

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2018/19

This Framework reflects the good work of the Service over the course of the last year, illustrated through case studies, and also highlights some key improvements we will be progressing during the course of this year.

Welcome to the Highlands

Highland covers 10,104.73 square miles (26,171.13 square kilometres), making it the largest region by area in Scotland. In 2017, the population was estimated as 235,180, the 15th largest Scottish local authority by population. There are about 4.5 dwellings for every square kilometre, reflecting the sparsely populated rural areas of the region. The largest town in the region is Inverness with a population of 63,949, next is Fort William with 10,201 people and then Nairn with 10,148.

Introduction

As Chair of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee of Highland Council I am very pleased to submit the Planning Performance Framework for 2018 - 2019.

This Framework reflects the good work of the Service over the course of the last year, illustrated through case studies, and also highlights some key improvements we will be progressing during the course of this year. The Planning performance Framework (PPF) outlines our continued commitment to improving performance, meeting customer needs, trialing innovative approaches and helping deliver high quality development across the Highlands.

I am particularly pleased to be able, for the first time, to submit our PPF in StoryMap format and hope that you find this innovative approach both informative and user-friendly. As part of the Council's modernisation of the planning service this software was also used to publish Town Centre Health Checks, the Business and Industrial Land Audit and a Housing Completions dashboard. Feedback to date suggests that this approach is well received and provides information in an accessible format that both customers and partners like.

I'm encouraged to see our planning performance figures are being maintained particularly at a time of continued financial challenge for the Council. Of note is the number of applications dealing with the reuse/repurposing of old buildings, details of which are provided in a number of case studies in the PPF.

We continue to work closely with partners to support development and investment and this year the FW2040 Masterplan and Delivery Programme was approved. An innovative approach to ongoing engagement in Fort William has also been agreed where community representatives will work alongside Committee Members in helping steer future development decisions in the area.

In addition to the above the recently formed Environment Advice and Consultancy Team is proving successful maintaining both a consistent level of specialist advise and exceeding income targets and this alongside our improved Developer Contributions recording system has brought real savings to the Council and efficiencies to the customer.

Our planning service will continue to look for innovative ways to work collaboratively and efficiently with our partners and our communities to deliver a high quality service across the Highlands.



Allan Henderson

Vice Convener of Highland Council

Part 1:

Qualitative Narrative and Case Studies

Quality of Outcomes

2018/19 has proven to be an exceptional year for quality of outcomes for Highland. This year the Council has delivered on a number of high quality regeneration and environmental improvement projects that have positively influenced the fabric and economy of our town centres; two of which have received national recognition.

Inverness Town House

Inverness Town House, a Flemish-Baronial styled building originally dating to 1878-82, is a **significant architectural landmark** in the city-centre at the heart of the Inverness: Riverside Conservation Area. It was A-listed in 1971.

The Townhouse is currently undergoing a comprehensive renovation, with Phase 1 (the original frontage block) having now been completed at a cost of £3.9 m. Phase 1 not only delivered external repairs, with over 80% of facing stonework being replaced due to **severe erosion**, but complete restoration of the **main hall** and public space within the building. The building is now **available for guided tours** and private events. Phase 2, which relates to work on later additions, is ongoing.

The project has benefitted from a close working relationship between LDN Architects, Laing Traditional Masonry (main contractor) and the Council's planning and conservation officers, with a series of detailed planning/listed building consent applications and regular on-site meetings. The building won the UK Natural Stone Awards, 2018.

In addition, we been working hard to deliver development on the ground to bring vacant, derelict and difficult sites within our Town Centres back into use, securing the viable long-term re-use of historic buildings and achieve wider social and economic benefits.

Raining's Stairs

Raining's Stairs, won the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS) Andrew Doolan Best Building in Scotland Award 2019, its "**inspired but pragmatic and affordable resolution**" for a difficult, **extremely steep and almost inaccessible site** located in the centre of Inverness. It has **regenerated** a long-standing vacant site within the City which is detailed more fully in the **Raining's Stairs Case Study**.

Charles Kennedy Building Project

The Charles Kennedy Building project has resulted in the sensitive and welcomed **rehabilitation of a Category B Listed Building** in a prominent location within Fort William to provide **high quality, modern facilities** for Council staff and customers.

Early engagement with staff and partners through the property review, and with planning officers and consultees through the pre-application process has resulted in high quality development on the ground. This is detailed more fully in the **Charles Kennedy Building Case Study**.

Kingshouse Hotel

Nearby, in the iconic Glencoe landscape, lies the **Kingshouse Hotel**. The condition of this once popular tourist facility had significantly declined in recent years. Planning permission was granted in January 2018 for its redevelopment; with retention of the original building and further design iteration having been negotiated to ensure it would have a positive effect on the important landscape qualities of the Glen. The new facilities are a significant benefit to the area. Opening in February 2019, this is a great example of investment in a **new, modern building** in a high quality landscape which is providing improved facilities for visitors old and new.

The Inverness Design Review Panel met five times during the 2018-19 period to review seven developments including three significant regeneration projects in Inverness City Centre; two hotels and one new-build residential development involving redevelopment of a former department store. Two key strategic projects were also reviewed; the NHS/HIE/UHI joint venture Centre for Health Science and the Council's new Waste Management Facilities designed to address the forthcoming landfill ban.

Over the last year the planning service has taken its latest proactive step in creating a more flexible and diverse workforce. The setup of the Housing Delivery Team has involved planners in Development Plans Team utilising their knowledge and skills in contributing to the determination of large housing applications. Examples include creating new neighbourhoods in the East of Inverness demonstrating how decisions can be informed and efficiently determined in line with the recently adopted **Inverness East Development Brief**. This approach has led to an enhanced breadth of workload for planners across plans, policy, pre-application and determination.

Meanwhile the continued focus on maintaining an up to date Policy Framework has contributed to high quality development. The adoption of the **Caithness and Sutherland Local Development Plan** is providing a positive planning framework for development and regeneration in the area, and some unique investment opportunities. Our updated **Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief**, which is soon to be adopted, has involved close liaison with communities on future developments surrounding the second stage of the West Link road project. This will provide exciting new tourism, leisure and recreation facilities within the iconic setting of the **Caledonian Canal and the Great Glen**. The updated **Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance** has allowed for a consistent and proportionate approach to securing contributions towards the infrastructure and services required to create high quality development.

Quality of Service and Engagement

As a large rural authority we dealt with a significant volume of planning applications for **hydro schemes** in 2018/19. There was considerable pressure to process these applications timeously before the cut off for the feed in tariff rate. In response to this we re-directed resources to address this increased workload pressure. In the majority of cases there had been constructive pre-application discussion with agents and developers which allowed us to plan ahead. By committing dedicated resources to deal with this influx we were able to collectively manage the workload across a number of area teams. In total 38 hydro applications were granted planning permission with 9 withdrawn. The commitment and dedication of staff to dealing with these applications was substantial, ensuring that the cases were successfully managed to meet the required timeframe.

In 2018 The Highland Council won a Scottish Quality in Planning Award in the Process category for the establishment of the Small Applications Team (SAT). The main purpose of SAT was to process and determine routine applications as efficiently and timeously as possible to help deliver on our key performance targets. The successful establishment and implementation of the team resulted in householder applications determined in 2 months rising by 4% to 90% in 2018/19 compared to the preceding year.

For the 2019 awards, we have been shortlisted for 7 projects in 4 categories. There are 2 in the place-making section – the Fort William Offices project and Raining’s Stairs, Inverness, as well as 4 process improvements featured Housing Delivery Team, Modernising Monitoring, Developer Contributions, the Historic Environment Record Online and finally Fort William 2040 in the Plans category. Details of all of these projects are set out more clearly in the **Case Studies section**.

The provision of **Pre-application Advice** remains a key component of our service delivery. In total we issued 35 major development pre-application packs in 2018/19 a 6% increase on the previous year. The major development pre-application process ensures that the advice contributions of all key consultees, both internal and external to The Highland Council (including SNH, SEPA Transport Scotland etc), is provided on to prospective development proposals. These meetings are held on a monthly basis and this partnership working with key consultees and developers allows for a smoother process for the submission of planning applications by identification of key issues and concerns at an early stage

and a smoother process at the submission stage of planning applications. It enables identification of key issues and concerns at an early stage and a smoother process at the submission stage of planning applications. In total we issued 35 major development pre-application packs in 2018/19: a 6% increase on the previous year.

As a further development of the pre-application advice service offered we have undertaken a number of Street Engineering Reviews on housing developments, with the aim of ensuring compatibility between detailed street design and development layout thereby reducing uncertainty at Road Construction Consent approval. This is offered for all development that has come through the pre-application process.

The average time taken to determining major applications in 2018/19 was 18.7 weeks, of these 84% had a processing agreement. In addition the Planning Service dealt with 582 Local Pre-application Advice applications and 746 Permitted Development Enquiries.

Customer Engagement Sessions (May 2018)

On 22nd May 2018 the Planning and Environment Service hosted a Customer Engagement session which local agents and developers from across the Highland were invited to attend. Prior to the meeting, we contacted attendees about particular issues or concerns they wished to raise. The event was held in the Council Chamber and the format consisted of a series of presentations from all Teams within the Service (including Development Plans, Development Management, Transport Planning, Building Standards, Systems Team and Environment Team) followed by an opportunity for attendees to meet the teams and ask any specific questions they had.

The event was well attended and received positive feedback.

First of all may I take this opportunity to thank your staff and yourself for hosting yesterday's Customer Engagement Session. It was evident from the presentations that significant time and effort had been taken by the teams to be prepared for the event and deliver information that was relevant to customers across the region. Ptarmigan Homes appreciated this and very much welcomed the opportunity to meet the people who on a day to day basis we are in communication with. It was obvious from the presentations that Highland Council (HC) are being proactive in ensuring that you have structures and mechanisms in place to facilitate effective customer engagement.

Ptarmigan Homes (local developer)

The sessions and the feedback will inform future events.

Digital Planning Workshops (Feb 2019)

In January and February 2019 Scottish Government's Digital Planning team ran three regional workshops with five different Local Authorities as part of their engagement efforts on the development of the Digital Strategy for Planning which is due to launch later in 2019. Given Highland's challenging geography with seven area offices, consistently high online submission rates and extensive development of Uniform and virtual ways of working, Highland volunteered to host one of the regional events. Held in February, the event was attended by a range of stakeholders from the authority including Development Plans, Development Management, Performance and Systems Team, Building Standards, Transport Planning, the Council's Corporate ICT Services as well as Planning colleagues from Moray Council.

The format of the session included the Digital Planning Team updating attendees on their approach to the programme and progress to date, followed by a workshop which sought to understand the **opportunities and challenges arising from a digital transformation of planning.**

The willingness to modernise our approach to engagement and optimise our role in enabling and coordinating future growth is well demonstrated through the **Fort William 2040 project.** In recognition of the scale of potential change in Fort William this was an attempt to collaborate closely with a **wide range of people** living, working and investing in the area. This collective approach to shaping place has improved communication and is aimed at adding value both through individual projects and developments and the synergies between them. The Council is exploiting the role of the LDP Delivery Programme in monitoring and coordinating the delivery of change and the emerging LDP itself. The project has also been identified as part of the Place Principle announced by Scottish Government and adopted by partners alike.

We are in the process of preparing a single Delivery Programme for its Development Plans, an action that can be completed on adoption of the West Highland and Islands LDP later this year.

To take account of the Housing Delivery Team arrangement we have established a new approach to work programming for Development Planning. Projects and caseload are closely monitored with milestones built in to secure delivery of key projects against the Development Plan.

The Torvean and Ness-side Development Brief has involved **engagement with a range of stakeholders and interest groups**. **School workshops** have been run in tandem with public consultation events and videos prepared to highlight the opportunity to input to the regeneration and development of an important gateway site for the City of Inverness and the Great Glen.

In partnership with the Cairngorms National Park Authority and local groups, we undertook an Appraisal of the Grantown-on-Spey Conservation Area. This resulted in a wider area being protected and ensures that the future management of the Conservation Area will be undertaken with a detailed understanding of its special qualities.

Our **Development Plans Consultation Portal** continues to provide an effective tool for sharing our consultations with customers and it allows full control of drafting and submitting responses. We strive to make our development plans and associated monitoring more accessible and engaging. Over the past year we have published several monitoring documents in the StoryMap format including the **Business and Industrial Land Audit**, **Town Centre Healthchecks** and **Housing Completions**. These reports include mapping and data presented in an interactive, intuitive and flexible way allowing the user to tailor the presentation of these reports to their needs. This is providing us with new ideas for how to prepare the Main Issues Report, and particularly the background evidence, for our emerging **Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan**.

Highland Archaeology Festival 2018

The Council has run the Highland Archaeology Festival for 25 years and it is the longest running event of its type in Scotland. The festival celebrates the **rich archaeology** and **built environment** of the highlands and encourages communities to engage with their cultural heritage. The Festival culminates in a **two-day conference** hosted by the Historic Environment Team (HET) in the Council's Chamber. The conference showcases the most important research and **outstanding archaeological discoveries** made in Highland over the last 12 months. This includes archaeological work led by local groups, universities and national agencies

as well as archaeological work secured through planning conditions and funded by developers. The conference enables the Council to disseminate the results of these projects to the public and showcase how cultural heritage, when carefully managed through the development process, can be protected and preserved. It demonstrates how developer-led archaeological research, curated by the HET, can contribute to the advancement of our collective knowledge, improve our understanding of the past and help foster, build and enhance a sense of community, identity and place.

Governance

The Council's Scheme of Delegation continues to operate effectively and efficiently with 95.4% of applications determined under delegated powers. This is slightly down from 97.1% the preceding year. In total there were 104 delegated refusals. Overall 96% of all applications were approved which is down 0.3% on last year.

During 2017/18 there were a total of 18 Area Planning Committees, 9 for both South and North Highland operational areas. A total of 3 site visits were undertaken during this time, all by the South Area Planning Committee. During the course of the year, 5 applications required to be referred to Full Council. In one instance this was as a consequence of it being classed as National development. The other 4 cases arose from a Notice of Amendment on review of earlier decisions taken by the South Area Planning Application Committee. In addition there were 7 Planning Review Body meetings.

Our structure has remained intact following the implementation of earlier changes rolled out in 2016/17 with the establishment of the Environmental Advice and Consultancy Team and the Small Applications and Major Housing Delivery Team in 2017/18. The performance of these teams along with all other aspects of the service is subject to continual review.

Over the reporting period 53 legacy cases (i.e. applications over 1 year old) were determined. The number of undetermined applications rose slightly from 33 to 35 for the previous year. We remain committed to ensuring the number of legacy cases is reduced.

The Highland Council has the largest geographical area of any Planning Authority in Scotland and often has the highest number of applications determined. Our geography, coupled with our population, presents a number of challenges for service delivery. The average number of planning applications per year over the last 6 years is 2,523 per annum. The actual number of applications submitted per annum is relatively consistent from year to year with only a 13.9% variation between the lowest and highest years.

An initial review of the effectiveness of the former March 2013 Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance (DCSG) was undertaken by the Development Plans Team with input from other authority staff and key

agencies. This identified both procedural and policy related matters which required to be addressed to ensure that the methodology for each type of developer contribution remains up to date and accurately reflects the costs for providing the services and infrastructure required to support development.

Developer Contributions

Over the last 12 months, we have moved from a spreadsheet-based recording system for Developer Contributions to an innovative and fully electronic system within the Uniform Case Management System. This involves recording all planning cases where contributions are expected or received, containing details of related Section 75 agreements including clawback dates and billing dates, and plot-by-plot completion information from building standards to present a true reflection of development progress. This also creates a link between the Planning Application case and any future monitoring of contributions in the system.

We also now use the same module within Uniform to record Developer Contribution Projects, alongside the specific planning application cases. This means that we have an up to date running balance of monies received for each project, and this can then be used to monitor spend from the relevant departments within the Council. This has already improved the frequency and quality of draw-down requests we have received from the relevant spending services across the Council. We believe that this is a unique way of using the Uniform system and something we are open to sharing with other Local Authorities.

Under the new supplementary guidance and accompanying process, contributions sought and collected for 18/19 amount to £5,489,619.25 in total with £34,813 collected from 1-3 house developments (between 11/12/18 and 31/03/19).

Finally, we are also developing a third aspect to recording within Uniform to include information from our Delivery/Action programs and Development Plans in order to record the true cost of projects delivered by The Council. This, allows all spending services to be more closely aligned with the development of these projects, and cross-linking them to existing and future Developer Contributions.

Culture of Continuous Improvement

We are an active participant in our benchmarking group with other rural authorities: Dumfries and Galloway, Argyll and Bute, Aberdeenshire, Border, Orkney, Moray, Shetland and Cairngorms National Park Authority. We also regularly attend and participate in the Heads of Planning Scotland committee and sub committee meetings. We recognise and value the knowledge and experience gained by sharing best practice with different authorities and encourage and promote these opportunities with our staff.

Regular Team Leader meetings are held by senior staff every 6 weeks to review and discuss ongoing and emerging planning issues and develop and promote practice and procedures accordingly. Each Team Leader has regular meetings with their teams to discuss and disseminate information. All of these meetings are a 2 way process to encourage staff feedback and engagement.

We aim to ensure staff training needs are met. We organise an annual training day event for technical and professional staff.

We have sought to promote and develop good practice both internally and externally with other organisations. We have bi-annual meetings with SNH/SEPA to review existing practices and procedures, predominantly in connection with large scale developments and major applications. This collaborative approach allows us to have a better understanding of our respective roles and specific concerns in our consideration and assessment of development proposals.

We actively seek and welcome feedback. Issues can be raised through feedback forms for local and pre-application advice packs, customer enquires and complaints as well as from communications from the Ombudsman. We objectively consider and review comments made and where appropriate refine and amend our protocols and procedures accordingly. A recent example was a revision to the way in which we record enforcement breaches to ensure all instances are recorded and the party raising the concerns are updated of progress.

Housing Delivery Team

Following our commitment in the 2017-18 PPF submission to ensure training and development opportunities for teams across a wider

functional and geographic area, we have set up the Housing Delivery Team. This team seeks to share the knowledge and experience in providing a solution focussed approach to the delivery of housing developments through the planning system. Regular training sessions are held within the team with “on the job” training provided to members of the team. This includes **site visits to recently completed developments** to see what has went well, what hasn’t and what lessons can be learnt for future developments. This team has also created a bridge between Development Management and Development Plans with collaborative working with colleagues across the Council and its partners, to deliver development on the ground supported by essential infrastructure using collective experience in project management.

Broadening the skillset of planners has been a central aim of the Housing Delivery Team with training and work-shadowing being programmed in to ensure that their new skills and knowledge are firmly embedded in people’s way of working.

Mobile Working (Sim-enabled Laptops and Tablets)

The service has been and continues to trial 5 sim-enabled laptops across the areas as proof of concept. This trial is proving successful with Planning, Building standards and Environment case officers having the ability to transfer and upload photos to the back office and update Uniform while out on-site, immediately after doing site visits. The device trial has proved successful due to improved coverage from EE and the Service is now waiting for all case officers to be swapped out with sim-enabled laptops as part of the Corporate ICT refresh.

I used the sim-enabled laptop yesterday and was in Foyers, Whitebridge, Fort Augustus, Invermoriston and Cannich and was pretty impressed. Full WiFi coverage and had access to all systems so by the time I came back to office I had updated Uniform with all my site notes, issued 3 Completions and responded to some emails.

Scott Willox, Building Standards Surveyor

Coverage has been excellent at all the places I have tried:

- *Whitebridge (used mobile, wired and wireless networks);*
- *Dalnain Bridge (mobile network);*
- *Upper Achintore Fort William (mobile network); and,*

- *Smithton FPS (mobile).*

It's fabulous and I hope this will be the future.

Katy Martin, Ecologist, Environment Team

The service is also working with ICT Services and WIPRO to migrate **existing Samsung tablet devices** (for taking documents out on to site electronically) from Airwatch device management solution across to Intune, WIPRO's device management software. The aim is that post-refresh, case officers will have a sim-enabled laptop and tablet with interchangeable sim.

Traditionally the Council has provided Member training in-house by way of officer presentations on Development Plans, Development Management, Enforcement, Appeals, Reviews, Committees and Code of Conduct. However following the last election, the Council appointed Planning Advice Scotland (PAS) to deliver training as it was felt Members could benefit from delivery by external trainers. We recognise the importance of training all of our Councillors as they are all potentially involved in planning; either through constituent enquiries, notification of delegated refusals, or making decisions at committee.

Although the PAS training was comprehensive, it was considered that more interaction was required to be truly effective. Therefore, as and when new Members are elected, **the PAS training is now delivered by officers with a focus to encourage members to consider different perspectives**; be it as an applicant, objector, consultee etc. Case studies have been incorporated to assist Members understand the decision making process. Only Councillors that have received training are permitted to take part in the determination of planning applications at Committee/Council.

In addition, specific training is provided to Planning Review Body (PRB) Members on the role and remit of the PRB and as and when training requirements arise. A forthcoming training session will be in a workshop format. As above, instead of the "officers talk, members listen" approach, the intention is to tailor training to what the Members themselves want (a questionnaire will be issued to ascertain this) – while also promoting good practice messages. This training will be led by the Council's Independent Planning Adviser to the PRB and the Clerk of the PRB and will allow plenty of opportunities for questions and open discussion.

Case Studies

Case Study Title:

1 Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance

Location and Dates:

Highland-wide – Mid 2017 to Late 2018

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):

- Governance

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

11: Production of regular and proportionate policy advice, for example through supplementary guidance, on information required to support applications

13: Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities

15: Developer contributions: clear expectations

Key Areas of Work (please select the **main area** of work covered - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Affordable Housing
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Process Improvement
- Staff Training

Stakeholders Involved (please select the **main stakeholders** - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

An initial review of the effectiveness of the former March 2013 Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance (DCSG) was undertaken by the Development Plans Team with input from other authority staff and key agencies. This identified both procedural and policy related matters which

required to be addressed to ensure that the methodology for each type of developer contribution remains up to date and accurately reflects the costs for providing the services and infrastructure required to support development.

Following extensive consultation on a replacement draft, the guidance was adopted in November 2018. This has had an immediate effect resulting in a significant increase in developer contributions for expenditure on services and infrastructure; particularly on schools.

The updated DCSG forms part of a wider project ensure the authority is taking a consistent approach to the collection and spend of developer contributions. This has involved:

- a tailored system for monitoring;
- an intuitive and robust process for managing collection and spend; and
- improved governance and coordination through a new Developer Contributions Action Group which involves managers of all relevant assets and services.

This series of actions has enabled Highland to take a comprehensive view of current and future spend and how this relates to Highland communities being provided with consistently high quality services and infrastructure.

Goals:

The main objective is to mitigate the impacts of development on services and infrastructure by seeking fair and realistic developer contributions towards the delivery of such facilities.

Outcomes:

As part of our Full Cycle Planning concept (see diagram below) this project has sought to integrate existing processes and make effective use of existing data.

The process makes optimum use of existing data gathered in the Planning & Environment Service, such as:

- Housing Land Audit to accurately determine future infrastructure needs, as demonstrated by the school roll forecasts.
- Building Standards Completions data to provide a snapshot of

changes on the ground and as part of payment collection processes.

The Service has also made creative and innovative use of the existing Uniform case management system whereby we have designed an effective monitoring system for both collection and spend of contributions received. This includes recording contributions sought on a per-plot basis which assists with accurate monitoring and enables future income to be forecast.

The way in which developer contributions are communicated to developers and prospective land purchasers has also evolved. The DCSG has been presented in a clear format to better enable applicants to calculate likely contributions themselves. In addition, the anticipated financial contribution requirements for small scale developments are presented on an Interactive Map. This lets prospective house builders know from the outset what they will be expected to contribute prior to or as part of pre-application and/or planning application stage, which in turn helps to inform land purchase prices and projected project costs.

We have moved from an approach which only focused on infrastructure and service requirements for large site / volume house builders to now ensuring that all scales of development make an appropriate and fair contribution. With over 1,000 house completions per annum, a simplistic 1-3 house development calculator has been created to enable all planning case officers to provide a consistent and clear assessment of developer contribution requirements.

Use of Enterprise Tasks as part of the process has also enabled a tighter development management process in the form of not being able to issue planning decisions until payments have been received and the issuing of timely notifications of when contribution expenditure clawback dates are approaching.

As a result of the robust policy framework provided by the DCSG and procedural improvements to the assessment, collection, management and spend of developer contributions, this has resulted in a significant increase in revenue to help deliver additional services to support and enable development. In time, through determining more planning applications it is expected that this revenue stream will steadily increase inline with additional service demands.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
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Contributions Received	£0.8M	£1.7M	£4.9M
Contributions Spent by Services	£0.8M	£0.7M	£1.7M

Name of key officer

Peter Wheelan

Scott Dalgarno

Case Study Title:

2 Drumnadrochit Prehistoric Cemetery

Location and Dates:

Inverness-shire, 2017-2018

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):

- Quality of outcomes

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

3, 12, 13

Key Areas of Work (please select the **main area** of work covered - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Conservation
- Environment
- Development Management Processes

Stakeholders Involved (please select the **main stakeholders** - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Authority Planning Staff
- Local developers

Overview:

Drumnadrochit lies on the flat land at the head of Urquhart Bay, where two rivers discharge in to Loch Ness on a natural route from the west coast to the east coast of the country. Evidence for later strongholds such as Urquhart Castle are widely known but prior to development in this area evidence for prehistoric activity was non-existent. Following the discovery of two important prehistoric burials during site clearance for a new medical centre, further housing, retail and infrastructure developments were subject to planning conditions requiring archaeological investigation. Archaeological evaluation, excavation and monitoring of groundworks are still ongoing, but in the summer of 2018 a series of important discoveries were made that have fundamentally changed the story of Drumnadrochit and this part of the Great Glen.

To date, six prehistoric burials have been discovered. Although no substantial human remains survived, objects buried with the dead have been recovered including the remains of three decorated 'Beaker' pots, a stone wrist guard, a unique decorated cist slab, a possible stone arrowhead and a cremation deposit. An additional large isolated

sandstone slab was identified nearby, probably the capstone of an additional cist burial that had been disturbed in antiquity. The archaeological work has also revealed evidence for clusters of settlement activity dating to the Neolithic across the development site. Collectively, these findings indicate that in the Neolithic/Early Bronze Age – in the region of 4,500 years ago – this site, set on a rise in the natural flood plain overlooking Urquhart Bay and Loch Ness, was an important focus for prehistoric settlement and burial activity.

If this area had not been developed and if the archaeological potential of the area had not been identified or understood by the Planning Authority and future development appropriately conditioned, this important discovery would have remained unknown and unrecorded.

Goals:

Recognising archaeological potential in the planning system and mitigating impact of development is essential if we are to understand, preserve and promote our irreplaceable cultural heritage. Discoveries such as this not only enable better understanding and knowledge of the past, but can be used to promote the area, both to those who live there and to visitors. Important archaeological discoveries can be used to raise awareness of the importance of cultural heritage, and the Council's positive role in safeguarding it, foster pride in the community and develop an enhanced sense of place. This follows the Scottish Government Historic Environment Strategy, *Our Place in Time* which seeks 'to ensure that the cultural, social, environmental and economic value of our heritage continues to make a major contribution to the nation's wellbeing.'

Outcomes:

Archaeological mitigation required by the Planning Authority, monitoring of the planning condition by the Council's archaeologist and the fieldwork undertaken by an archaeological consultant, funded by the developer has rewritten the story of Drumnadrochit and the wider area. As a direct result of the successful operation of the planning system, national and local aims and outcomes with regard to heritage have been fulfilled. This has resulted in a significant discovery – one that is worthy of celebrating – that would otherwise have gone undetected and unrecognised and may have been unwittingly destroyed.

Post-excavation studies of the archaeological deposits, human remains and material culture are ongoing. This work will provide a full detailed analysis of the date of the site and shed light on the people buried here

(their age, sex, height and possibly even where they were born), and the activities taking place at the time. This all contributes to our understanding of life and death in Highland during the Neolithic/Early Bronze Age.

In the interim, the initial results of the fieldwork will be made publicly available on the Council's online Historic Environment Record and presented to the public at the forthcoming Highland Archaeology Festival Conference.

In light of these discoveries future development in the area, as it enters the planning process, will continue to be assessed for archaeological potential by the Historic Environment Team to ensure that any additional archaeological remains, features and objects are identified and recorded. This will contribute further to our new understanding of Drumnadrochit's prehistoric past. Early collaboration with applicants will be encouraged to ensure that they are aware of the potential sensitive nature of the area and that wherever possible archaeological issues are dealt with in advance of development avoiding unnecessary delays and additional costs.

Locally, the discovery has been celebrated and as a lasting memorial to its prehistoric past, a number of the stone slabs from a disturbed cist have been reused to form a feature at the entrance to the health centre, where interpretation is also provided. The large stone slab, which probably once capped a cist burial, has been built into feature walling on a roundabout at the development site entrance on the A82.

Name of key officer

Kirsty Cameron

Case Study Title:

3 Environmental Advice and Consultancy Team

Location and Dates:

Highland-wide

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to
(please select all that apply):

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement
- Governance
-

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

11, 12, 13

Key Areas of Work (please select the **main area** of work covered - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Conservation
- Process Improvement
- Environment
- Development Management Processes
-

Stakeholders Involved (please select the **main stakeholders** - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority other staff
-

Overview:

The Environmental Advice and Consultancy Team (EACT) is a newly formed team combining five existing specialist planning advisors covering archaeology, forestry and historic buildings and two new ecology surveyors.

EACT were required to maintain the existing level of high quality planning advice as consultees within the planning service and also develop and operate an environmental consultancy to serve other Council services and generate income. EACT has now been operating for over 2 years and demand for services consistently outstrips resources. During this time EACT have maintained a consistent level of specialist planning advice and exceeded income targets. EACT have demonstrated a successful model that provides high quality advice, generates an income and has realised

significant savings to the Council by providing a service comparable to external consultants at considerably less cost.

Goals:

The overarching aim was to create a team blending existing officers and newly created posts to provide specialist planning advice in respect of forestry, listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology and develop an environmental consultancy service to operate across the Council on a rechargeable basis. Officers would also continue to formulate policy and guidance and input into strategic plans.

The focus for the environmental consultancy function was to provide an in-house service, primarily for ecology, to reduce a reliance on external consultants and the additional costs, management/oversight burdens and complex procurement procedures that this requires. In the process, EACT also ensure that the Council is fulfilling its statutory obligations with regard to natural, built and cultural heritage. Whilst the forestry, building conservation and archaeology specialists continue to focus on the provision of planning advice, their expertise is made available for larger Council projects as required. An income target of £51,125 was set to help cover the additional cost of the new ecology posts.

Outcomes:

In 2018/19 EACT provided comment on applications for over 1,200 development proposals, from single house plots to large renewable projects, alterations to Listed Buildings to major infrastructure proposals. In this period EACT contributed to strategic development plans and published policy and guidance including Historic Windows and Doors in Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, Shopfront Design Guide, the Highland Forest and Woodland Strategy and commenced work on a conservation area appraisal for Grantown-on-Spey. EACT have also continued to provide general advice to the public and developers on a diverse range of topics, from non-native invasive species to energy efficiency in historic buildings. EACT lead on statutory Biodiversity Duty Reporting and take a lead role in managing statutory designations including Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas. The Highland Historic Environment Record is also managed within the team and its associated website underwent a major refresh in 2018-19. It has been acclaimed as a one-stop-shop for historic environment data availability, unique in the UK, and won its category at the Highland Council Quality Awards in late 2018.

In addition, EACT provided a consultancy service to over 60 Council projects. These ranged in scope from Ecological Clerk of Works and Arboricultural Supervision for large infrastructure development including the Inverness West Link and the Smithton and Culloden Flood Prevention Scheme, to protected species surveys in Council buildings, forestry and woodland management on behalf of Council services and archaeological investigation in advance of Council development. A total income of £69,863 was generated in 2018/19. It is difficult to quantify the value of additional savings to the Council through providing this service in house. However, based on comparable projects and previous costings from external consultants employed by the Council, it is estimated that EACT are at least 50-60% cheaper than the commercial equivalent. As an example, EACT recharged the Inverness West Link project £571 for badger monitoring; an external consultant had quoted £5,000 for the same work.

Additional income of £11,592 was generated through provision of archaeological advice to statutory undertakers outwith the planning process and the provision of archaeological data to consultants. This brings the total income generated by EACT in 2018/19 to £81,455.

EACT won the Convenor's Award at the 2017 Highland Council Quality Awards.

Housing Development sought environmental advice from EACT on a sensitive development site in the Cairngorms National Park and received an excellent, professional and pragmatic report quickly enabling us to submit the planning application for much needed affordable housing quicker and more cost effectively than employing external consultants.

**Allan Maguire
(Head of Development & Regeneration)**

For major infrastructure projects environmental assessments and mitigation are key to their successful delivery. The first major piece of work (undertaken by EACT) was the West Link, where there were extensive environmental issues and many controls in place following the planning approval. Not only do EACT provide an excellent service, but they bring added value as they are local and recognise the significance and importance of environmental issues on the construction process – whilst ensuring compliance with all the environmental constraints and mitigation. We are very pleased with the service that the team provide.

Colin Howell
(Head of Infrastructure)

Name of key officer

Andrew Puls

Case Study Title:

4 Fort William Offices

Location and Dates:

Fort William 2015 to 2018

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to

(please select all that apply):

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

3, 12

Key Areas of Work (please select the **main area** of work covered - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Development Management Processes
- Collaborative Working
- Planning Applications

Stakeholders Involved (please select the **main stakeholders** - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

Planning permission and listed building consent were granted in 2016 for the creation of new Council Offices, Service Point and Civic Hub in Fort William by way of restoration, renovation and extension of a derelict Category B Listed Building.

The proposal occupies a very prominent site on the A82 close to the roundabout at the south western end of Fort William. It comprises the old Fort William Secondary School. The building was constructed in 1876 and then significantly altered around 1910. It was the first public secondary school in be built in Lochaber. Due to its history and the prominence of its architect, Alexander Ross, the building is significant in Fort William's history. The building had lain empty for over 40 years.

The new offices proposal was the outcome of a strategic, and local,

property review by the Council. The original vision of the strategic property review was that "The Council must work collaboratively across Services, with staff and with partners to maximise opportunities and invest responsibly in quality, flexible accommodation which supports service delivery for our staff and customers, permits sharing and retains a local identity. The Council should lead by example to deliver practical, innovative buildings at the heart of our communities that we are proud of."

Although the proposal was not a 'major' scale of development in terms of the development hierarchy, the Planning Service opened its Major Developments Pre-Application Service to this significant Council proposal. This allowed the Council's project designers to engage at an early stage with the Planning Service and the Consultees and detailed feedback was provided to the designers. As a 'major' scale of development would require public consultation prior to submission of the application, the project designers also followed this approach and held public consultation events.

The Council's Pre-Application Service for Major Developments has proven to be a successful format since its introduction in 2009, with positive feedback from users of the service. The 'round the table' approach is appealing to developers, allowing direct questions and answers, and the discussions are incorporated into a written response to the developer.

Goals:

The New Offices project was a locally significant development, both in terms of the prominence and history of the buildings, and the potential users of the building (customers and partnering organisations). A clear dialogue between the developer (in this case Highland Council) and the Planning Authority on the merits of the development was required and built upon previous involvement with staff through the Property Reviews. The goal was to deliver a high quality development which met the needs of its users.

Outcomes:

The proposal has been a sensitive and welcomed rehabilitation of a Category B Listed Building in a prominent gateway location within Fort William. The New Offices provide a multi-agency One Stop Shop for the Council and Partner organisations (Department of Work and Pensions and Highlands and Islands Enterprise) and increased usability for customers and off-set costs operational costs for the agencies. A new

modern extension has been sensitively developed, following changes made to this element during the planning process.

The grounds have been landscaped and an enhanced courtyard landscaping scheme provided to take account of the building as a wedding venue. Visitor and disabled parking have been incorporated into the grounds.

The extension of the Council's Major Developments Pre-Application Service to cover this type of locally significant, but not 'major', development provided for early policy, design and technical feedback and allowed the opportunity to positively approach issues arising through the planning process and prevent unnecessary conflict.

Following the Major developments model for pre-application discussions also provided a wider platform for public engagement. Low levels of public objection/representation through the planning process indicate that the public engagement was successful, and positive feedback on the finished project demonstrates the success of the project visually, architecturally and civically.

Early engagement with staff and partners through the property review, and with planning officers and consultees through the pre-application process has resulted in a high quality development which meets the requirements of its users, and a development which makes a significant positive visual contribution to Fort William.

This proposal has delivered a significant improvement to the built environment in Fort William and provides high quality, modern facilities for staff and customers. The proposal has breathed new life into a derelict Listed Building and has protected its future.

The proposal demonstrates well how early and enhanced engagement with the planning process can deliver higher quality developments that benefit the wider community.

Name of key officer

Susan Macmillan

Case Study Title:

5 Fort William 2040 (FW2040)

Location and Dates:

Fort William and Lochaber – latter half of 2018 and early 2019 however this is the first iteration of a process that will be ongoing

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):

- Quality of service and engagement
- Governance
- Culture of continuous improvement

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

10 (stakeholder working), 12 (corporate working) 14 (delivering)

Key Areas of Work (please select the **main area** of work covered - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Delivery of Local Development Plan
- Collaborative Working
- Placemaking (Place Principle)

Stakeholders Involved (please select the **main stakeholders** - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- General Public
- Key Agencies

Overview:

The FW2040 project has involved an innovative approach to collaborating with communities, investors and community partners to create and deliver a shared vision for Fort William and Lochaber. The FW2040 consultation was undertaken jointly by the Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the Scottish Government throughout the latter half of 2018. This series of events engaged those living, working and investing in the Fort William area with tailored events for schools and young people. The consultation focussed on the contribution that each development and infrastructure proposal could make in addressing the vision and 'placemaking priorities' for the area identified in the Council's statutory Local Development Plan (WestPlan LDP) as well as the interrelationships between them. A full summary of the consultation is set out on the [FW2040 webpage](#).

Taking account of the consultation the [FW2040 Report](#) was published in early 2019 comprising three main elements: Vision, Masterplan, and Delivery Programme. The report is directly aligned with the emerging West Highland and Islands Local Development Plan and will form a central part of its Delivery Programme. It is acting as the shared portfolio for everyone working together to deliver improvements for people and the place now and in the future.

The FW2040 project has also initiated an ongoing approach to engagement which empowers communities and partners in shaping their future. The Delivery Programme will be updated regularly with the assistance of a working group and an annual public workshop. This will monitor and communicate progress on delivery against the FW2040 Vision and the LDP. An innovative partnership arrangement has also been created between Community Council representatives and the Council's Lochaber Committee who will be working together to monitor progress and steer future actions for delivery.

Fort William has subsequently been identified as a pilot project for the Scottish Government's Place Principle. It is hoped that this will reinforce the collaborative approach at the national level and lead to more coordinated investment and better outcomes for people in Fort William and Lochaber.

Goals:

The project has delivered against the goal to create a step change in customer engagement and collaboration on the delivery of the emerging Local Development Plan. It has enabled closer, more collaborative working with stakeholders and empowerment of local communities and investors. The joined up approach was taken from the initiation stage with the Council working closely with HIE and Scottish Government in preparing for, resourcing and facilitating the events.

The aim was to take an innovative format of local workshops and a particular emphasis on seeking the views of young people via school and youth groups sessions on the future of their community. Pooling the interests, intentions, ambitions and resources of wider stakeholders was seen as a means of securing better quality outcomes for the place, the collective impact of projects being greater than the sum of their parts.

The outcomes and outputs from the engagement process were intended to create a joint portfolio for future changes in the town. The FW2040

report was targeted to form an integral part of the Delivery Programme which accompanies the emerging WestPlan thereby coordinating future developments and projects and the synergies between them.

The [‘live’ and dynamic format](#) of the Report illustrates how an LDP Delivery Programme can be a live, interesting and useful tool to communicate updates, actions and responsibilities for delivering an LDP. We believe this provides a flagship example of how Digital Planning could be enhanced to provide a place-based mapping tool showing ‘live’ information on developments as they progress from concept to completion through all planning stages.

Outcomes:

The project achieved / will achieve the following outcomes.

- Greater [sustainable economic growth](#) for Fort William and the Lochaber area – FW2040 was born out of the need for all stakeholders to come together to promote, coordinate and manage jobs led growth for Fort William.
- Greater [community empowerment](#) and involvement in planning issues via a formal commitment to an ongoing, annual consultation on, review of, and Lochaber Committee reporting of, the project documents. FW2040 has brought together partners that don’t always communicate effectively. Feedback from participants has demonstrated that the collaborative approach is empowering people to play a stronger role in shaping their future. In turn this is engaging a much wider audience in the delivery of the Local Development Plan. Andrew Baxter, Chair of the Lochaber Committee, has been quoted supporting this outcome saying “We want people to understand what changes are proposed in the Lochaber area and when they might happen, but also to feel more engaged in shaping their future. The Lochaber Committee is excited about the opportunity of working together with community representatives and those investing in the area to maintain Fort William as the beating heart of Lochaber and the West of Scotland.”
- Greater [stakeholder collaboration](#) in securing commitments to the spatial coordination of agencies’ investment programmes.
- [Delivery](#) “on the ground” – early groundworks have commenced at Blar Mor, applications for 320 homes have been lodged at Upper Achintore, and the Caol Lochside Flood Scheme is at an advanced stage.
- [Transferability](#) - FW2040 is a project based on a new way of

working that is transferable to any scale of place and circumstances. It is a new model for encouraging partners to work together to achieve a greater collective good and therefore could be used to engender a culture of and process for continuous improvement in the delivery of other Council functions.

Name of key officer

Scott Dalgarno

Case Study Title:

6 Historic Environment Record Online

Location and Dates:

Highland-wide

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to
(please select all that apply):

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement
-

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

3, 6(???), 12, 13

Key Areas of Work (please select the **main area** of work covered - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Conservation
- Historic Environment
- Community Engagement
- Development Management Processes
- Online Systems

Stakeholders Involved (please select the **main stakeholders** - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Authority Planning Staff
- Local Developers
- General public

Overview:

The Council has collated historic environment data over many years to ensure cultural heritage is carefully considered in development. The Historic Environment Record (HER) includes records for over 60,000 designated and undesignated assets and tens of thousands of fieldwork reports, photographs and technical papers. It supports the work of the Historic Environment Team and the planning authority in line with local and national policy. This data also has immense value to others outwith the planning service and the HERO project, through the use of technology and extensive digitisation, has made this information accessible to a wide range of stakeholders which has had numerous positive outcomes for the Council, developers and our communities.

Goals:

Digital transformation is a key priority of the Council and key to HERO's success was making better use of digital technology to make all heritage information held by the Council easily accessible to all. Access had to be user-friendly and straightforward and information comprehensive ensuring that consultants, developers and the public no longer need travel into Inverness to view the HER. This will improve efficiency by reducing time spent on straightforward enquiries. Improved access should ensure that developers consider heritage in their proposals early, resulting in better quality and more informed planning applications. HERO will also provide easy access to heritage information for planning officers and across Council services.

A key goal of the project was to use technology more effectively to ensure back-end processes ran smoothly and that data could be made available to users without undue delay. It was also recognised that the public, especially local heritage groups, have a wealth of information about our culture and heritage and HERO was to empower the public to directly submit information. This will improve data quality and currency and increase knowledge and thereby better inform decision making. It also ensures that sites of value to local communities can be properly considered and protected within the planning processes helping deliver localism by enabling communities to take ownership and use their heritage as an asset to make the Highlands an even better place to live and visit.

Outcomes:

HERO presents information via a modern and user friendly online platform, enabled for use across desktop and mobile devices alike. Detailed geographic information for sites and investigations can be viewed on an interactive map allowing users to easily identify the extent of designated and undesignated assets, and to see where previous investigations have taken place.

Underpinning HERO is a comprehensive and ongoing digitisation project that has seen tens of thousands of supporting documents including technical reports, survey data and photographs, much of which is from developer-led research, being made available online. This approach is unique in the UK. HERO also provides dynamic links from its own records to those of partner organisations and complimentary datasets including Historic Environment Scotland's databases and the Buildings At Risk Register. Furthermore, HERO also now discharges the Council's statutory duty to make information about our Conservation Areas available for

public inspection.

Improvements to the back-end of the HER have removed time consuming manual data uploads and new data, once validated, immediately appears online. This improves data currency and allows resources to be targeted more effectively, increasing productivity and efficiency.

Enabling stakeholders to upload their own information improves the quality of the data and empowers communities to actively help protect what's important to them. This not only results in new cultural sites being recorded and protected through the planning system, but brings the Council and the community together as partners jointly building knowledge and identifying and protecting cultural heritage in a sustainable way. HERO has become the main dataset for the Highland element of the HES-led Scottish Archaeological Regional Research Framework which places it at the forefront of Scottish research.

Since HERO was launched the number of simple and straightforward enquiries has dramatically reduced as information can now be easily accessed. HERO has enabled a cycle that enhances our ability to protect heritage for the future in a sustainable way. Through HERO, the Planning Authority and our community partners proactively develop better quality data and this feeds into making better planning decisions. Investigations and research secured through planning conditions feeds back into HERO which, in turn, is consumed by developers (improving the quality of applications by addressing heritage constraints early in the process, requiring less input from the Planning Authority), by communities (improving quality and sense of place), and the planning authority (improving decisions and outcomes).

Website performance a useful indicator of HERO's success. A target was set to double the reach of the HER in the first year. We recorded 1,464 users in April 2018 and 4,270 users in April 2019, far exceeding this target and the upward trend continues. The drop in average session duration confirms reports that information is now quicker and easier to locate.

	Period from 14/6/17 to 21/5/18	Period from 14/6/18 to 21/5/19	Percentage
No of Users	12,817	35,303	+ 175%
No of Sessions	19,917	48,783	+ 144%

No of Page views	92,240	140,227	+ 52%
Av session duration	3.46 mins	2.42 mins	- 28%

The commercial sector has also praised HERO. AOC Archaeology Operations Manager says “The improved functionality makes our research and project work more efficient and effective. This resource is much more user friendly than databases I’ve found in other local authority regions.”

Since its launch HERO has been accessed from across the world with users from the Netherlands up 523%, France up 566%, Australia 459% and the USA 96%. This raises the overall profile of the Highlands globally, demonstrating far-reaching value and interest in our cultural heritage, promoting tourism and enhancing the reputation of Highland nationally and internationally, a strategic priority of the Council Programme.

Name of key officer
 Ian Scrivener-Lindley

Case Study Title:

7 Housing Delivery Team

Location and Dates:

Highland-wide July 2018 to present

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement
- Governance
- Culture of continuous improvement

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

1 - Decision making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types

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

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)

Key Areas of Work (please select the **main area** of work covered - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Development Management Processes
- Collaborative Working
- Planning Applications
- Process Improvement
- Skills Sharing
- Staff Training

Stakeholders Involved (please select the **main stakeholders** - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

The Highland Council have set up the Housing Delivery Team (HDT) to effectively target resources in planning services and bring greater

consistency to the delivery of housing developments across the area.

Building on the recent experience of tailoring resources through its Small Applications Team, through the 2017/18 Planning Performance Framework, the Highland Council committed to introduce arrangements which utilise the specialist skills and knowledge of staff across service to facilitate the effective and efficient determination of the largest housing applications (applications of 10+ homes).

To deliver this approach consideration was given to the challenges of resourcing the planning system and a cross service team was set up to bring together the skills, knowledge and experience of both Development Management and Development Plans based planners.

By working in this broader team it has been possible to co-ordinate the provision of planning requirements, set out in the development plan and consultee feedback, to enable delivery on the ground. This has been due to the broader team having the knowledge and expertise in coordination and project management to deliver the essential supporting infrastructure.

Since its inception in July 2018, the applications dealt with by the HDT which will facilitate the delivery of nearly 1300 new homes.

Goals:

Ensure consistency of process, ensuring quality application and developments; and delivery of development on the ground.

Deliver a flexible way of working across planning disciplines to create a more flexible workforce of planners across the service.

Address viability concerns and ensure a corporate response to asset management for the benefit of the wider community in line with the Delivery Programme.

Outcomes:

To do so Highland have brought forward a unique way of managing resourcing to create flexible team that could respond to ever changing priorities. The team is made up of a core team augmented by expertise from the area offices and planners from the Development Plans Team. The team members brought in to share expertise are also used to train and support colleagues on aspects of the planning process they are not

familiar with. Thus building capacity and expertise across the service. This approach creates a unique working and learning environment for planners providing dedicated support, and a proactive means of addressing issues, from inception of projects to delivery of development on the ground. Taking a workshop based approach to development delivery involving the relevant consultees and the developer allows any matters identified with an application to be identified and resolved in a collaborative manner during the application process.

Communication between officers dealing with applications has improved significantly and alongside this the understanding between consultees, case officers and different disciplines as each role is clearer.

We are providing consistency in approach to the application of policy and design guidance, in particular Designing Streets and Creating Places. In doing so this create confidence in the development industry allowing them to be more assured to the success or otherwise of their projects when the submit them for planning.

Our development is a large complex residential mixed use site. The site has been talked about and had consents in various forms over a long number of years. With a change of ownership the focus was put on delivery. THC Housing Delivery Team worked in a collaborative way to help bring forward this project from a proposal to an actual major investment delivery. The best example of what has been achieved – in development terms in a short timescale – is to look on site. Major upfront infrastructure and significant delivery of new homes both private and affordable.

Brian Clarke, recent major development applicant

The Upper Achintore site was identified as a strategic housing development site to meet the changing housing needs of Fort William due to the proposed new wheel factory at the Fort William Smelter. We were able to submit a complex planning application in extremely quick timescales due to the proactive, constructive and helpful approach of the Housing Delivery Team to overcome the many challenging issues which arose in developing proposals for place making on a very difficult site . Due their expert professional assistance we are now in position of being ready to deliver the housing solutions to meet the economic expansion of Fort William

Allan Maguire, Head of Development and Regeneration

Name of key officer

Simon Hindson

Scott Dalgarno

Case Study Title:

8 Modernising Monitoring

Location and Dates:

Highland-wide during 2018-2019

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):

- Governance
- Culture of continuous improvement
- Quality of Service & Engagement

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

6: Continuous improvements

7: LDP less than 5 years since adoption

8: Development plan scheme demonstrates next LDP on course for adoption within 5-year cycle and project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale

Key Areas of Work

- Town Centres
- Housing Statistics
- Process Improvement
- Data Quality Improvement
-

Stakeholders Involved

- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff

Overview:

Monitoring exercises including [Town Centre Health Checks](#), a [Housing Land Audit](#) and a [Business and Industrial Land Audit](#) were undertaken in 2018-19. A [monthly house completions tracker](#) was also created to easily convey the most up to date position on delivery of new builds. The collection of information for these projects and its presentation has been substantially improved through innovative methods of data capture and pioneering use of online GIS mapping software.

Goals:

Each of the monitoring exercises that were undertaken are requirements of Scottish Planning Policy (2014). A Business and Industrial Land Audit had not been undertaken for several years and Town Centre Health Checks were to be carried out for the first time. It was decided at the

outset that a new approach to these monitoring exercises was to be taken in order to make use of new online GIS technology that had been made available to us through our mapping contract. These goals were not listed in the 2017-18 Planning Performance Framework (PPF) but would nevertheless be extremely useful in providing a more efficient, more thorough and more public-facing planning service.

Outcomes:

The output from these exercises has provided the planning service with crucial information on town centre vacancy rates, the quality of town centres based on multiple indicators, the availability of land for business and industrial use, the predicted rate at which houses are expected to be completed and their actual rate of completion. This important data is now feeding into a review of the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP), the Main Issues Report (MIR) for which is expected to be published in winter 2019.

Data gathering during the town centre health checks was undertaken using low-cost camera phones to capture a GPS located image of each individual non-residential ground floor unit within the fifteen town centres in Highland. These photographs were then assessed in office to establish the occupancy of each unit, its typology of use and its physical condition. The information was then presented using ArcGIS Story Maps that offer interactive mapping, graphs and tables in a way that has yet to be attempted by any other Local Authority in Scotland. The findings of the checks have been drawn upon to develop town centre strategy supplementary guidance aimed at improving the five town centres of Caithness and Sutherland. Work on this project is ongoing and the guidance is expected to be adopted in spring 2020.

The Business and Industrial Land Audit was also presented using a Story Map. The mapping elements of the tool will primarily be of use to the planning service but a further output as a marketing tool that may be of interest to developers who wish to grow their businesses and create employment in the Highlands.

The Housing Land Audit is crucial to the creation of School Roll Forecasts and the preparation of the Council's Housing Needs and Demands Assessment. Information for the audit was gathered through extensive consultation with case officers and housing developers. The use of a Story Map to present the findings of the Housing Land Audit provides an interactive tool that sits alongside a more traditional approach using

individual maps showing information on a settlement-by-settlement basis. The House Completions tracker is a new creation and details build rates on a quarterly basis. It is presented as an ArcGIS Dashboard.

Reaction to this new approach has been extremely positive. Publication of the TCHC was reported by the Press and Journal, who seized upon the comparisons made between each town centre. Elected members and community groups were enthusiastic about the quality and depth of the information provided and the way that it had been presented. Publication of the BILA was reported by several news sites, including 'the construction index' and 'Scottish Construction Now' and 'CRL'. Promotion of allocations/sites was an aim for the tool, and it is extremely encouraging that industry pages consider the mapping and information to be of practical use. Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) tweeted their appreciation of the BILA tool in mid-March, saying that it was a 'Good example of digital information to assist investors'. The tools were described as 'incredible' by Jacobs. The consultants were undertaking work in Fort William for Transport Scotland and sought up to date and accurate information on new developments in the area. Dr Paul Teedon of GCU was 'impressed' by the House Completions dashboard after requesting data from the Council.

Each of these monitoring exercises has been carried out before in one form or another however improvements made during 2018/2019 use available technology to improve the way in which the information is gathered and how it is made available to members of staff and the public. Lessons learned during the data capture for the audits and its presentation mean that future efforts will be significantly streamlined to improve their efficiency and minimise resource requirements.

Name of key officer

Mike Atkinson

Case Study Title:

9 Raining's Stairs

Location and Dates:

Inverness 2012 to 2018

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to

(please select all that apply):

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers:

3, 11, 14

Key Areas of Work (please select the **main area** of work covered - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Regeneration
- Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Environment
- Collaborative Working
- Design
- Active Travel
- Affordable Housing

Stakeholders Involved:

- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Other – Highland Housing Alliance

Overview:

The project relates to the redevelopment of a steeply sloping site in the heart of Inverness City Centre, which had lain derelict for a number of years, to create a new building containing 16 flats and 1 commercial unit for a local Housing Association with the assistance from the umbrella organisation for Housing Associations: the Highland Housing Alliance. The development was undertaken in partnership between a local company, William Gray Construction, the Highland Housing Alliance and The Highland Council.

The 2012 Inverness City Centre Development Brief identified The Raining's Stairs site as a potential residential opportunity. However, the steepness of the site represented a major challenge for both viability and

design.

The City-Region Deal (2016) provided a funding opportunity. Using this and working collaboratively Highland Housing Alliance, the developer and The Highland Council, were able to realise a viable development.

In June 2016 the design was discussed at the Inverness Design Review Panel (IDRP), which aims to raise the quality of the built environment through the provisions of constructive design advice. Many of the Panel's suggested design improvements were taken forward within the finalised application submission. Planning permission, for a development of 3 stepped blocks each extending to 3 storeys in height and linked through on the upper floors, was granted in April 2017. The design and construction took advantage of the slope and used lightweight structures to reduce cost and increase buildability. Traditional building forms with contemporary materials and detailing create a building of unashamed modernity but steeped in the local vernacular.

The development was completed in October 2018.

Goals:

Key goals of the project were to redevelop a challenging City Centre site, to deliver much needed affordable housing and to do this in a way that provided an opportunity to enhance the appearance of the area and of Raining's Stairs itself, a key City thoroughfare that was in poor condition.

The Inverness City Centre Development Brief (2012) identified and promoted significant opportunities and actions for redevelopment and enhancement of the City's core in line with the Council's key priority to rebuild the City Centre as the focal point of economic, social and civic interaction. The Brief had an important role as an additional tool to the Development Plan to implement the development aims and objectives of the Council that includes improving the quality of buildings and places for public benefit.

Outcomes:

The redevelopment has regenerated a longstanding derelict site within the City Centre on a principal pedestrian thoroughfare linkage between the Crown and the City Centre. Redevelopment has created much needed high quality affordable housing within the City Centre. It has achieved the aims and objectives of the City Centre Development Brief. The new development and reconfiguration of the Stairs has enhanced the area's

visual appearance and transformed it into a welcoming thoroughfare, providing an attractive sense of place, with the replacement and upgrade of quality finished materials for the Stairs contributing to public art.

This case study evidences the value of collaboration on a project as well as the contribution that the Inverness Design Review Panel (IDRP) can make to delivering positive planning outcomes.

Fraser Grieve, Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) Highlands and Islands Regional Director said: It's a great development on a very constrained site, helping utilise land that had laid derelict for far too long. This is making a major contribution to the regeneration of this part of the city centre which can only be good for the local economy. It's also helping address the shortage of affordable housing in the centre of Inverness.

Name of key officer

Keith Gibson

Case Study Title:

10 Stoneyfield Active Travel Bridge

Location and Dates:

Inverness Stoneyfield Business Centre – Bridge formally opened on 14 November 2018

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to (please select all that apply):

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

- 14: Stalled sites/legacy cases
- 15: Developer Contributions

Key Areas of Work

- Transport
- Active Travel

Stakeholders Involved

- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

The short way round. For many years workers and visitors to 2 major business and retail parks, only 100m apart, have had to walk or cycle 10 times that distance or negotiate a deep ditch and marsh. Many choose to drive 2km instead to access key trip generators. This simple bridge and path project finally delivered a long missing and logical link between hotels, shops and businesses. It is a crucial active travel artery in this busy and growing part of Inverness.

Goals:

The ultimate goal of this project was to provide a short, direct and attractive link for non-motorised users between the offices, restaurants, hotels, shops, leisure centre and cinema of Stoneyfield Business Centre and Inverness Retail and Business Park along with a link to the public transport facilities at the Retail and Business Park.

Viewed as part of an overarching vision of walking and cycling improvements in and around this site, this project has the potential to generate the most additional active travel trips. Some of these will be at the expense of single occupancy car journeys in which some travellers drive between the 2 business parks. This involves a trip of over 2km.

Outcomes:

This project brought together 2 private landowners working with The Highland Council's Planning Service and Project Design Unit to deliver this well used Active Travel link. Smithton and Culloden Community Council and Local Members were consulted from the outset to gain support for the project with several attending the opening ceremony. Site investigations were completed, including wildlife survey and ecological walkover by The Highland Council's Laboratory Services team.

The retrospective installation of a cycle and pedestrian counter has provided useful statistics showing that the link is being well used, even during the winter months.

Month	Stoneyfield People	Stoneyfield Bike
Jan-19	4275	372
Feb-19	4653	475
Mar-19	4510	510
Grand Total	13438	1357

Name of key officer

Neil Young

Case Study Title:

11 Regeneration of Wick Harbour for Base for Beatrice Off-Shore Windfarm

Location and Dates:

Wick, Caithness

Applications for planning permission and listed building consent were granted on 21 December 2016. The development was completed in July 2019.

Elements of a High Quality Planning Service this study relates to
(please select all that apply):

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

Key Markers (please select all that apply):

Key Areas of Work (please select the **main area** of work covered - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Conservation Regeneration
-

Stakeholders Involved (please select the **main stakeholders** - 1 to 2 options maximum):

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

Overview:

The developer initially approached the Planning Service with the concept of constructing a new purpose built building on the harbour quay at Wick to house an operations and maintenance (O&M) base for the Beatrice Offshore Wind Farm (approved by Scottish Ministers in 2014). Beatrice is one of the largest off shore renewables projects in the UK. The O&M base houses staff facilities, control room, stores and provides maintenance facilities for equipment necessary for the operation of the offshore turbines.

The Planning Authority asked the developer to consider the re-use of existing redundant industrial buildings at the harbour as an alternative solution to a new build, and facilitated contact between the developer and owners of the buildings.

The developer subsequently decided to pursue re-use of two large scale derelict buildings located within the Thomas Telford designed Lower Pultneytown area and fronting onto Wick Harbour. Both buildings are in the Pultneytown Conservation Area and one is category C Listed (within an A Listed group).

From the outset the Planning Service was strongly supportive of the principle of the restoration and reuse of these buildings that were in varying states of dereliction given then importance of these sites to the heritage townscape of Wick.

A formal application for pre-application advice was submitted to the Council in July 2016. Although a Local Development, the developer chose to pursue pre-application advice through the Council's pre-application process for Major Developments in order to obtain a comprehensive pre application advice pack. The working relationship between the Planning Service, consultees and the applicant/agent and a proactive approach from all was also crucial to the efficient processing of these applications.

Applications for planning permission and listed building consent submitted in September 2016 and approved under delegated powers in December 2016. Thereafter the Planning Service has worked with the developer to ensure the timeous discharge of conditions.

The applications raised complex matters including:

Built heritage – Sensitive restoration of the buildings was key. Both blocks had a gritty commercial/industrial character, appropriate to their context and the desire was to retain/enhance these rather than over-refurbishment/gentrification of the site. The development is accommodated within the existing footprint and with limited changes to the elevations of the building, principally; reducing and replacing the extent of render, public access and glazing work, using and reinstating previously infilled openings. Internally the buildings were reconstructed sensitively to respect and strengthen the historic context.

Natural heritage – Protected species (bats) were present in one of the buildings, survey work was carried out and mitigation identified.

Access and parking – Transport assessment carried out for construction and operation

Amenity – Potential noise impacts (operational and construction) given proximity to noise sensitive properties, including residential

Flood risk – Assessment undertaken as the site lies adjacent to the medium likelihood flood extent identified on SEPA maps, and mitigation measures identified

Drainage - Existing and proposed drainage arrangements for management of foul and surface water were assessed and identified

Contamination – Due to previous uses including curing yard, warehouse, depot, workshop, surveys carried out and mitigation measures identified.

Landscaping – Public realm improvements around the buildings and harbour area

Developer contributions – A public art scheme for the Black Stairs in Wick including a lighting scheme.

Goals:

The main goals of this project were to facilitate the regeneration of this part of the town including: sensitive reuse; refurbishment and long term preservation of historic fabric and character; environmental enhancement; job creation; and social and economic benefits. The proposal was considered to be in accordance with the development plan which recognises the potential for Beatrice offshore wind farm to be a driver for improving harbour facilities and with potential to regenerate the more central areas of Wick.

Outcomes:

The outcome on the ground is sympathetically refurbished buildings of great significance for the enhancement and preservation of historic fabric and character of the conservation area and listed building as well as wider regeneration. Furthermore, being the onshore base for Beatrice Off-shore Wind Farm, the development is fundamental to the delivery of increased energy generation and delivery of economic and social benefits resulting from construction employment during development and long term employment of staff at the base.

Steven Wilson, Project Director said “It’s not every day that SSE, leading the construction on behalf of Beatrice Offshore Windfarm Ltd, looks to purchase and renovate historic 200 year old buildings. So we have

worked very closely with our contractors and the Highland Council Planning Team to develop our proposals for sensitive and appropriate renovation. The experience, support and advice from the Highland Council has been instrumental in delivering a high quality renovation which will provide the long term operational base for up to 90 employees while also significantly improving the appearance of Wicks Harbour front. We have also received a lot of very positive feedback from the community which is testament to the hard work of everyone involved in this significant project

Mark Williams, Director of HRI Munro Architecture who led the design team said "At the outset, we met with the Highland Council departments as part of the 'pre-application' process that set the consent parameters that we needed to work within. This was a valuable exercise allowing BOWL, their design team and all the statutory consultees to discuss the overall project, consider relevant issues and agree what might be achieved. The Highland Councils response report set out in detail what we needed to do and allowed us to take a full planning application process through to detailed consent within the statutory period. The various officials, especially the planning officers, were supportive of the scheme and worked with us to deliver the consents and subsequently to deliver the project".

Name of key officer

Emma Forbes

Part 2:

Supporting Evidence

Part 1 of this report was compiled by drawing on evidence from the following key sources:

- Local and major pre-application advice service feedback questionnaire results;
- Review of public representation feedback;
- Ombudsman responses;
- Feedback from our customers through the Development Management and Development Plans processes and in particular feedback received from our Developer Workshop held in early 2018 e.g. Street Engineering Review pilot;
- Feedback from Member Workshops including Housing in the Countryside and Developer Contributions;
- A broad range of Council committee reports;
- Results of both formal and informal monitoring, data and information gathering and internal auditing, primarily undertaken by our Performance and Systems team; and
- Various in-house reports from Idox and Uniform, minutes, meeting agendas and briefing notes.

Wherever supporting evidence used is publicly available it has been hyperlinked in the body of the report. Planning Teams across the Service have provided input to the report, including regular reviews at fortnightly management meetings, and a draft version was subject to review through the wider Managers & Team Leaders Meeting.

The following table provides an overview of the issues covered in the case studies set out in Part 1. In addition, the accompanying text in Part 1 covers the majority of the topics listed below:

1. Developer contributions Supplementary Guidance
2. Drumnadrochit Prehistoric Cemetery
3. Environmental Advice and CConsultancy Team
4. Fort William Offices
5. FW2040
6. Historic Environment Record Online

7. Housing Delivery Team
8. Modernising Monitoring
9. Raining's Stairs
10. Stoneyfield Active Travel Bridge
11. Wick Harbour

Case Study Topics	Issue covered in PPF7
Design	9
Conservation	2, 3, 6, 11
Regeneration	9, 11
Environment	2, 3, 9
Greenspace	
Town Centres	8
Masterplanning	
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	1, 5, 9
Housing Supply	
Affordable Housing	1, 9
Economic Development	
Enforcement	
Development Management Processes	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7
Planning Applications	1, 4, 7
Interdisciplinary Working	

Case Study Topics	Issue covered in PPF7
Collaborative Working	1, 4, 5, 7, 9
Community Engagement	1, 6
Placemaking	5
Charrettes	
Place Standard	
Performance Monitoring	
Process Improvement	1, 3, 7, 8
Project Management	
Skills Sharing	7
Staff Training	1
Online Systems	6
Transport	10
Active Travel	9, 10
Other:	
Historic Environment	6
Housing Statistics	8
Data Quality	8
Improvements	

Part 3:

Service Improvements

Service Improvements 2019-20

In the coming year we will:

- Create a single integrated planning service with:
 - A flexible, dynamic workforce with a wide range of skills;
 - A diverse workload in development plans, place planning, and the determination of planning applications
- Improve a suite of service processes such as:
 - Development of the pre-application advice service
 - Satisfaction of Conditions
 - Listing of plans on decision notices
 - Review of enforcement process
 - Roll-out of Consultee Access for easier access to detailed case information
- Promote the corporate role of planning including the preparation of a Place Planning Protocol and a “Full Cycle Planning” approach to the management of Council and partner assets affected by development
- Prepare a pilot interactive LDP evidence report for the Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan
- Continue to develop virtual teams to enable more efficient and flexible delivery of the Service
- Continue to develop functional Teams e.g. Major Apps/Projects to make best use of available resource
- Develop Service ICT to enable mobile and flexible working.

Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2018-19:

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
Develop our mobile working technology to enable more work to be done on site	Yes
<p>This project will aim to get the best out of our forthcoming Corporate ICT refresh by ensuring case officers are swapped out with a sim-enabled laptops and is currently ongoing while we await implementation. Moving to sim-enabled laptops will better complement their current tablet devices, making document transfer slicker and faster. It will also enable case officers to have improved connectivity and access to Uniform and Idox, our back office casework systems while still on-site, saving time and travel costs back to the office.</p>	
Implement our workforce planning strategy to ensure training and development opportunities for teams across wider functional and geographic areas.	Yes
<p>The Housing Delivery Team and Small Applications Team were set up to improve efficient handing of applications, turnaround times and team skill sets. Both teams have set up work shadowing arrangements which provide opportunities for Planners to share knowledge and skills across geographic and functional areas, creating a greater diversity of skills across the planning service and providing additional flexibility in terms of workload management. The process is managed virtually negating the need for staff to move. This is an ongoing process with the aim of creating a single planning service, where new and existing staff can be deployed to the full range of planning activities</p>	
Carry out a review of our Website structure to more closely reflect the customer journey for a planning perspective and drawing on Scottish Governments aspiration of 'Aligned Consents'. This will also include a review of planning-based online services that The Highland Council offers. Implement further focussed Member training sessions as part of continuous improvement programme	Yes
<p>The Service has been working with the Service Centre and Digital Services staff as part of a phased approach to improve the Planning & Environment web pages as set out in last year's Planning Performance Framework Submission for 17/18. This piece of work has involved collecting information from planning and building standards duty officers and Service Centre staff to better inform the layout of our web pages so</p>	

that commonly requested information is more easily accessible for customers, service centre staff and duty officers alike.

Based on this engagement and the data recorded by these staff, some immediate improvements have been made:

- Ensuring [Pre-application advice](#) pages and [Request and pay for copies of planning and building standards documents](#) are more easily found/accessible.
- Layout and content improvements to the [Planning and building standards](#) and [Environment pages](#).
- Environment and Development Plans team completing a similar recording exercise to collect information to inform future website improvements.

Future improvements to be implemented have also been identified:

- Using graphic representation to show how disciplines connect within Planning and Building Standards to better reflect the customer journey
- Create simple text boxes beneath subject headings on the Planning, Building Standards and Environment pages which briefly describes what can be found within each section.
- An A-Z guidance to assist customers finding topics within the Service.

Implement further focussed Member training sessions as part of continuous improvement programme.	Yes
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Refresher training was provided for members of the North Planning Applications committee. In addition we undertook a policy workshop session with members with regard mainly to review the current housing in the countryside policy.

Implement a strategy of piloting Local Place Plans in advance of the Planning Act and Regulations.	Yes
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The Area Local Development Plans already provide support for communities to prepare Place Plans and allow such plans to have a strong relationship to the Development Plan. A guide has been prepared for community groups, including community councils, who want to prepare a plan for all or part of their community to help support the delivery of local priorities. A number of communities around Highland are actively preparing plans for their area and this guide has been provided to them. It is intended that the guide will be a 'one stop shop' for

information on how the Council will support and enable communities to prepare their own plans

Part 4:

National Headline Indicators

NHI Key outcomes - Development Planning:

Development Planning	2018-19	2017-18
Local and Strategic Development Planning		
Age of local/strategic development plan(s) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i>	4 years and 5 months *	4 years and 4 months
Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5 th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	N	N
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	N (WestPlan)	Y-earlier/ Y-later/ N
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Y	Y/N
Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs		
Established housing land supply	29433 units	30136 units
5-year effective housing land supply programming	6145 units	4965 units

- * Average age of our adopted Local Development Plans at March 2019:
- HwLDP (April 2012) – 6 years 11 months
 - IMFLDP (July 2015) – 3 years 3 months
 - CaSPlan (Aug 2018) – 7 months
 - WHI Local Plan (as continued in force) (April 2015) – 6 years 11 months
- 17 years 8 months ÷ 4 = **4 years 5 months**

The only Highland LDP submitted to Scottish Ministers during the 2018-19 year was WestPlan which was submitted in July 2018 in line with the 2018 Development Plan Scheme commitment. CaSPlan was adopted during this

year and the review of the Highland wide LDP was put on hold. Again, both these commitments were in line with the Development Plan Scheme for that year.

In terms of maintaining an Effective Land Supply, the 2018 Highland Housing Land Audit recorded the position as of 1 June 2018. It showed a more than adequate (relative to LDP housing requirement figures) total of 6,145 units across Highland and a sufficient total for each housing market area within Highland. Windfall sites of less than 4 units were not included in the total so in many parts of rural Highland the effective supply will be higher. The programming of the larger sites was checked with the development industry.

NHI Key outcomes – Development Management:

Development Management:	2018-19	2017-18
Project Planning		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	497# 17.5%	505# 17.1 %
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	19# 84.2	#9% 66.7%
Decision Making		
Application approval rate	96%	96.3%
Delegation rate	95.4%	97.1%
Validation 18-19 Workings	41.6%	25.5%
Decision-making Timescales (average number of weeks to decision)		
Major Developments	18.7	14.7
Local developments (non-householder)	11.5	11.7
Householder developments	6.8	6.9
Legacy Cases		
Number cleared during reporting period	53	62
Number remaining	35	33

Enforcement activity

Key Outcome	2018-19	2017-18
Time since enforcement charter published/ reviewed(requirement: review every 2 years)	23 months	8 months
Complaints lodged and investigated	508	450
Breaches identified – no further action taken	197	207
Cases closed	369	432
Notices served	74	74
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

With reference to enforcement we investigated 508 cases for 2018/19 compared to 450 the previous year. This resulted in 74 notices being served which was the same as the previous year.

The Council's Enforcement Charter is due to be reviewed in August 2019 within our projected two year timeframe. Some preliminary work related to this has already been undertaken.

Part 5:

Scottish Government Official Statistics

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

Timescales	2018-19	2018-19	2017-18
Overall			
Major developments	8#	18.7 Weeks	14.7 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	1804#	11.5 weeks	11.7 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	62.7% 37.3%	6.7 weeks 19.7 weeks	6.5 weeks 18.1 weeks
Householder developments	704#	6.8 weeks	6.9 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	91.5% 8.5%	5.9 weeks 16.6 weeks	5.8 weeks 13.7 weeks
Housing Developments			
Major Local housing developments	0#	0 weeks	18.4 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	906# 57.6% 42.4%	13 weeks 6.9 weeks 21.2 weeks	12.7 weeks 6.6 weeks 18.8 weeks
Business and Industry			
Major Local business and industry developments	1# 229#	11.7 weeks 10.6 weeks	12.4 weeks 11.4 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local: less than 2 months Local: more than 2 months 	64.6% 35.4%	6.7 weeks 17.7 weeks	6.6 weeks 18.2 weeks
EIA Developments	13#	25.9 weeks	0 weeks
Other Consents	458#	6.3 weeks	9.7 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As listed in the guidance(right) 			

Planning/legal agreements			
• Major: average time	1#	26.6 weeks	21.6 weeks
• Local: average time	57#	31.4 weeks	21.6 weeks

There were 27 Major applications in total, 19 of which had Processing Agreements and so are not included in the average time calculations, only the 8 stated.

There were 13 Major Housing applications in total, all of which had Processing Agreements and so are not included in the average time calculations, hence the figure is 0.

B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions	Original decision upheld			
		2018-19		2017-2018	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	38	21	55.3	30	71.4
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	17	9	52.9	11	57.9

There was a slight drop in the number of Appeals falling from 19 to 17 for the preceding year. There was a slight decrease of 5% of decisions where the Council's decision was upheld from 57.9% to 52.9%. With reference to Review Body decisions they fell slightly from 42 in 2017/18 to 38 in 2018/19. There was a significant decrease in the number of the original decisions not being upheld from.

Part 6:

Workforce Information

Workforce information should be a snapshot of the authorities planning staff in position on the 31st of March. The information requested in this section is an integral part of providing the context for the information in parts 1-5. The template below allows the information to be recorded in a consistent format, additional guidance on what to include is within the template itself.

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

RTPI Qualified Staff	Headcount	FTE
Development Management	35	31
Development Planning	10	10
Enforcement	2	2
Specialists	7	7
Other (including staff not RTPI eligible)	16	14.2

Staff Age Profile	Headcount
Under 30	2
30-39	27
40-49	13
50 and over	21

The above data has been drawn from the Council's HR and personnel records. The information has helped shape our strategic approach to workforce planning and our proposed Single Planning Service ensuring that all planners and staff within the Service have the opportunity to upskill across a range of planning functions. Although the Council has an ageing workforce, the planning and environment service has a reasonable spread of age groups with some vulnerability to potential retirees in particular geographic locations. We are however sighted on this and as such the data is being used to shape our approach to succession planning, flexible working, deployment of staff and the use of corporate Modern Apprenticeship/ Graduate Apprenticeship in recruiting. This should

alleviate the risks to the delivery of the Planning and Environment functions.

Part 7:

Planning Committee Information

The template below allows the information on the number of meetings and site visits during 2017-18 to be recorded in a consistent format, additional guidance on what to include is within the template itself.

Committee & Site Visits	Number per year
Full council meetings	3
Planning committees	9+9 = 18
Area committees	24
Committee site visits	3
Local Review Body	7
LRB site visits	0

Part 8:

Performance Markers

Performance Marker		Measure	Policy Background to Marker	Part of PPF report best suited to evidence this marker
DRIVING IMPROVED PERFORMANCE				
1	Decision making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types.	Pre App advice. Housing Delivery Team. Customer Engagement Sessions.	Official Statistics and PPF reports.	NHI. Scottish Government Official Statistics. Quality of Service and Engagement. Culture of Continuous Improvement. Case Study – Housing Delivery Team.
2	Project management: offer of processing agreements (or other agreed project plan) made to prospective applicants in advance of all major applications <u>and</u> availability publicised on planning authority website.	Y/N Pre App advice. Housing Delivery Team.	Modernising the Planning System (Audit Scotland). SG website/template.	NHI. Quality of Service and Engagement. Culture of Continuous Improvement.
3	Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications; clear and proportionate requests for supporting information. 	Y/N Pre App advice. Housing Delivery Team. Wick Harbour. Raining’s Stairs.	White Paper; Delivering Planning Reform; Planning Reform Next Steps.	NHI. Quality of Service and Engagement. Case Study - Wick Harbour. Case Study - Raining’s Stairs.
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).	Official statistics; PPF reports; evidence of delays to major developments.	NHI. Quality of Service and Engagement. Governance.
5	Enforcement charter updated/ re-published.	Within 2 years.	Planning Act (s158A).	NHI.
6	Continuous improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Training. Fort William 2040. Modernising Monitoring. Developer Contributions. Benchmarking.	Delivering Planning Reform; PPF Report.	Culture of Continuous Improvement. Case Studies. Fort William 2040. Modernising Monitoring. Developer Contributions. Benchmarking.
PROMOTING THE PLAN-LED SYSTEM				

7	LDP (or LP) less than 5 years since adoption.	Y/N	Planning Act (s16); Scottish Planning Policy.	NHI. Quality of Outcomes. Quality of service and engagement.
8	Development plan scheme demonstrates next LDP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on course for adoption within 5-year cycle; project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale. 	Y/N Y/N	Planning Act (s16); Scottish Planning Policy.	NHI. Quality of Outcomes. Quality of service and engagement.
9	Elected members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation.	Advanced briefings for and discussions with Members of forthcoming Inner Moray Firth LDP, Development Brief, Supplementary Guidance (e.g. Developer Contributions) and Fort William 2040 processes.		Quality of Service and Engagement. Governance.
10	Cross-sector stakeholders, including industry, agencies and Scottish Government, engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation.	Contact with development industry and other key stakeholders on Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance and Inner Moray Firth LDP. Joint working with Scottish Government and HIE on developing. Fort William 2040 Delivery Programme approach.		Quality of Service and Engagement. Governance.
11	Production of regular and proportionate policy advice, for example through supplementary guidance, on information required to support applications.	Early and integrated policy advice during pre-application and application processes. Application of Developer Contributions Supplementary Guidance.		Quality of Service and Engagement.
SIMPLIFYING AND STREAMLINING				
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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre App advice; Housing Delivery Team; Review of Feedback; Modernising Monitoring; Developer Contributions. 		Quality of Service and Engagement. Governance.
13	Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities.	Evidence of activity to pass on and adopt good practice. Benchmarking. Liaison with Key Agencies – SNH/SEPA.	Delivering Planning Reform; Planning Reform Next Steps.	Culture of continuous improvement.
DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT				
14	Stalled sites/legacy cases:	Reducing number of applications more		Governance.

	conclusion/withdrawal of planning applications more than one-year-old.	than one-year-old (from same time last year).		
15	Developer contributions: clear expectations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan,) and; • in pre-application discussions. 	Y/N Modernising Monitoring. Developer Contributions. Supplementary Guidance. Pre app advice.		Quality of service and engagement.