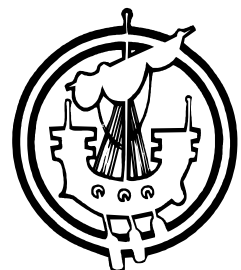


12TH PLANNING  
PERFORMANCE  
FRAMEWORK REPORT  
2022 – 2023  
**COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR**



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# Map of area covered by the Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan



## Outer Hebrides – Planning Context

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is the Planning Authority for the Outer Hebrides (the Western Isles), an archipelago of over 70 named islands lying off the northwest coast of Scotland, as illustrated by the map on the previous page. The prevailing character is of a dispersed population in a predominantly rural landscape. 28% of the total population, close to 7,500 people, live within the Stornoway area with the remaining population scattered over 280 settlements in 11 inhabited islands.

Delivering development in this multi-island extensive geography presents unique challenges and opportunities. The Outer Hebrides is an area of high scenic value where ecology and ornithology have thrived on account of the low intensity and traditional land uses; peat soils, a natural carbon store, and rare machair remain intrinsic to traditional working and are contribute to many livelihoods. Our area offers a highly desirable environment for people to live, work and enjoy healthy productive lives. Our Planning Service works to support the sustainable economic growth of the Outer Hebrides.

Delivering our Development Plan Vision has however become more challenging. The last year has seen increased cost of transportation, building materials, fuel and energy coupled with labour and skills shortages; this has resulted in a dramatic escalation in build costs compromising investment and development viability.

A lack of affordable housing, increased living costs (electricity, fuel, food), below average income levels, a reduction in availability and reliability of air and ferry travel are combining to undermine the attraction and retention of working age residents to island communities, threatening delivery of services and the viability of many rural communities. Skills and labour shortages have become more prevalent in public services but also in many private sectors, including the professional services required to aid developers and communities in providing specialist and technical information to inform planning submissions.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, is one of the smaller local authorities in Scotland, and has an increasingly pressured budgetary situation. Services, outside of those with protected budgets, including Planning and the services who support the planning process (e.g. Legal Services, Roads/Transport, Archaeology, Biodiversity, Environmental Health) have had to accommodate a greater share of the budget savings over the last ten years. This budgetary pressure combined with staff recruitment and retention challenges has led to exceptional demands upon the Planning Service in the reporting year; one where the national transformation of Planning has gathered pace.

The twelfth Planning Performance Framework (PPF) Report of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar covering the reporting period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 is presented without case studies due to significant resource pressures upon the Planning Service.

## Part 1: Qualitative Narrative

Note: the 22/23 PPF Report draws on a range of examples to evidence the performance markers rather than evidence this through specific case studies.

### 1. Quality of Outcomes

The focus of the Planning Service in the reporting period has remained on delivering high quality outcomes, by helping to secure high quality development on the ground, and adding value through pre-application, application and post-consent stages on key projects.

#### 1.1 High quality development on the ground

##### 1.1.1 Affordable Housing Projects

The vision and ambitions of the Development Plan have been to the fore of negotiations on projects seeking value engineering changes to materials and finishes pre-commencement of works and post contract where elements such as landscaping are being omitted due to cost over-runs.

All affordable housing development projects are by the Hebridean Housing Partnership, the only RSL that operates in our area. Collaboration and solution focused approaches (rather than enforcement) has been adopted to secure good outcomes on the ground. Planners have engaged with developers on a number of housing projects to negotiate best possible outcomes on changes to materials and colours, revision to layouts/level changes and landscaping solutions. These have resulted in maintaining quality of development on the ground in line with the Development Plan. Examples include:

- The landscaping scheme at a flatted social housing development in Tarbert Harris completed in 2021/22 was not carried out as approved. Contractual issues (Covid and workmanship), resulted in the project requiring to be retendered, the substructure removed and reconstructed with attendant escalation in build costs. Faced with the likelihood of the development being left absent of soft landscaping, development management negotiated with the RSL, their agents and contractor to secure a modest but effective landscaping solution which has been put in place and enhanced by the new tenants adding bench seating and flowerpots.
- The layout of Johnstone Court, a 10-unit housing development for affordable rent benefitted from officer advice to revise the position of larger v smaller houses to reflect plot size and keep those bordering a business park to single storey. The completed cul-de-sac is a pleasant and safe environment which has used a site within the village formerly identified but never developed for mixed use. The finalised layout and scale of houses is compatible with the adjoining business area.
- Goathill, (Sinclair Avenue) a social care and affordable housing development on the northern edge of town site has been largely completed. There is clear evidence that planning officer intervention to secure a greater range and distribution of materials on walls, accents and

porch features and secure a circular, albeit shorter, walking routes in the vicinity of the SUDS pond, has resulted in an attractive quality housing development that is of a standard equivalent to that likely to be delivered by any private housing developer.

## 1.2 Design in the Outer Hebrides.

### 1.2.1 *Pre-application engagement*

A free pre-application advice service and pro-active input to secure better design outcomes on local and major projects has been maintained during the reporting period. We have placed an emphasis on the benefits of Planning Briefs and secured a place at the table on some Project Boards. For example: Planning Service presence of Project Board for the Goathill Housing and Care development in Stornoway; the Blackwater Housing development (guided by a Planning brief); and ongoing master planning work with agents on the emerging Melbost West housing allocation site development, and the Arnish Enterprise Area, a key site for renewables supply chain businesses.

### 1.2.2 *Engaging expert design advice*

Development Management engaged Architecture and Design Scotland (ADS) to secure expert design input that allowed important feedback on the design of a visitor centre, . The Callanish Stones on the Isle of Lewis is a world-renowned Scheduled Monument site in the care of Historic Environment Scotland. It comprises a series of standing stone circles, on distinct but related sites; the main site has 13 standing stones set out in a circle with rows of parallel outer stones set out to create a cruciform shape. The first formal visitor centre was developed by the landowning community trust in the early 1990's and attracts visitors from across the globe. A project has been ongoing for some years to expand and redevelop the Centre to increase its capacity to meet demands and enhance visitor experience to the site. The project has involved many stakeholders. It is a key challenge for the design team to achieve certain spatial requirements on a highly constrained site while avoiding an adverse impact on the setting of the Scheduled Monument. The re-development project is a key 'Islands Growth Deal' project. The design advanced for planning has incorporated the 1990s centre, an organic shaped stone and turfed roof building linked with an existing farmhouse complex, set at a lower level. Development Management engaged Architecture and Design Scotland (ADS) to secure expert design input that allowed important feedback on the design.

## 1.3 Environmental Enhancement and Town Centre Regeneration

### 1.3.1 *Building Conservation Grants*

The Planning Service continues to face significant budget pressures due to the requirement for delivery of savings across all Council Services. During the reporting year this significantly affected the Comhairle's Building Conservation Grant Schemes (administered by the Planning Service), with the budget being cut as part of corporate budget cutting exercise. To address this challenge the Economic Development Service presented a report to the Sustainable Development Committee requesting that the Town Centre Legacy Fund (rental income from a Town Centre property in the ownership of CnES) be used to provide top up funding for the schemes for which there is high demand for assistance to maintain and repair from property owners of historic properties in the Conservation Area.

A key regeneration project in the town has been the renovation of a vacant anchor property in Stornoway Town Centre. Through the Conservation Area Grant Scheme the Planning Service has secured the sympathetic restoration of key historical and architectural features of the former Murdo Maclean's department store. The newly renovated building will provide retail, leisure, and accommodation floorspace in one of the most prominent buildings in Stornoway. The Grant scheme and advice from the Planning Service has sought to achieve the best outcomes for this building, including grant assisted works to the architectural mouldings, leadworks, and repairs to the original chimney stacks. This project has helped retain historical features, promoted awareness on historical buildings, and maintained skills whilst working to bring a key vacant building back into economic and residential use.



Former Murdo MacLean's, Stornoway. Top left image: before works, all other images works completed or underway.

### 1.3.1 Painting Grants Scheme

The Conservation Area Painting Grants Scheme administered by the Planning Service has led to enhanced finishes to a number of commercial properties within Stornoway town centre, our only town. Through advice and negotiation, the Service supported the operators of a whisky shop in the town centre to repair and repaint the windows, doors, shops front and a prominent side gable of their property which forms part of a listed building. This has helped the shop better integrate into the wider building and streetscape. The business also received support to install heritage compliant signage.



Image: Stornoway Painting Grant Scheme, Island Spirit Whisky Shop Cronwell Street.



## 2. Quality of Service and Engagement

2.0 This section focusses on demonstrating the positive actions taken by our Planning Service to support sustainable economic growth, initiatives to work closely with stakeholders and deliver a positive customer experience.

### 2.1 Development Plan action programmes, pre-application processes, policy in practice

#### 2.1.1 LDP Action Programme and Plan Monitoring

The Comhairle reports on its LDP Action programme ever two years reflective of the development pace and context here. The reporting year of 2022-23 falls in the intervening years where wider LDP Plan monitoring is being undertaken to inform the emerging new LDP, through analysis and scoping for the Evidence Report. Monitoring has identified the very good uptake of LDP allocations sites particularly for affordable housing which highlights the significant and sustained cross working between Planning and Housing colleagues and other housing stakeholders. Further Plan monitoring, and surveying of planning stakeholders including Development Management, Economic Development, Developers, private and community land owners, and the wider community is informing the next LDP Action Programme review, and preparatory work for the Evidence Report scoping and issue identification.

#### 2.1.2 Pre-application and post consent support

All affordable housing proposals have benefitted from pro-active pre-application advice and post consent support whereby in some cases minor changes, following value engineering, have been achieved through discussion between the Planning Service and developers. The need for this responsiveness from the Service has been heightened by supply chain issues, burdened markets, and tighter financing options, which are even more apparent in a remote rural setting.

#### 2.1.3 Case conferences.

Many of our larger more complex cases sit within programmes funded by the Comhairle Capital Programme, Highlands and Islands Investment priorities or schemes promoted by the UK/and/or Scottish Government e.g. Islands Growth Deal, Rural Capital Grants Fund, Tourism Infrastructure Fund. Colleagues in other services are engaged with these projects and programmes e.g. Economic Development, Legal Services, Corporate Services. The Planning Managers maintain a watching brief on project timescales and engage with colleagues on project management progress. The Development Plans Manager has sat on Project Boards and the Planning Manager (Dev Mgt) highlights early flags on planning and environmental matters that would benefit from early interventions. Where live cases are stalling due to particular issues that involve internal consultees or other service Departments, the Planning Manager engages with Managers in those Services to better understand the 'blocks' to progress and identify what if any actions are required to progress the Planning casework.

### 2.2 Protocols and relationship management

#### 2.2.1 Processing Agreements

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar encourages the use of processing agreements for all major and substantial or complex local developments. We offer [processing agreements on the Comhairle website](#), and a template is provided to aid the process.

To assist Developers, we also added a link to guidance produced by the Scottish Government Planning & Architecture Division on the '[Benefits of using Processing Agreements](#)'.

### *2.2.2 Enforcement Charter*

The biennial review of our [Enforcement Charter](#) setting out customer expectations for the Service was completed in February 2022.

Breaches of Planning are recorded by the Enforcement and Planning Systems Support Officer on a Complaints case management system with investigation dealt with by planning officers. Complaints are acknowledged and followed up fairly quickly by phone with parties advised of the actions required to resolve these. This approach works well in most instances without the need to resort to formal action.

### *2.2.3 Working with Stakeholders*

#### *Housing and Site Appraisal Methodology*

We continue to work with housing colleagues in identifying and assessing potential affordable housing site as part of the housing delivery programme through early policy and DM input to feasibility studies. We took this as an opportunity to draft, pilot and refine the emerging statutory site template methodology which will form part of the new LDP process. This has been used and reviewed by a small 'peer working group' of internal colleagues including housing, transport, climate change and development management officers initially and this will help refine it for its application in the new LDP and SEA process.

#### *SEPA - Quarterly triage meetings*

DM Manager and Officers, the Planning technician and the DP manager attend 6 weekly liaison meetings with SEPA, which have been very useful during the formulation and publication of NPF4.

#### *Heads of Planning Scotland*

Planning Service representatives regularly attend meetings of Heads of Planning Scotland (including DM and DP sub-groups); DP Manager Mairi Maciver attends meetings of the North of Scotland Development Plans Forum group.

#### *Scottish Government*

During 2022-23 officers participated in a series of workshops on NPF4 run by the Scottish Government. These engagements facilitate sharing of knowledge, approaches to policy formulation; good practice, exchange of ideas and often include skills sharing to progress specific pieces of work/projects.

#### *Aquaculture Forum*

The DM Planning Manager is a member of a joint Planning Authority forum (5 PAs with fish farm interests) together with colleagues from Marine Scotland Aquaculture Policy. The forum has a rotating Chair with The DM Planning Manager being the Chair in the Reporting year; The role of the Chair is to gather views from planning authorities, identify solutions to common issues in discussion with each other and in conjunction with other regulatory stakeholders.

## 2.3 Project management - development planning

### 2.3.1 *Outer Hebrides Development Plan Scheme*

The [Development Plan Scheme 2023](#) has been published and we are on track to deliver the next plan in line with the requirements of the new Development Planning Regulations, though this will exceed the 5-year targets aligned with the previous regulations.

Our DPS demonstrates how the Service will continue to liaise with the Scottish Government on the timeline for a new LDP; progress supporting policy guidance under the existing LDP; expand the monitoring framework; and progress collation of data for the Evidence Report. This work and the engagement processes proposed are detailed in the DPS and the draft participation statement currently out for consultation. This document includes a Development Plan Programme with timescales for the proposed work.



### ***Development Plan Scheme 2023 with Draft Participation Statement***

Our Development Plan has an important role in influencing and providing a positive framework for investment decisions and should provide clarity on the long-term spatial vision we want to achieve and what is required to deliver this vision in a sustainable way.

## 2.4 Communications, engagement, and customer service

### *Engaging stakeholders on new LDP work*

The current LDP was adopted in November 2018, and under the 2006 Act would have been subject to revision and renewal every 5 years. As a result of the new 2019 Planning Act however, we will be moving to a different format of Local Development Plan. Whilst awaiting the Development Planning regulations we had initiated work on the Evidence Report stage and other informative audit and assessment work, before setting out a definitive timeline for a new Outer Hebrides LDP. Concurrent with the formulation of the Participation Statement we have drafted a communications strategy reflective of the different mediums and tools for engagement in preparing a new LDP.

As part of the new Planning Act there is a requirement for planning authorities to prepare Open Space Strategies and Play Sufficiency Assessments as part of the Development Plan. We are currently formulating our approach to this aspect of the new system. We will be engaging with the community, stakeholders, organisations on the Open Space Strategy and the provision for play throughout our localities. Councillors have been briefed regarding the regulations and will be fully engaged in the LDP planning process in due course.

#### *Stakeholder bi-annual updates*

We continue to connect with our customers through media for engagement and to provide regular updates to our stakeholders which are posted on the Comhairle website at:

<https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/planning-and-building/stakeholder-update/>

#### *Planning Press*

The Planning Manager (Development Management) authored an article for the RTPi Scottish Planner on Aquaculture and the jurisdiction of the Scottish 'Land Use' Planning System in marine waters. This skills and good practice sharing exercise provided an insight to other planners and authorities of the specialist work undertaken by just 5 planning authorities for a sector which is so significant to the Scottish economy and GDP, providing well paid and skilled jobs particularly in rural and island communities.

<https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/13459/issue-191-final.pdf>

#### *Delivering a positive customer experience*

Both planning offices in Stornoway and Balivanich have re-opened to the public with officers available to meet on an appointment system. Meetings are available in-person, by telephone and using on-line collaborative technology (MS Teams and Zoom). We work proactively with developers, stakeholders, and agencies to deliver new development to meet the needs of the Islands' communities and to support the economy of the Outer Hebrides. The use of collaborative technology has increased access to our Planning Services for mainland based agents and key agency as well as for customers resident in our more remote island communities, who previously required to navigate travel arrangements by road, sea and air.

#### *Customer Satisfaction Survey*

To find out what our customers think of the service and to help us improve the service we provide we have a [Customer Satisfaction Survey](#) on the Comhairle website, and we also direct customers to fill it in when we send emails to them.

### 3. Governance

#### 3.1 Corporate Restructuring and Staffing Resource

The focus during the reporting period has been one of sustaining and maintaining Services within the resources available to deliver them through a period of change and financial pressures.

During the reporting period the restructure of wider Comhairle service was ongoing. Foremost has been the need for an interim structure to make the radical savings required to achieve a balanced budget. The resultant interim structure is a 'flat' management structure. Planning in common with allied services are now within the Chief Executive's Department with the two senior planning posts, the Development Plans and Development Management Managers, reporting direct to the Depute Chief Executive. A decision on the Chief Planning role will form part of the next stage of restructuring and has been held to date pending receipt of Scottish Government Guidance on the role.

The interim corporate and planning structure with current management reporting can be viewed within Part 6 of this Report.

Development Management had a vacancy in one of its five established posts for 9 months of the reporting year, while still carrying a backlog of casework post Covid and had a very controversial case to process that required an officer be dedicated to that case for circa 6 months. The Planning Manager is also carrying a caseload of aquaculture and other complex cases while supporting the officers in the team on other casework.

Development Planning has been heavily engaged in NPF4 and staff and member familiarisation at a time when resource in the team has been challenged by two experienced officers reducing their working hours (combined hours reduced from 1.8FTE to 1.1FTE), without backfill leaving only the Development Plans team with only other FTE.

#### 3.2 Governance structures

##### *Scheme of Administration*

The Comhairle has in place an up to date 'Scheme of Administration' which details the membership, quorum, purpose, and functions of the Comhairle and its Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Joint Consultative Committees. It also regulates certain aspects of procedure.

##### *Scheme of Delegation*

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar's has an up to date 'Scheme of Delegation' to Officers. This operates effectively with 98% of decisions being made under delegated powers in 2022/23. During the reporting year 98.8% of applications were approved evidencing the effectiveness of the Plan-led system; using flexible pro-development policies which are aligned to the Comhairle's priority of encouraging and facilitating sustainable economic growth, whilst protecting the special environment and ensuring that development contributes to the creation of well-designed attractive places that people want to live, work, and play in.

### *Planning Applications Board*

Development Management items that are not delegated are reported to the Planning Applications Board which can meet with appropriate notice, according to the needs of the Service. Each member of the Board must have undertaken relevant training before being permitted to take part in Board meetings. Following the Local Government elections in May 2022, the Planning Managers delivered a new training programme to prepare all members for committee service. The first tranche of planning training was delivered in advance of the first meeting of the Planning Applications Board, and Local Review Board. The Planning Applications Board may convene for site visits and pre-determination hearings as required.

### *Local Review Body (LRB)*

The Comhairle has a Local Review Body (LRB) which has meetings that are advised by officers of the Comhairle as may be determined by the Chief Executive. Each member of the LRB must have undertaken both planning training and specific training on Local Review Bodies before being permitted to participate in a decision-making role on the LRB. Following the Local Government elections in May 2022, members of the LRB are now drawn from the Planning Applications Board; this has helped build knowledge, skills and experience within the pool of applicable Members.

### *Sustainable Development Committee*

Development Planning and Marine Planning Policy items report to the Sustainable Development Committee which generally meets 5 times per year.

## 3.3 Sharing Skills across services

The Planning Service GIS technician co-ordinates data collection and collates spatial datasets from Council departments regarding assets, infrastructure, services, and provides this data to the Improvement Service Spatial Hub and has liaised with other authorities before taking on new applications/tools e.g., the ArcGIS StoryMaps platform to present various documents and consultations.

During 2022/23 the planning technician continued to work with the Climate Change working group and the Active Travel group to support the mapping requirements of the DP Team and these groups and collaborating with internal and external organisations on partnership projects such as developing an interactive mapping tools that everyone can access. These fora represent key policy topic areas for the emerging new LDP, and the data collated now will also inform the emerging LDP Evidence Report.

## 4. Culture of Continuous Improvement

### 4.1 Service Improvements progress

An overview of progress on the Improvement Actions identified in the PPF 2022/23 is detailed in **Part 3** of this Report.

### 4.2 Staff - Continual Professional Development

During 202-23 Staff have taken part in a wide range of CPD attending webinars and contributing to workshops on a wide range of subjects including:

Staff participated in training / workshops on

- *Peatland Restoration*
- *Community Engagement*
- *Building Conservation*
- *Green Recovery*
- *Hydrogen and the Planning System*
- *Accessibility*
- *Cost of living crises*
- *Historic Environment*

*And a series of workshops and training hosted by the Improvement Service/Planning Skills on:*

- *Grid Improvements for ScotWind; and*
- *Carbon Literacy.*

Staff participated in an engagement session with SEPA on the new Aquaculture regulatory framework.

Following publication of the draft NPF4 in November 2022 officers contributed to a series of workshops hosted by the Improvement Service and Heads of Planning Scotland to collate comments on the draft. In anticipation of its adoption the Development Planning team prepared briefing on the Framework and its Policies for Development Management and other colleagues and stakeholders.

Development Plan team members including a Planner and the Research officer attended the inaugural and subsequent Local Housing Market Partnership meetings. This key group will direct the emerging new Local Housing Strategy and by succession inform the new Local Development Plan. Current work is looking at Housing demand, housing market drivers and scenario planning.

The Development Plan team itself prepared and delivered a series of in-depth training sessions for Development Management colleagues on the new National Planning Framework 4. The NPF4 is a significant new policy document for planning throughout Scotland and poses a number of challenges for assessment of development here in the Islands. The finalised NPF was approved and adopted by the Scottish Parliament in February and laid before the Comhairle at the April/May (Q1 2023-24) series. The Development Planning team prepared and delivered briefings on the National Planning Framework 4 to Dev Mgt colleagues and to staff in corporate services, housing, and building standards.

#### 4.3 Member training and development

Development Management and Development Planning Managers delivered Planning training to Members in May 2022 to enable them to discharge their statutory duties as a Planning Authority and introduce them to the Planning Service and its functions. A further session of Planning training was delivered in early October to enable remaining Members to undertake the training.

Further training sessions on the National Planning Framework 4 were delivered for elected members post adoption of NPF 4 in February 2023.

#### 4.4 Clear vision and programme 23/24

The priority Improvement Actions identified for the 2023/24 year are set out in **Part 3 of this Report**.

The redesign of services across the Council will continue in the year ahead with a Members' Seminar on options for the Corporate Structure planned for August 2023.

The recent advice from the Chief Planner that guidance on the role of Chief Planning Officer is expected to be issued in Autumn 2023 is welcomed. It is important that this guidance can inform the next stage in the evolution of the Corporate Structure.

The Service continues to be mindful of the need to redesigning the service and invest in people and skills to facilitate the delivery of the service in a dynamic process and policy context.

The Planning Managers have fed into a department work force planning exercise. In addition, the Service has inputted to RTPI and HoPS work around skills identification and planning for Future Planners.



## Part 2: Supporting Evidence

- [Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan \(Adopted November 2018\)](#)
- [Outer Hebrides Monitoring Statement 2015](#)
- [OHLDP Development Plan Scheme](#)
- [Outer Hebrides Local Development Plan Action Programme Review 2021-2022](#)
- [Planning Service Charter Revised February 2019](#)
- [Planning Enforcement Charter February 2022](#)
- [Customer Satisfaction Survey Results](#)
- [Stakeholder Updates](#)
- [Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Housing Land Audit for 2021](#)
- [Outer Hebrides Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022](#)
- [Service Business Plans \(Progress Reports\) 2021/22](#)
- [Action and KPI Progress Report April 2021 - December 2021 \(Communities\)](#)
- [Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Planning Performance Framework Reports and Feedback](#)
- [Socio-Economic Updates](#)
- [Outer Hebrides Fact File](#)
- [Comhairle nan Eilean Siar Public Performance Reports](#)
- [Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership](#)
- [Scottish Government Planning Statistics](#)

## Part 3: Service Improvements

### 3.1 Progress on Delivery of our service improvement actions in 2022-23:

<b>Committed improvements and actions</b>	<b>Complete?</b>
<p><b>Undertake preliminary work to enable delivery of a new Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan for Stornoway, leading to a future regeneration scheme for Stornoway Conservation Area.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief has been revised with specialist officer input, good practice incorporated, and new specialist supplier contacts obtained. This along with consideration of new NPF policy should enable contact to be let once funding is identified and prioritised.</li> </ul>	Largely complete, brief revised in light of new policy context, specialist officer input and shared good practice from other LAs.
<p><b>Following receipt of Government Guidance, establish a role of Chief Planning Officer in line with the statutory duty arising from the Planning (Scotland) 2019 Act;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No appointment or role established yet as this will be a statutory post and awaiting SG guidance. It is anticipated that the guidance which will explain the post remit. This may inform wider senior management restructuring with the Comhairle and succession planning.</li> </ul>	CnES awaiting Scot Gov guidance on provisions of the CP role.
<p><b>Establish and recruit staff to deliver regional marine planning function and operational aspects of the Marine Planning Partnership;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Comhairle remains committed to progressing regional marine planning and subject to a reduction in wider Planning Service pressures around staff absence and recruitment, will seek to recruit a dedicated Marine Planning team. This action is partly suspended until issues around a tied Seabed Lease pilot project, in part, a precursor to RMP governance are resolved. Marine planning team staff resourcing requirement and finance largely agreed.</li> </ul>	Awaiting available management resource, and outcome of Crown Estate Seabed Lease pilot discussions.
<p><b>Promote the Design Agenda in the Outer Hebrides.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-application advice and input to local and major projects to obtain better design outcomes and emphasis on Planning Briefs. For example: having Planning Service presence of Project Board for the Goathill Housing and Care development in Stornoway; the Blackwater Housing development (guided by a Planning brief); and ongoing masterplanning work with agents on the emerging Melbost West housing allocation site development.</li> <li>Lack of integration between the various specialisms providing the overall engineering and design input to a commercial distillery in a highly sensitive location on the Isle of Barra, led Development Management to set out an Agenda and lead a meeting with all the parties to guide actions required to achieve a satisfactory design outcome.</li> </ul>	Yes

Committed improvements and actions	Complete?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design awareness and agenda promoted and discussed with Members and applicants through Scotland's Home of the Year 2002 winner being in Lewis and other media coverage.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Design and deliver a training programme on key themes to elected Council Members.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elected Member planning training was delivered covering all aspects of Planning and Members roles and functions as a Planning Authority.</li> <li>In addition, Members were given training and briefing on the new National Planning Framework and their role in helping to deliver it.</li> </ul>	Yes
<p><b>Identify a planner to participate in the Conservation Officers Group (Built Environment Forum Scotland), following retiral of current representative;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A dedicated Planning officer now attends this (mainly online) group which has proved a valuable source of conservation knowledge skills, contacts and good practice sharing.</li> </ul>	Yes
<p><b>Ensure all RTPI members are meeting Continuous Professional Development obligations;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A good variety of policy and procedural training opportunities were undertaken reflective of the dynamic policy and regulatory context currently. This included 12 hours on NPF4, and other training on Hydrogen, Scotwind, peatland restoration, green recovery (further detail in Part 1, section 4.1).</li> </ul>	Yes
<p><b>Develop a workforce plan/succession planning arrangements for the Planning Service.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Planning Managers have been looking at specific workforce and succession planning jointly across the Development Planning and Development Management Teams, taking cognisance of the evolving skills needed to deliver Planning Services. Concurrently we have fed into a wider Department workforce planning exercise.</li> </ul>	Yes. This is an iterative process and will continue.

## 3.2 Service Improvements planned for the 2023/24 Reporting Year

### Governance

- **Corporate and Service redesign** - Planning Managers to continue to engage proactively with senior management to agree a robust staffing structure and additional resources for Planning Services to upskill, improve performance, and ensure service delivery;
- **Chief Planner provision** - Following receipt of Government Guidance, establish a role of Chief Planning Officer in line with the statutory duty arising from the Planning (Scotland) 2019 Act;
- **Elected Member Training** – Deliver appropriate Member training to support new Plan process and wider Place based awareness.

### Quality of Outcomes

- **New Skills for Evidence Report – Key Agency Group (KAG) Offer** - The Planning Service has bid to take part in the Key Agency Group pilot project to help planning authorities delivery their Evidence Reports and LDP and ensure that these processes are strongly focused on a Place making. The Comhairle was select as one of six planning authorities to benefit from the Key Agency support in the pilot, and is committed to optimising this support in preparing and delivering its next LDP. A scope of support and more defined work programme will emerge in due course.

### Quality of Service and Engagement

- **Explore data management and presentations tools** – In preparing the new LDP and initially the Evidence Report we will explore the best and most accessible data management and presentation platforms and tools/applications for our authority. This is to ensure efficient, currency of data and optimise stakeholder engagement.

### Culture of Continuous Improvement

- **Carbon Literacy** - Given the strong policy thrust of NPF4 and the emerging LDP, then need for specific knowledge and skills on this, and a number of significant and transformation projects likely to come forward in the Islands around Renewables, it is recognised that we need to improve our skills and knowledge around carbon literacy. This will benefit planning staff, Members, other Comhairle staff and wider stakeholders including developers and applicants. Further this will cross over with wider corporate work around Net Zero and Climate Change.
- **EIA training for officers** – Given the increased number of EIA applications associated with Energy and Renewables projects (which follow on from OFGEM approval of a 1.8GW transmission cable) we will need to upskill officers in EIA practice.
- **Succession and workforce planning** – we will continue the iterative process of assessing skills and resourcing in response to the evolving demands required to delivery Planning services.

## Part 4: National Headline Indicators (NHI)

### 4.1 A: NHI Key outcomes - Development Planning:

<b>Development Planning</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
<b>Local and Strategic Development Planning:</b>		
Age of local/strategic development plan(s) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i>	<b>4 years and 4 months</b>	<b>3 years and 4 months</b>
Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5 <sup>th</sup> anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	<b>N</b> <b>(Under the 2019 Act we are moving to the new process for LDPs)</b>	<b>Y</b> <b>(Under the 2019 Act are moving to a different format of LDP)</b>
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	<b>N</b>	<b>N</b>
Were development plan scheme engagement / consultation commitments met during the year?	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>Effective Land Supply and Delivery of Outputs<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>
Established housing land supply	<b>1,155 units</b>	<b>1,555 units</b> (NB: we produce a biennial audit, published July 2021)
5-year effective housing land supply programming	<b>508 units</b>	<b>508 units</b> (NB: we produce a biennial audit, published July 2021)
5-year effective land supply total capacity	<b>508 units</b>	<b>508 units Per LDP</b> (NB: we produce a biennial audit, published July 2021)
5-year housing supply target	<b>460 units</b>	<b>460 LDP target units</b>
5-year effective housing land supply (to one decimal place)	<b>5.5 years</b>	<b>5.5 years</b>
Housing approvals	<b>116 units</b>	<b>163 units</b>
Housing completions over the last 5 years	<b>443 units</b>	<b>378 units</b>
Marketable employment land supply	<b>13.67 ha</b>	<b>13.67 ha</b>
Employment land take-up during reporting year	<b>0 ha</b>	<b>0 ha</b>

<sup>1</sup> This relates to 2021 HLA, which covers the 5-year period April 2021 to March 2026 and then 2026+

## 4.2 B: NHI Key outcomes – Development Management:

<b>Development Management:</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
<b>Project Planning</b>		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	We no longer analyse this data	We no longer analyse this data
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	0% We offer this service at pre-app and on our website, however no recent uptake	0% We offer this service on our website, however we have minimal major applications and no recent uptake
<b>Decision Making</b>		
Application approval rate	98.8%	99.3%
Delegation rate	98.0%	98.7%
Validation	Our analysis is incomplete (but the percentage valid on first receipt is less than 20%)	We do not analyse this
<b>Decision-making Timescales</b>		
Major Developments	76.1 weeks (1 case)	35.1 weeks (2 cases)
Local developments (non-householder)	12.0 weeks	12.7 weeks
Householder developments	9.3 weeks	8.9 weeks
<b>Legacy Cases</b>		
Number cleared during reporting period	81	6
Number remaining	19	4

## 4.3 C: Enforcement activity

	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Time since enforcement charter published / reviewed	months	months
Requirement: review every 2 years	14	2
Complaints lodged and investigated	Many	0
Breaches identified – no further action taken	x	0
Cases closed (breaches resolved)	3	4
Notices served	1	2
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	1*	0

\*One prosecution on 15 June 2022 (reported Oct 2018) omitted from SG return

## 4.4 D: NHI Key outcomes – Commentary

### 4.4.1 Development Planning:

As stated previously we have started preparing the next LDP under the new regulations and formulated our timetable in anticipation of the publication of the finalised regulations.

Reflective of the pace and context of development in the Islands historically, and as permitted under SPP/NPF3 we produce Housing Land Audits every two years as opposed to annually, with the 2021 HLA being the latest. With only one RSL the scale of affordable housing development here is more readily monitored than in bigger authorities.

The current LDP has a limited number of economic development plan allocations in response to previous Plan monitoring which directed that a more policy-based approach was appropriate for the nature of economic development here, which is often based on small or social enterprises distributed throughout the islands. However early scoping for the next LDP has identified a number of significant transformational projects which should be directed by the new Plan, and which would benefit from a focus on place based and strongly spatially directed master planning.

### 4.4.2 Development Management

For the last three quarters of the reporting year, the Development Management team had a vacant post (one of five posts (or 20% capacity)). Further there was no Head of Service for 9 months in the reporting year. Further there is no enforcement officer or conditions monitoring officer on the Establishment. This results in added workload for planning officers.

This year has continued to see pressure on the Development Management team in terms of managing a vacancy, a high number of new cases, a backlog of undetermined cases, high demand for advice, delays in obtaining further information requested from agents and some highly controversial/complex cases one of which required a dedicated officer be assigned to it for circa 6 months reducing further the number of officers available to deal with routine casework. The Planning Manager continues to carry a significant caseload. Restructuring to achieve corporate saving saw the Head of Service post vacated on redundancy and the Department disbanded and Planning Service moved to the Chief Executives dept.

Overall, the volume of work exceeded the capacity of the staff resource and this is reflected in performance figures. The pressure on a small cohort of Development Management staff has been significant.

#### Project Planning

- Pre-application advice – we continue to provide a free pre-application service for all scales of development. The demands for both pre-application advice remains high. Requests for advice vary in nature scale and complexity and we no longer try to analyse this data. We set up a dedicated mailbox and enquiry form for enquirers and this provides evidence of the daily volume of enquiries.
- Processing Agreements - We offer this service on our website, however we have had no major applications and no recent uptake (most 'major' development is S36 and S37 Electricity Act) and most housing projects are contractor led in our area.

#### Decision Making

The application Approval rate and delegation rates have remained fairly consistent with those in previous years, albeit the number of applications determined fell.

#### Decision Making Timescales

We had only one major development a major EIA development for a windfarm, submitted in 2018, required SEI, determined by committee in March 2021 but delays on S75 planning obligation conclusion prevented decision being issued until June 2022.

There was a slight improvement on the average determination times for Local (non-householder developments) and a slight increase on the average determination times for Householder.

#### Legacy cases

At the end of the 22/23 reporting period we had nineteen legacy cases.

During the reporting year we determined 81 cases which were more than one-year-old at the date of their determination.

The increase in cases determined at more than one year is a reflection of the lack of resource and capacity within a small team to deal with the demands upon the service over the last year.

Legacy cases will continue to be subject to quarterly review by the Planning Manager (Development Management).

#### 4.4.3 Enforcement Activity

Complaints, including many anonymous complaints, regarding Breaches of Planning continued throughout the year and placed an additional pressure upon the Development Management team. Many were for development for which retrospective planning permission was applied for and granted.

The lack of a dedicated enforcement officer adds to the pressure on development management officers who require to deal with complaints and investigate breaches of planning.

During the Reporting Year we have had to rank breaches of planning by severity and act only upon those where there is real harm or strong public pressure to act and protect the integrity of the planning system.



## Part 5: Scottish Government Official Statistics

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

<b>Timescales</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
<b>Overall</b>			
<b>Major developments</b>	1	<b>Weeks</b> 76.1	<b>weeks</b> 35.1
<b>Local developments (non-householder)</b>	256	<b>Weeks</b>	<b>weeks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months</li> <li>Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	34.4% 67.5%	6.7 15.9	7 14.3
<b>Householder developments</b>	72	<b>Weeks</b>	<b>Weeks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months</li> <li>Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	61.1% 38.9%	5.9 14.8	7 11.4
<b>Housing Developments</b>			
<b>Major</b>	0	<b>weeks</b> -	<b>weeks</b> 50
<b>Local housing developments</b>		<b>weeks</b>	<b>weeks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months</li> <li>Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	32.5% 67.5%	6.8 14.9	7.6 13.7
<b>Business and Industry</b>			
<b>Major</b>	0	<b>weeks</b> n/a	<b>weeks</b> n/a
<b>Local business and industry developments</b>	19	<b>weeks</b>	<b>weeks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local: less than 2 months</li> <li>Local: more than 2 months</li> </ul>	31.60% 68.4 %	5.7 17.8	6.8 15.1
<b>EIA Developments</b>	1	<b>weeks</b> 76.1	<b>weeks</b> 14.9
<b>Other Consents</b>	16	<b>weeks</b> 11.6	<b>weeks</b> 12.9
<b>Planning/legal agreements</b>	1	<b>weeks</b> <b>76.1</b>	<b>weeks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major: average time</li> <li>Local: average time</li> </ul>	1 0	76.1 n/a	n/a n/a

## 5.2 B: Decision-making: local reviews and appeals

Type	Total number of decisions No.	Original decision upheld (%)			
		2022-2023		2021-2022	
		No.	%	No.	%
Local reviews	2	1	50%	3 (2021/22)	66.6%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	0	0	n/a	1 (2021/22)	100%

## 5.3 C: Context to Decision Making

See staffing resource and corporate context under D - NHI Key Outcomes commentary.- Development Management

Major Development - The increase in determination time for major applications is not statistically significant since it relates to only one case; this was an EIA for a major windfarm development; significant number third party contributions and a need for an extended period to gather ornithological data in the form of Supplementary Environmental Information, determined by committee in March 2021 but delay in decision issue due to 15 months to conclude a multi stakeholder S75 planning obligation.

Local developments – Non householder and householder and Business and Industry – Performance timescales were similar to last year with small improvement in Local developments and Business and Industry. There was also a small improvement in average determination timescale for Other consents.

Decision-making: local reviews and appeals – these were limited in number, consistent with the high approval rate, which we attribute to early engagement at pre-application stage and a development plan that is working for our area.

There have been three meetings of the LRB (June 2022, September 2022 and March 2023) during the reporting period.

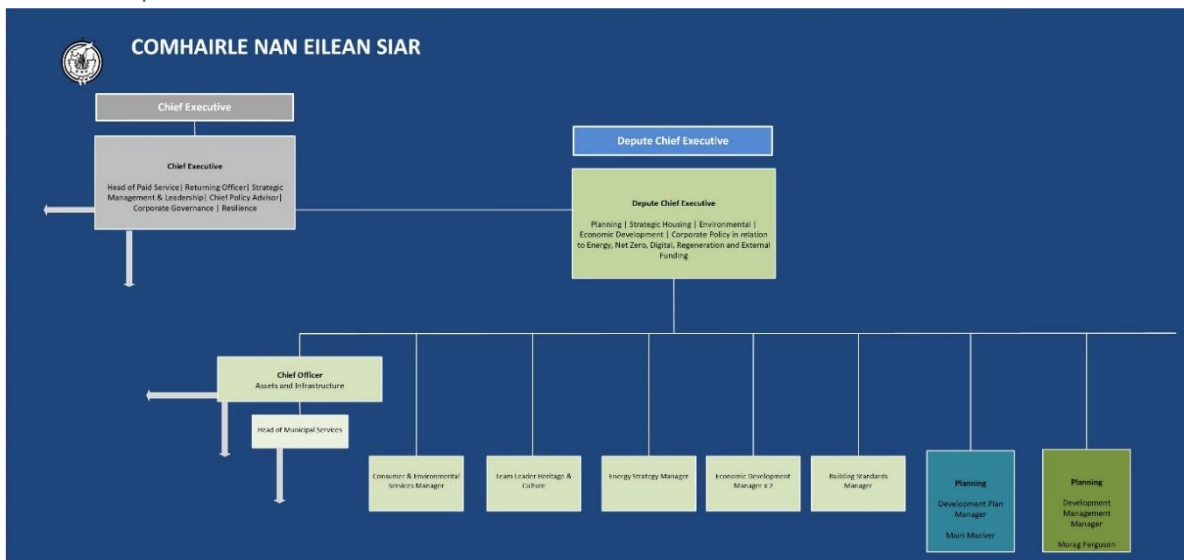
## Part 6: Workforce Information

A snapshot of the authorities planning staff in position on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023.

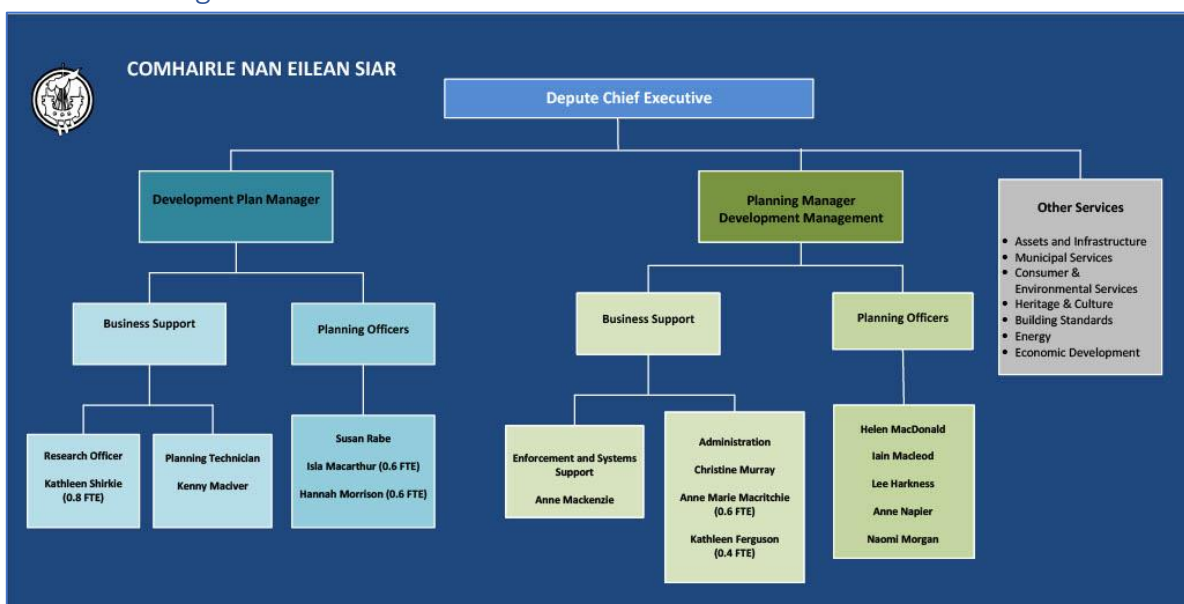
	Tier 1 <i>Chief Executive</i>	Tier 2 <i>Director</i>	Tier 3 <i>Head of Service</i>	Tier 4 <i>Manager</i>
<b>Head of Planning Service</b>	0	0	0	0

Staff Age Profile	Headcount	RTPI Membership	Headcount
Under 30	1	Chartered	5
30-39	1	Associate	4
40-49	3	Licentiate	0
50 and over	4		

### 6.1 Corporate - interim structure



### 6.2 Planning Service - structure



Notes: NM took up the vacant post of Dev. Mgt. planning officer post the reporting year; There is no Head of Planning, Enforcement Officer or Conditions Monitoring Officer in the interim structure.

## Part 7: Planning Committee Information

<b>Committee &amp; Site Visits</b>	<b>Number per year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023</b>
Full council meetings	8 Comhairle meetings including budget setting and inaugural Elected Member meetings.
Planning committees	4
Area committees	N/A
Committee site visits	None in 2022/23
Local Review Body	3
LRB site visits	None in 2022/23

## Part 8 - Performance Markers 2022-23

No.	Performance Marker	Previous R.A.G Rating in PPF 11	Evidence
<b>DRIVING IMPROVED PERFORMANCE</b>			
<b>1</b>	Decision-making: authorities demonstrating continuous evidence of reducing average timescales for all development types	AMBER	NHI Statistics and commentary is provided at <b>Part 4 above</b> and performance statistics and context to these at <b>Part 5 above</b> .
<b>2</b>	Project management: offer of processing agreements (or other agreed project plan) made to prospective applicants in advance of all major applications and availability publicised on planning authority website	GREEN	<p>We promote the use of Planning <a href="#">processing agreements</a> as a project management tool on our planning authority website for all major and National developments. Detail in <b>Part 1 para 2.2.1</b></p> <p>We also encourage the use of Planning Processing Agreements for substantial local or complex developments through pre-application advice.</p>
<b>3</b>	<p>Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- availability and promotion of pre-application discussions for all prospective applications</li> <li>- clear and proportionate requests for supporting information</li> </ul>	GREEN	<p>Pre-planning advice remains free of charge for all scales of development. <a href="#">A Pre-application form</a> to gather more comprehensive information is promoted to enquirers via officer e-mail signature straplines and through the auto responses on the generic Planning and Planning Advice mailboxes. E.g. Auto response from <a href="mailto:Planning.advice@cne-siar.gov.uk">Planning.advice@cne-siar.gov.uk</a>.</p> <p>We review requests for advice each week and aim to respond to straightforward questions either by phone or in writing that same week; for more complex enquiries we request up to three weeks to respond.</p> <p>We provide clear and proportionate requests for information by email; telephone and via video link.</p> <p>Detail in <b>Part 1, paras 2.1.2 and 2.2.3</b></p>

No.	Performance Marker	Previous R.A.G Rating in PPF 11	Evidence
			The delivery of the multi-agency / multi contract Goathill site in Stornoway (profiled in previous PPFs), which is nearing completion and full occupancy, benefited from having a Planning Manager on the Project Board. This development will provide 72 general needs housing units, 50 housing with extra care beds, and 52 care beds on an identified housing allocation site. The complex planning, contracting and delivery of this significant project partly during covid was testing in terms of high design aspirations (Dementia care, prominent site), ground conditions, supply chain etc. The presence of a planning team Member on the Project Board supported effective communication, agreed timescales, responsiveness, informed risk management and better project delivery of clients and contractors from the outset.
4	Legal agreements: conclude (or reconsider) applications after resolving to grant permission reducing number of live applications more than 6 months after resolution to grant	GREEN	Only one legal agreement was concluded for which a planning permission was issued in the reporting year; a major development for a windfarm approved by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar on 31 March 2021. The Planning Obligation agreement while not complex involved a number of interests and the legal process was lengthy; taking in excess of a year to conclude. Planning permission issued 28 Jun 2022.
5	Enforcement charter updated / re-published	GREEN	The Comhairle <a href="#">Enforcement Charter</a> was updated and republished in February 2022 (14 months old at the end of the reporting period) and within 2 years of the previous iteration. Further detail in <b>Part 1 para 2.2.2., and 1.1.1. and evidence in Part 2</b>
6	Continuous improvements: - progress ambitious and relevant service	AMBER	Refer to <b>Parts 2 and 3 above</b> ; during the reporting year we made good progress on a number of Continuous Improvements, identified for the reporting year in the previous PPF:

No.	Performance Marker	Previous R.A.G Rating in PPF 11	Evidence
	improvement commitments identified through PPF report		<p><b>Conservation Officer Group:</b> In a positive pre-emptive succession planning move in anticipation of the retiral of an officer with significant conservation experience several planning officers shadowed him, to improve their historic environment and conservation skills. This was achieved through mentoring, joint case working and peer review and a day of fieldwork training within the Stornoway Conservation Area. This enabled a planning officer to succeed the retire office on the national Conservation Officer group.</p> <p><b>RTPI CPD:</b> Despite wider service pressures officers have achieved an excellent level of CPD (including RTPI accreditable), through both formal and informal training and learning. The fast-changing planning policy and regulatory environment has afforded officers training opportunities, both in-house and through HoPS, IS and other training agents including on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Peatland Restoration</i></li> <li>• <i>Community Engagement</i></li> <li>• <i>Building Conservation</i></li> <li>• <i>Green Recovery</i></li> <li>• <i>Hydrogen and the Planning System</i></li> <li>• <i>Accessibility</i></li> <li>• <i>Cost of living crises</i></li> <li>• <i>Historic Environment</i></li> </ul> <p><i>And a series of workshops and training hosted by the Improvement Service/Planning Skills on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Grid Improvements for ScotWind; and</i></li> <li>• <i>Carbon Literacy.</i></li> </ul> <p>Staff participated in a series of engagement sessions with SEPA on the proposed changes to the regulatory framework for Aquaculture, a key development sector within our Planning Authority Area.</p> <p>Further, the Development Plan team prepared and delivered a series of in-depth training / briefing sessions (12 hours in total) for Development Management colleagues on the new</p>

No.	Performance Marker	Previous R.A.G Rating in PPF 11	Evidence
			<p><b>National Planning Framework 4.</b> This was a discursive forum where policy interpretation was constructively debated to achieve consensus.</p> <p><b>Workforce/Succession Planning:</b> The Planning Managers have been looking at workforce and succession planning jointly across the Development Planning and Development Management Teams, taking cognisance of the evolving skills needed to deliver Planning Services. Concurrently we have fed into a wider Department workforce planning exercise.</p> <p><b>Future Service Improvements:</b> We have included a number of considered service improvements based on service need going forward and these are set out in <b>Part 3 para 3.2.</b></p>
<b>PROMOTING THE PLAN-LED SYSTEM</b>			
7	LDP (or LP) less than 5 years since adoption	GREEN	<p><a href="#">Outer Hebrides Development Plan</a> was Adopted in November 2018, making it 4 years and 4 months old at the end of the reporting period. The Plan monitoring framework is indicating that the Development Strategy and policies are proving to be largely effective in guiding new development to the right place during the life of the plan.</p> <p>The Comhailre will be progressing the next LDP Plan under the new Development Planning regulations (published May 2023).</p> <p>Refer to <b>Part 1, paras 2.3 and 2.4</b> for further detail.</p>
8	<p>Development plan scheme demonstrates next LDP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- on course for adoption within 5-year cycle</li> </ul>	GREEN	<p><a href="#">Our Development plan scheme (DPS) and draft Participation Statement</a> demonstrates how the Development Plan &amp; Marine Planning team will continue to project manage the current and new LDP process whilst liaising with the Scottish Government for guidance; and on the timeline for a new LDP; progress supporting policy guidance under the existing LDP; expand the monitoring</p>



No.	Performance Marker	Previous R.A.G Rating in PPF 11	Evidence
	<p>- project planned and expected to be delivered to planned timescale</p>		<p>framework; and collation of data for the new Evidence Report.</p> <p>The DPS has been published and we are on track to deliver the next plan in line with the requirements of the new Development Planning Regulations.</p> <p>The current LDP was adopted in November 2018, and under the 2006 Act would have been subject to revision and renewal every 5 years. As a result of the new 2019 Planning Act however we will be moving to a new format and process of Local Development Plan.</p> <p>Refer to <b>Part 1, paras 2.3 and 2.4, and Part 2</b> for further detail.</p>
9	<p>Stakeholders including Elected Members, industry, agencies, the public and Scottish Government are engaged appropriately through all key stages of development plan preparation</p>	N/A	<p>We have regularly reported to Members (through committee reports and direct briefings) on the adoption of NPF, the implication for local policy, the draft Development Plan regulations, and the emerging scoping and approach for a new Outer Hebrides LDP.</p> <p>In addition to the actions set out on the 2022 DPS and in anticipation of the finalised Development Planning regulations the Development Plan team have been drafting a Communication Strategy for the new LDP. This emerging strategy will seek to address all stages of the new Plan process and identify new mediums of communication and engagement, and broader messaging opportunities.</p> <p>As part of the Planning Service's bi-annual Stakeholder Holder update to industry ,community groups, developers and land owners we have reported on the new and current LDPs.: <a href="https://cne-siar.gov.uk">Stakeholder Updates (cne-siar.gov.uk)</a></p>

No.	Performance Marker	Previous R.A.G Rating in PPF 11	Evidence
			<p>During the reporting year we published a dedicated new LDP page initiating the public presence for the new Plan process:  <a href="http://cne-siar.gov.uk">Working towards a new Local Development Plan (cne-siar.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>We undertook a specific direct mailing to community councils, community development and interest groups, and community land owners in March formally inviting groups to prepare Local Place Plans. This linked to a dedicated LPP page with guidance, information sources and links to support groups considering preparing a LPP:  <a href="http://cne-siar.gov.uk">Local Place Plans (cne-siar.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Refer to <b>Part 1, paras 2.3 and 2.4, and Part 2</b> for further detail.</p>
10	No longer applicable – gap kept for data continuity	N/A	N/A
11	Production of regular and proportionate policy advice	GREEN	<p>Policy is regularly updated to align with the latest national policy and guidance and existing policies (both LDP and SG) are being reviewed in light of the publication of NPF. This will inform the emerging new LDP and possible interim updates of (currently still statutory) <a href="#">Supplementary Guidance</a>. Work on preparing new technical Supplementary Guidance on Minerals is advanced and a revised Mineral Audit to establish supply with minerals operators was re-issued to operators, to address potential additional mineral requirements from some significant energy and civils projects anticipated in the next 8 years.</p> <p>On the advice of Marine Scotland (now the Marine Directorate) work on revising the Marine Fish Farming Supplementary Guidance (which is at an advanced stage) has been paused pending the</p>

No.	Performance Marker	Previous R.A.G Rating in PPF 11	Evidence
			<p>outcome of work on wild fish interactions and sea-lace management protocols.</p> <p>Following publication of the National Planning Framework 4 In February, the Development Planning Team produced a series of briefing sheets for internal colleagues, including DM planners, economic development, transport, climate change and strategy colleagues. These crib sheets covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy intent</li> <li>• Summary of policy</li> <li>• Conflict or alignment with current LDP</li> <li>• Variance from NPF3/other national policy</li> <li>• Policy impacts</li> <li>• Cross-cutting outcome/policy links</li> <li>• Summary of Comhairle response to first draft; and</li> <li>• Scope for miscellaneous notes.</li> </ul> <p>This was very positively received and formed the basis for discussion to achieve consensus on interpretation of policy.</p>

#### SIMPLIFYING & STREAMLINING

<b>12</b>	Corporate working across services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit (e.g., protocols; joined-up services; single contact; joint pre-application advice)	GREEN	<p>We have initiated Case conferences for stalling casework involving key projects e.g. islands growth deal</p> <p>Communication/discussion is initiated with stakeholders to understand the 'blocks' to progress and identify what if any actions are required to progress the planning casework.</p> <p>Examples of this are 2025 Callanish Stones Centre (an island deal project where there were challenges accommodating parking solutions that would satisfy both HES and Roads)</p>
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			<p>The Planning manager facilitated a number of different meetings with HES, Roads, Economic Development, The Trust and the Agents culminating in agreement that a transport assessment with natural heritage concerns at its heart would be prepared; funding made available through economic development.</p> <p>A new Fish Farm Shore base where pre-application the developer was persuaded to change the location of the proposed development on account of likely adverse impact on the NSA and peatland; collaboration was facilitated with Harbours and Legal services to identify land interests in the immediate vicinity and progress more feasible site options.</p> <p>Single point of contact: Due to the dispersed nature of our geography each development management officer has area-based casework and the Planning Manager leads on key sectors of Marine Fish Farming, S37 energy transmission and large scale renewables</p> <p>Co-ordination: Our Planning Technician continues to co-ordinate data collection, collating spatial datasets from various departments within the council regarding assets, infrastructure, services, and facilities and publishing the data to the Scottish Government, <a href="#">Improvement Service Spatial Hub</a>. These data sets will be valuable in informing our Evidence Report.</p> <p>During this reporting year our DP&amp;MP Planning Technician continued to collaborate with the Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership in a project to develop an interactive tool which organisations, groups and individuals can access to find out about climate change and its impact on the Outer Hebrides. During this reporting year work to refine and make this accessible for 'lay' readers was progressed. <b>Part 1, para 3.3.</b></p> <p>Regarding corporate working across services for customer benefit progress at the Goathill site (Care Centre and Sinclair Avenue), Stornoway the Planning Service continues to play an active part in</p>
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			<p>a project sub-group charged with assessing applications for some of the 40,000 tonnes of excavated topsoil from this former farmland. In a joint protocol with SEPA, who regulate movement of topsoil, the Comhairle has enabled community groups, individual householders, and some commercial businesses to legitimately apply for batches of the topsoil, whilst still complying with SEPA regulations. Details <b>here</b>.</p> <p>Post consent planning staff remain in contact with project agents and contractors regularly on this major development and an officer sits on the project delivery board: this has proved to be an effective approach with the officer ensuring that problems and opportunities are addressed on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>The DM&amp;MP team also work in partnership with the Council's Technical Department; and the Housing Service to identify suitable sites for affordable housing. We are trialling a site appraisal template with them, <b>refer to Part 1, para 2.2.3.</b></p>
13	Sharing good practice, skills, and knowledge between authorities	GREEN	<p>Early in the reporting year we liaised with Moray Council on their experience of the Evidence Report pilot project. Whilst they acknowledge the finalised ambition for the new Evidence Reports, will be evolved from the pilot the discussions around data gathering and stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Through the Knowledge Hub HoPS forum we have contributed on our interpretation of some NPF4 policies. This has been an invaluable platform to share and discuss context of and understanding of NFP and its application across Scotland.</p> <p>The DM and DP Managers attend HoPS DM and HoPS DP Meetings, and the DM Manager attends the North of Scotland Development Plan forum group.</p> <p>We have been also working with the other Island Authorities in scoping projects for the Islands Growth Deal.</p>

			<p>A DP planning officer attended an Improvement Service (IS) workshop on PPF preparation in April 2022</p> <p>The Planning Service is contributing technical resources to the development of a new interactive mapping tool to assist with planning for climate change in the long term. <b>Part 1, para 3.3.</b></p> <p>The DM Planning Manager attends a joint Planning Authority forum (5 LAs with fish farm interests). See <b>Part 1 para 2.2.3.</b></p> <p>DM Manager and Officers, the Planning technician and the DP manager attend monthly/six weekly liaison meetings with SEPA. See <b>Part 1 para 2.2.3.</b></p>
<b>DELIVERING DEVELOPMENT</b>			
<b>14</b>	Stalled sites/legacy cases: conclusion/withdrawal of planning applications more than one-year-old	<b>AMBER</b>	81 legacy cases (more than one year old at date of determination); 19 remained at end of the reporting period. Refer to commentary on NHI table.
<b>15</b>	Developer contributions: clear expectations  - set out in development plan (and/or emerging plan,) and  - in pre-application discussions	<b>GREEN</b>	<p>The Adopted Outer Hebrides LDP includes Policy EI 12: Developer Contributions which sets out clear expectations on contributions, stating that these will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development and will be addressed through planning conditions or through a legal agreement if appropriate.</p> <p>The Planning Service offers pre-application consultation at no cost and developer contributions are clearly set out at the pre-application stage.</p> <p>The previously profiled Goathill Development (Care Centre and Sinclair Avenue, Stornoway) is an example of wider planning gain through direct action (enhanced traffic management and road layout, and an upgraded play park opened in the reporting year) and indirect benefits including</p>

			<p>construction and care apprenticeships with the main contractor and other suppliers.</p> <p>NPF4 and the focus on Infrastructure First, in addition to tighter budget will require that the Comhairle and its Elected Members revisit its current approaches to Developer Contributions. This has been sensitive in the past due to the borderline viability and significant on costs on developments in the islands, however a number of significant projects anticipated around national energy infrastructure provide a good juncture to revisit this policy approach, and optimise on islands benefits.</p>
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