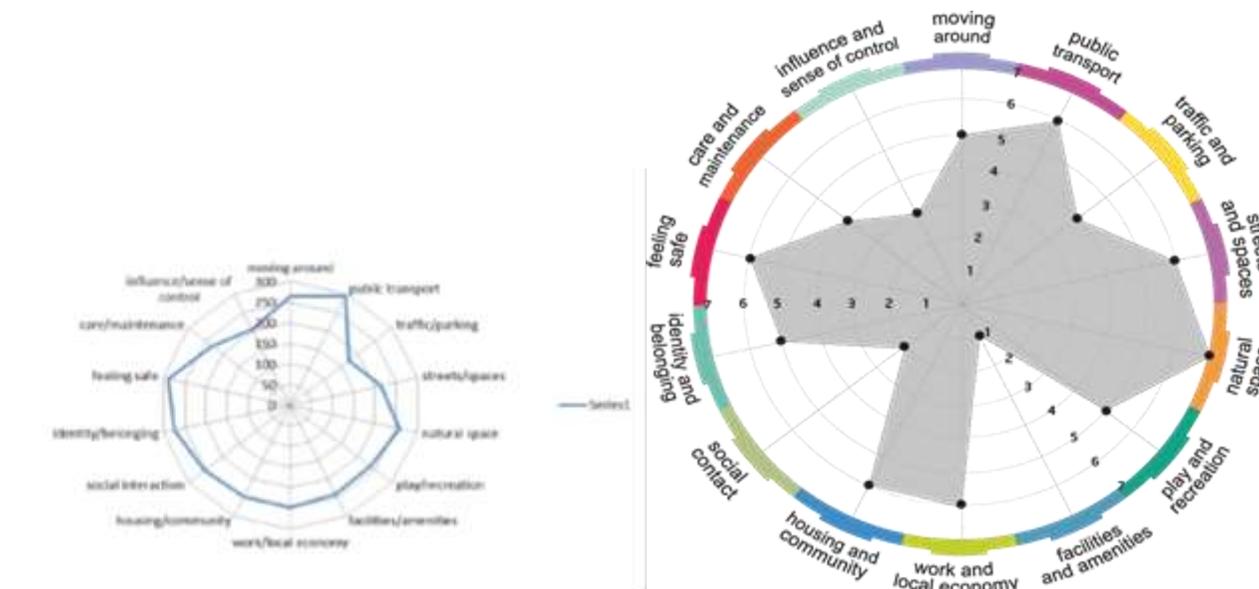
Case Study 4: Collaboration

Consultation methods LDP2

Place Standard Tool

The place standard tool is now used extensively across the Council. The first cases were associated with specific town centre charrettes and incorporated into dedicated outcome reports. The place standard tool was then “rolled out” as part of the conjoined consultation and discussion events held jointly between Planning, Community Planning and Community Justice teams during late 2016/early 2017. Information gained from aggregate locality planning areas will influence the Local Outcomes improvement Plan, Local Plans and local Development Plan. We anticipate that LDP2 will also recognise community aspirations detailed in the Charrette reports, and incorporate them as far as possible

Use of Place Standard within South Ayrshire



Case Study 5 – Innovation “Story Map” Development and “QuestionWhere” Consultation Methods-

The Planning Service has developed further the StoryMap format, by combining it with Questionwhere, another ESRI product, to form an interactive, spatial, on-line tool for public consultation. The tool was piloted at the Early Engagement/Call for Sites stage of the pre-Main Issues Report (MIR) of the replacement South Ayrshire Local Development Plan (LDP2) and is being refined for community consultation use during the subsequent stages of the Plan process. The public was invited to answer a series of questions via a portal on the Council’s web site, which took them to a StoryMap, comprising explanatory text, photographs, videos and interactive mapping. They could input comments on a number of themes, such as Housing, the Economy and the Natural Environment, and, where any comment had a spatial aspect, mark the location on the interactive map. As QuestionWhere is able to merge a questionnaire with interactive mapping, it was used to invite sites for release through the LDP. Applicants completed an on-line questionnaire about their submitted site/s and were instructed how to outline them on the interactive mapping.

The combined StoryMap/QuestionWhere format offers a simple, convenient, more attractive, method of engaging communities in the LDP process. It allows the Planning Service to collate in one place the textual and spatial information gathered, thereby enabling it to be more readily analysed. Employing this joined-up format for community engagement and the Call for Sites made those processes simpler to manage, cheaper, less resource intensive and less time-consuming than previous, mixed electronic and paper-based formats. The information gathered can be kept together, in one place, enabling easier information management and more rapid transparency (spatial information can be posted more quickly on the Council’s web site). As a result of the format’s deployment, the Planning Service will be able to dispense with a bespoke consultation web portal, thereby saving over £8k/year.

The Early Engagement process itself was innovative, in that it gave the public the chance to identify issues it thought the MIR should address. In addition, it was undertaken as conjoined process with Community Planning and community Justice Colleagues. Consultation was also undertaken with local school children.



Case Study 6 – Review of Mineral Permissions Use of processing agreements

Breedon prepared and submitted Review of Old Minerals Permission applications in relation to Barbae and Tormitchell Quarries to South Ayrshire Council in April 2016. The applications required the submission of a new modern scheme of conditions for each site which were considered by the planning authority in consultation with the various statutory consultees. Amended conditions were subsequently agreed between the planning authority and Breedon the operator. The Council issued an updated Schedule of conditions in October 2016.

“South Ayrshire Council took time to fully engage with ourselves as operator including agreeing key milestones for the determination of the applications by way of Processing Agreements and convening a meeting to discuss the final schemes of conditions and to take on board Breedon’s comments. The result is a scheme of modern conditions for each site which provides for good environmental control of the operations at the site without undue restrictions on working rights”.

Tom Lewis-Breedon



GOVERNANCE

Managing Resources

The Planning Service has a management structure that is fit for purpose and ensures that the planning service operates in an integrated manner across the two principal service areas of Development Planning and Development Management.

A mobile staff structure also ensures that staff can be deployed where pressures or new priorities demand additional resource. The current service arrangements will be reviewed in the forthcoming year, this will take account of emerging changes to the national planning system. (Refer Action Part 4).

Work programmes and priorities are monitored and managed through reporting on the Council service and improvement plan and through regular planning management and team meetings.

The planning service continues to manage resources efficiently.

- i. Resources are aligned to deliver the priorities of the Service Improvement Plan, Development plan and Action Programme
- ii. Service standards ensure that time and resources are proportionate to the value added from the planning process
- iii. Corporate efficiency savings are met through income generation, vacancy

and resource management examples include the introduction of fees for pre application advice.

Efficient & Effective Decision Making

During the year South Ayrshire Council continued to process applications efficiently with almost 90% of local applications being determined in less than 2 months.

In the last year the overall average time taken to determine local applications was amongst the lowest within Scotland For those determined in under two months the time period again fell from the previous year. The time taken to determine all applications was 6.8 weeks significantly lower than the national average of 9.2 weeks This consistent performance was achieved by means of an effective scheme of delegation, 96.1% of applications were determined under delegated powers, the national figure for Scotland being 95.3%, a development team structured so that cases are determined at the most appropriate level within the Service. Case officers report to senior case officers who authorise delegated decisions. Additionally, a Development Management Protocol promotes early decision making.

In the forthcoming year the planning service will **undertake a review and scope improvements to processes for the consideration of applications by members at Regulatory Panel** meetings (Refer Action Part 4).

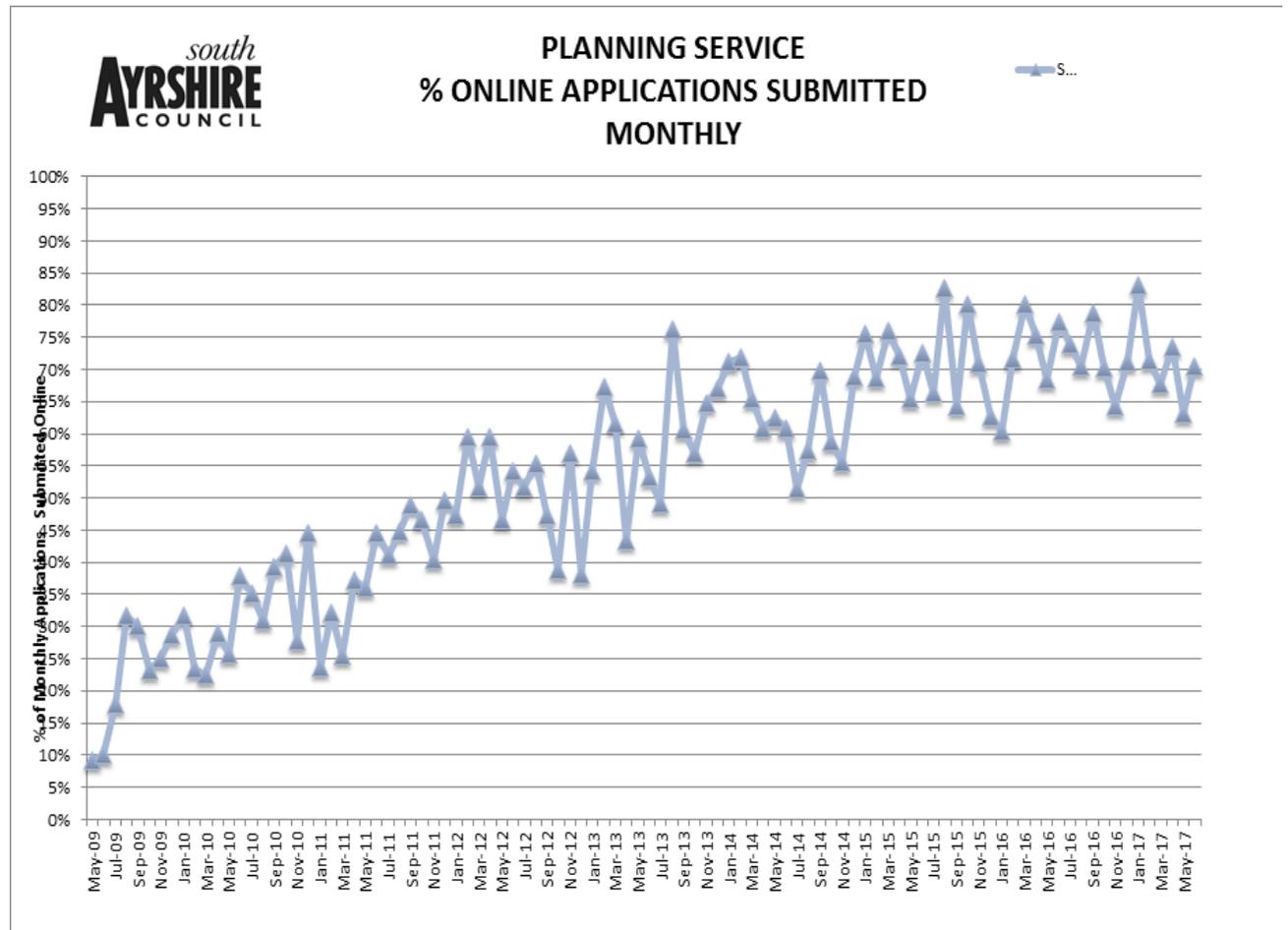
As reported earlier all major applications and more recently large s36 wind farm applications, in agreement with the Energy Consents Unit, are determined through processing agreements jointly agreed with the Planning Service and the applicant.

Online Applications

Submitting applications online helps speed up the process, while also ensuring a more transparent service. As illustrated in the graph opposite there has been a significant growth since 2009 of online applications to the Planning Service., this reflects a national trend. This growth appears to have now “flattened” out and within South Ayrshire monthly submissions online average around 70 to 75% of all applications

Validation

One of the main reasons for delay in the planning application process is because the planning application was not able to be validated at first submission. Guidance notes are provided with the planning application pack, but ultimately it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application submitted meets with statutory requirements. Of the total application received 1168 only 535 were valid on receipt (45.8%). This figure compares with a figure of 52.7% in 2015/16, 40.2% in 2014/15 and 55% in 2013/14. This compares with 40.2% in 14/15, 55% in 13/14 . The low level of first time validation impacts on the administration resources within the service. **The Service is currently working with HOPS to address a national approach to this issue.**



Value for Money

The costing the planning service undertaken by the Improvement Service on behalf of Heads of Planning Scotland in 2014/15 benchmarked South Ayrshire planning service with other planning authorities in Scotland. While acknowledging there were limitations in the exercise, it demonstrated at the time a cost efficient service within South Ayrshire planning department. Recent figures suggest this is still the case:

- Costs per application received were the 2nd lowest in Scotland (£694);
- Costs per capita were significantly below the national average at £13.36;
- Fee income as a percentage of the total cost of the planning service was the highest in Scotland (45.7%).

A review of historical performance data over recent years (Part 6 of this report) demonstrates sustained improvement in key areas of the service. The national indicators, age of the development plan and decision timescales for development management, clearly demonstrate a high performance that is meeting national targets with major strengths in some areas. When set against a culture within the service of early collaboration with applicants on development proposals, project management of key processes such as major development and the Local Development Plan a view could be reached that we are continuing to provide a highly performing planning service at best value

Decision Making

Local Review Body

An action from the 2015/16 Planning Performance Framework was to complete a review of Local Review Body arrangements. This was undertaken in consultation with the Council's Legal Services and Members of the LRB. One of the key drivers of the review was to ensure consistency, where appropriate, with procedures followed by the DPEA in their consideration of planning appeals. Improvements were made in relation to site visit arrangements, site photographs, LRB member briefing, appointed officer comment, preparation of draft planning conditions, circulation of any new material.

A total of 20 cases were considered by the Local Review Body in South Ayrshire Council in the 2016/17 reporting year. Only six 30% of the original decisions were upheld. This is below the national average which is around 60%. In 2012/13 almost three quarters of decisions were upheld. **(Refer to Action 2016/17)**

Appeals to Scottish Ministers

Four decisions taken by the Council were appealed to Scottish Ministers, of these only a quarter were upheld. This is significantly below the national average which is around half. (48.2%)

Since 2012/13 the number of appeals upheld by Ministers within South Ayrshire has fallen from around three quarters (78%). This trend is reflected nationally in decisions across Scotland.

Collaboration

During the last year the service has continued to strengthen collaborative arrangements with other Ayrshire Councils and Dumfries & Galloway through corporate, inter agency and partnership working. This is illustrated by involvement in the Ayrshire Growth Deal, Prestwick Aerospace/Spaceport bid, [Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere](#) Clyde Marine Planning the involvement of Architect & Design Scotland in key development projects, [Central Scotland Green Network](#). and improvements in internal working practices notably with the housing service and economic development services. Notable collaborative projects last year included:

- Supporting the delivery of the [Ayrshire Riverside Development Framework](#) [The first phase of this development has now commenced with the demolition of vacant buildings \(Refer Case Study3\)](#)
- Supporting the development of a "Growth Deal" for Ayrshire
- Developing an internal protocol with Housing Services to promote a design process for future housing investment.
- Finalising an indicative land use framework to complement a space port bid at Prestwick
- Supporting the development of the [Clyde Marine Planning Process](#)

CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Corporate working and Service Improvement Plan

The Planning Service works within the Council's "How Good is our Council Framework" (HGIOC) and over the last year has undertaken a robust self-evaluation against quality indicators within this framework. A number of improvements were identified and these are being taken forward both within the Service Improvement Plan and within supporting Planning Service Team Plans. They include:

- considering ways which spatial planning can be better integrated with community planning,
- improving business management infrastructure,
- Improving community engagement
- and strengthening effective relationships with key agencies.

The improvements introduced in these areas in the last year have been discussed earlier and highlighted in a number of case studies within this report, further actions scheduled for 2017/18 are reflected in Part 4

The service plan was published during the year and covered the period 2016-18. It has subsequently been updated for 2017-18. It identifies the challenges that are faced and acknowledges that in a positive economic environment there will be an increase in planning

applications which will require to be dealt with through resource management and the filling of key posts. There is also a recognition of the need to align the Local Development Plan needs to be more closely aligned with Community Planning Partnership and strategic planning objectives. This will provide a more coherent approach to delivering corporate actions identified in the Local Development plan.

Employee Engagement Survey

The annual employee survey demonstrated enthusiasm for the work of the service and a commitment to provide a quality service.

Service Workshops

The service continued its series of annual workshops, these seek staff views on service improvements. These views help inform the council service improvement plan and identify improvements for inclusion in the PPF for the forthcoming year, as well as general management actions and improvements.

Customer Service

As part of the Council's digital transformation strategy the Netcall telephony system was introduced into the Planning Service. This helps to enhance the customer experience of calling the Council, but also allows services to better utilise and monitor the way phone systems are used.

Seminar Series

As part of an ongoing drive for continuous improvement and professional development the Planning Service continued its series of monthly 'HGIOC' seminars. All planning staff are invited and the seminars last approximately an hour. The programme for the 2016/17 included the following topics:

- Design and Place Making
- Local Development Plan- Interactive Story Mapping
- Tree Protection and Enforcement

The programme continues to be popular amongst staff, demonstrated by high attendance at all events. For the year 2017 topics include, Alternative Planning Systems (Australia.), Space Port Bid, the future LDP2 and Marine Planning. Ad hoc training in terms of conference attendance, Council training, COAST system, and at individual team meetings is encouraged. Examples last year included Environmental Impact Assessment Legislation and the use of the Place Standard..

Professional Development

The Planning Service continues to support professional development training and RTPI membership amongst professional staff.

Personal Development Reviews

All staff undergo an annual personal review which is updated on a six monthly basis. This also provides an opportunity to assess future training needs.

PART 3: SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

[Local Development Plan](#)

[Supplementary Guidance](#)

[LDP Action Programme](#)

[Review of Development Management – Peer Review Report January 2012](#)

[Service Standard Major Developments](#)

[Pre-application form and guidance](#)

[Pre-application Protocol Guidance](#)

[Enforcement Charter](#)

[Planning Protocol Prestwick Enterprise Area](#)

[National Planning Protocol Enterprise Areas](#)

[General Guidance Notes for applicants and Agents on the Processing of Planning Applications](#)

[Guidance Notes for Pre-application Consultation for Developers](#)

[Protocol for Planning Liaison with Key Internal Stakeholders on Planning Applications for Major and National Developments \(Draft\)](#)

[Documentation Supporting Planning Applications Guidance](#)

[Service Standard for Local Developments and Major Developments](#)

[Ayrshire Green Network Partnership](#)

[Galloway & Southern Ayrshire Biosphere](#)

[Customer Experience Report 2016](#)

[Improvement Service and Heads of Planning - Costing the Planning Service](#)

[Leisure Economy and Planning Service Plan 2016-18](#)

[How Good is Our Place-Use of “Place Standard” in South Ayrshire-](#)

PART 4:

	SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS 2017-2018
1	Respond to the outcome of the review of the Scottish Planning System
2	Review the Planning Development function and associated functions
3	Review new two tiered pre-application service
4	Confirm test and review revised practice to enable conditions monitoring software to assist with systematic monitoring of development with environmentally high risks and record and monitor planning obligations
5	Work to inform next enforcement charter due in January 2018: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spot check review of NID's and certificates of completion• Proactive spot check monitoring of completion certificates and review against approved planning permission
6	Develop and complete Supplementary Guidance on developer contributions for education
7	Introduce Access Charter and publish outdoor access enquiries standard
8	Refresh Planning Forum and the Architects Forum
9	Review and scope improvements to processes for the consideration of applications by members at Regulatory Panel meetings
10	Monitor delegated decisions overturned by the Local Review Body.

	Committed Improvements and Actions 2015-16	
1	Review the Planning Service and associated functions based on the outcome of new Scottish Planning guidance/recommendations	Yes- This is progressing
2	Develop spatial planning and community planning links	Yes- and ongoing Actioned within SIP 2016-18 as a priority
3	Refresh Planning Forum and the Architects Forum	No- This has not been taken forward and remains an outstanding action
4	Engage Planning Aid Scotland to facilitate community engagement with young people during the forthcoming LDP2 review	The LDP2 has sought to engage with young people through a programme of participation which involves secondary schools
5	Undertake a sample survey of organisations/individuals that participated in Local Development 1 and seek their views on future participation in drafting LDP2	No-this action was reviewed. It was concluded not to take it forward.
6	Review the Planning Protocol for public consultation with a view to encouraging greater participation, through use of social media, including a Facebook group, which could host online discussions, comment boards, questionnaires and poll	Yes-This action was integrated within the statement of participation for the forthcoming LDP2
7	Undertake a review of the decline in online validation	Yes- Working with HOPS to address this issue across Scotland. There is clear evidence that the uptake of online applications has peaked and holding at between 70-75%
8	Introduce software facility to submit tree works applications online	Yes- software in place. It is expected that the tree works applications will be progressed through eplanning EDRMS and Public Access modules in 2017-18.
9	Introduce High Hedge Charter and publish register of High Hedge Notice applications online	The Council has initiated and implemented in 2016-17 processes and procedures for High Hedge applications to be recorded on its casework systems and also includes applications appearing on the Public access module. This now provides an ongoing record of high Hedge applications.
10	Work to inform next enforcement charter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spot check review of NID's and certificates of completion Proactive spot check monitoring of completion certificates and review against approved planning permission 	Action carried forward to 2017/18 (scheduled to be completed before enforcement Charter Review, January 2018)
11	Publish tree works application as standard	Refer to action 8 & 9 above
12	Publish outdoor access enquiries standard	No-not completed
132	Introduce Access Charter and publish outdoor access enquiries standard	No-not completed
13	Complete review of LRB arrangements.	Yes- Members training scheduled for members following the May 2017 election
14	Complete review of Planning Procedure Note	Yes- <u>Procedures for the handling of planning applications</u>
15	Review and implement 'Major Development Tracker'.	Yes
16	Review Council Scheme of Delegation related to access, TPO, and other delegations.	Yes- this has been completed- <u>South Ayrshire schemed of delegation</u>
17	Complete Supplementary Guidance on developer contributions for education.	This is identified in the Service Improvement Plan as a priority for completion by 2018
18	Continue to improve and review the content of the Planning pages of the Council's web site	Yes – and ongoing

PART 5: OFFICIAL STATISTICS- 2016/17

South Ayrshire Council^{1,2}

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
Without Legal Agreement	0	-
With Legal Agreement	0	-

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
All Major Developments	0	-
Minerals	0	-
Housing	0	-
Business and Industry	0	-
Waste Management	0	-
Electricity Generation	0	-
Freshwater Fish Farming	0	-
Marine Finfish Farming	0	-
Marine Shellfish Farming	0	-
Other Developments	0	-

LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
Without Legal Agreement	638	6.8
With Legal Agreement	2	15.3

LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	Proportion of Decisions
All Local Developments	640	6.8	
Local: Less than 2 months	575	6.2	89.8%
Local: More than 2 months	65	11.9	10.2%
Local Developments (non-householder)	258	7.1	
Local: Less than 2 months	211	6.2	81.8%
Local: More than 2 months	47	11.5	18.2%
Householder Developments	382	6.6	
Local: Less than 2 months	364	6.3	95.3%
Local: More than 2 months	18	12.8	4.7%
Housing	48	8.2	
Local: Less than 2 months	34	6.6	70.8%
Local: More than 2 months	14	12.2	29.2%
Business & Industry	25	7.2	
Local: Less than 2 months	20	6.3	80.0%
Local: More than 2 months	5	10.8	20.0%
Other Developments	172	6.7	
Local: Less than 2 months	149	6.0	86.6%
Local: More than 2 months	23	11.4	13.4%

LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)	% Under 2 months
Minerals	0	-	-
Waste Management	0	-	-
Electricity Generation	1	9.3	0.0%
Freshwater Fish Farming	0	-	-
Marine Finfish Farming	0	-	-
Marine Shellfish Farming	0	-	-
Telecommunications	7	6.4	100.0%
AMSCs (under 2 months)	5	10.4	20.0%

OTHER CONSENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
All Other Consents	216	5.2
Listed bldg.+con.area consents	81	6.8
Advertisements	38	5.5
Hazardous substances consents	0	-
Other consents and certificates	97	3.7

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
Local Developments Subject To EIA	0	-
AMSCs (Subject to EIA)	0	-

APPLICATIONS SUBJECT TO	Total number of decisions	Average time (weeks)
Planning/Legal Agreement	2	15.3
Local Review	20	13.6

PROCESSING AGREEMENTS	Total number of decisions	% within agreed timescales
All Processing Agreements	10	100.0%
Major applications	3	100.0%
Local Applications	7	100.0%
EIA developments	0	-
Other consents	0	-

APPLICATIONS APPROVED / DELEGATED	Percentage
Percentage of Applications Approved	92.5%
Percentage of Applications Delegated	96.1%

LOCAL REVIEWS and APPEALS	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld (%)
Local Review	20	30.0%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers ³	4	25.0%

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY	Number
Cases Taken Up	207
Notices Served	14
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0
Prosecutions	0
Number of breaches resolved	154

1. For a full description of the categories in this analysis please [see NOTES page](#) of the official published statistics.
1. South Ayrshire did not make any decisions for major developments that were subject to average time calculations in 2016/17 and are therefore not included in the charts in this section. South Ayrshire used processing agreements for all of their major developments. Percentages

PART 6: WORKFORCE INFORMATION

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
Head of Planning Service				x

Note: Tier 1= Chief Executive, Tier 2= Directors, Tier 3= Heads of Service, Tier 4= Managers

		DM	DP	Enforce- ment	Other
Managers	No. Posts	2	1		1
	Vacant				
Main grade posts	No. Posts	7	5	1.5	1
	Vacant	3	3	0.5	
Technician	No. Posts		2		
	Vacant				
Office Support/Clerical	No. Posts	4			
	Vacant	1			
TOTAL		17	11	2	2

Note: Managers are those staff responsible for the operational management of a team/division. They are not necessarily line managers.

Staff Age Profile and Committee Meetings 2016-17

Staff Age Profile	Number
Under 30	1
30-39	6 (+4 admin?)
40-49	5
50 and over	10

Committee & Site Visits*	Number per year
Full council meetings	0
Planning committees	11
Area committees (where relevant)	0
Committee site visits	0
LRB**	14
LRB site visits	7

Notes:

**References to committees also include National Park Authority Boards. Number of site visits is those cases where visits were carried out by committees/boards.*

***this relates to the number of meetings of the LRB. The number of applications going to LRB are reported elsewhere.*

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
Historical Performance against Key Markers 2012-16

	Marker	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Trend 2012-16
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	
10	Stakeholders engaged early (pre-MIR)	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)					
		3	6		4	
		2	5		6	
		1	7		5	
		0	4		9	

Historical Decision Making Timescales (weeks)

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2016-17 Scottish Average
Major Development	29.3	50.7	26.0	42.6	<i>All major applications subject to processing agreements</i>	38.8
Local (Non-Householder) Development	9.2	7.9	8.7	7.0	7.1	11.1
Householder Development	6.2	6.4	7.1	5.9	6.6	7.3

