



# PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Stirling Council 2022-23

Planning Service Annual Report



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## Contents

<b>Page 3</b>	<b>Highlights</b>
<b>Page 4</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>Page 5</b>	<b>Scottish Government Feedback 2021/22</b>
<b>Part 1: Qualitative Narrative &amp; Case Studies</b>	
<b>Page 6-7</b>	<b>Case Study 1 Maitland Crescent</b>
<b>Page 8-9</b>	<b>Case Study 2 Development Management &amp; Development Planning Clinics</b>
<b>Page 10-11</b>	<b>Case Study 3 Forthside Levelling Up Fund</b>
<b>Page 12-14</b>	<b>Case Study 4 Governance</b>
<b>Page 15</b>	<b>Case Study 5 APC Support Group &amp; Staff Learning Sessions</b>
<b>Page 16</b>	<b>Case Study 6 Local Place Plans: Phase 1</b>
<b>Part 2: Performance Update</b>	
<b>Page 17-24</b>	<b>Performance Update: Development Management</b>
<b>Page 25-30</b>	<b>Performance Update: Development Planning</b>
<b>Page 31-34</b>	<b>Service improvements</b>
<b>Page 35</b>	<b>Workforce information</b>
<b>Page 36</b>	<b>Planning Committee Information</b>
<b>Page 37</b>	<b>Key</b>
<b>Page 38</b>	<b>Appendix 1 – Supporting Evidence</b>
<b>Page 39</b>	<b>Appendix 2 – Staff Structure</b>
<b>Page 40</b>	<b>Further Information</b>

# HIGHLIGHTS

2022/23

**More than £19 million of funding awarded to Stirling Council from the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund for the regeneration of Forthside**

**Significant performance improvement through enhanced project management of Development Management processes**

**Ongoing progress of Stirling's Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) project which will see over £3 million invested into Stirling's historic environment. Progress at Alhambra Theatre in 2023 as viewed in photo to the right**

**Joint working with Community Development team on the preparatory work for Local Place Plans**



## Introducing

### ...the Planning Performance Framework

The planning performance framework was introduced by planning authorities in 2012. Developed by Heads of Planning Scotland and supported by the Scottish Government, the framework captures key elements of a high-performing planning service, such as:

- speed of decision-making;
- certainty of timescales, process and advice;
- delivery of good quality development;
- an overall 'open for business' attitude.

The framework gives a balanced measurement of the overall quality of the planning service and contributes towards driving a culture of continuous improvement.

All planning authorities, strategic development plan authorities and seven key agencies prepare a Planning Performance Framework (PPF) report on an annual basis and receive feedback from the Scottish Government. PPF reports contain both qualitative and quantitative elements of performance and set out proposals for service improvement. They also report on a set of Performance Markers which were agreed by the High Level Group on Planning Performance in 2013.

<sup>1</sup> The remit of the High Level Group on Planning Performance includes supporting improved planning performance and linking performance with planning fees. The Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) co-chair the group with the remaining members comprising: Heads of Planning Scotland; the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives; the Society of Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland and the Royal Town Planning Institute.

### ...the Stirling Council Planning Service

The Planning Service in Stirling Council has two teams: Development Management and Development Planning. Together, these teams work to deliver integrated outcomes.

► Our Staff Structure is set out in Appendix 2

We are a compact service that focuses upon work that fulfils our statutory planning duties, but we also work closely with other Council services to deliver corporate objectives related to economic development, sustainability, transportation and affordable housing delivery. We work collaboratively on a range of corporate strategies and also deal with managing and promoting our historic environment.

The Planning Service is managed alongside the Building Standards Service. We are part of the Council's Infrastructure Services and under a management team that includes Sustainability, Transport Planning, Council Infrastructure Planning and Environmental Health. This grouping of services provides great opportunity to ensure integrated working to deliver the City Region Deal aims/goals/objectives.

A Planning Service Improvement Plan, approved in December 2016, continues to be the focus of the efforts of the Service to improve performance.



## Part 1: Qualitative Narrative & Case Studies

### Case Study 1 – Maitland Crescent

#### Quality of Outcomes

**Key Markers:** PM3 – Early Collaboration with applicants and consultees

**Key Areas of Work:** Regeneration, Planning Applications, Housing Supply

**Lead Officer:** Michael Mulgrew (Development Management Team Leader) and Charlotte Brown (Planning Officer)

#### Goals:

The successful delivery of Maitland Crescent achieves a boost in housing numbers, specifically of small to medium sized homes and flatted units. The redevelopment of a derelict brownfield site sees a preferable location to greenfield land elsewhere, removes land from the Vacant and Derelict Land Survey and supports the longevity of the wider community by bringing it back into active use.

#### Overview:

Development has progressed on the site and is nearing completion. The delivery of the site and occupation of the units marks the successful completion of complex pre-application discussions, planning application process and development viability appraisal.

The site was brownfield land, vacant since the demolition of the former MFI furniture store in 2009. Originally allocated in the Stirling Local Development Plan 2014 as a retail site, intended to site a supermarket, the needs of Stirling changed and the site was no longer attractive for this use. The prolonged vacancy of the site attracted a number of issues including amenity complaints and antisocial behaviour reports. The site caused problems for the neighbouring community and Council services alike.

Given the lack of demand for retail and structural changes in the wider retail market, officers promoted the site for residential use during preparation of the Main Issues Report (2015) and the site was subsequently reallocated for residential in the Local Development Plan 2018, taking advantage of the proximate amenities and services. It was hoped that the reallocation of the site would both stimulate development and aid in the delivery of housing units in the core



area.

Although, the land purchase value pre-recession was high, given both the recession and the intended retail development the attractiveness to the market therefore declined. As a result the site was considered unviable for residential development by the developer. With the cost of development, profit and requisite developer contributions, the site could not be delivered as intended.

Extensive viability work was carried out to explore whether there were exceptional circumstances to remove the required developer contributions in order to ease the financial losses of the developer and promote delivery at the site. This included an independent viability assessment, officer assessment and negotiation of density at the site.

After the assessments were complete, it was apparent that due to market conditions it was unviable for the developer to pay the required contributions. After careful consideration, officers were of the view that there was sufficient public benefit to be gained from progressing the development without the required developer contributions. A recommendation for approval (subject to conditions) to Planning Panel, with the calculations and justification to remove the developer contributions at the site was then progressed. The report carefully considered all the benefits the development would bring and the policy requirements with regards to developer contributions. The report concluded that the delivery of housing units at the site and bringing a derelict site back into active use after such a period of time justified the setting aside of financial contributions.

Planning panel members agreed with officer's recommendation and a decision to approve was taken.

#### Outcomes:

This application has demonstrated Stirling's ability to apply policy relative to specific sites, make adaptations where required and balance development plan policies to deliver positive planning of outcomes for wider public benefit.



## Case Study 2 – Development Management/Development Planning Clinics

### Culture of Continuous Improvement

**Key Markers:** PM6 – Continuous Improvement

**Key Areas of Work:** Skills Sharing, Staff Training, Conservation, Local Development Plan

**Lead Officer:** Michael Mulgrew (Development Management Team Leader), Mark Laird (Development Planning Team Leader), Catherine Malley (Planning Officer – Conservation), Fionn McIntosh (Planning Officer – Conservation), Rebecca Higgins (Graduate Planning Officer)

### Goal:

Both drop in clinics sought to streamline processes and to enhance and up skill officers skills and knowledge. These processes have helped to contribute to the efficient running of the planning service to allow performance enhancements in development management timescales.

### Overview:

Informal drop in clinics have been established between Development Management and Development Planning in relation to Conservation and National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4).

As part of wider service goals to promote good planning outcomes, sharing of knowledge and performance enhancements, officers from Development Planning and Development Management have established drop in clinics on conservation matters. These clinics allow a 2 hour drop in session that takes place fortnightly via MS Teams. The sessions enable DM officers to have informal chats with Conservation officers on Pre-application discussions, live applications and condition discharge without the need to issue a formal consultation response. This speeds up quick queries and also allows officers to focus more closely on those applications that require more detailed consideration.

The sessions also allow officers to ask questions and enhance their skills in knowledge on general conservation matters. The sessions have been well received by officers from both teams and is now a well-established forum.

In the lead up to the adoption of NPF4, officers from both teams attended meetings regarding the new development plan to explore the changes from the current Local Development Plan (LDP). NPF4 provides clear policy direction to achieve positive planning outcomes and it was important that officers understood any areas of conflict or incompatibility between the LDP and NPF4 to enable sound development management decisions.

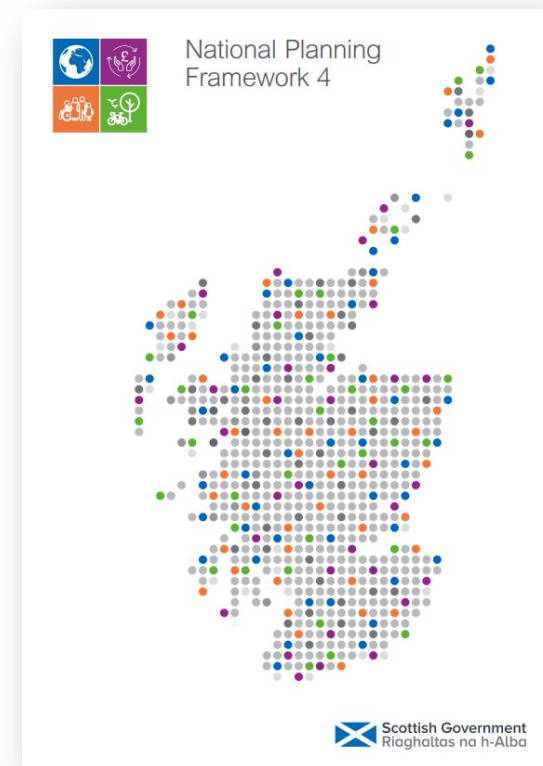


As we transitioned from having NPF4 as a significant material consideration to forming part of the statutory development plan in February 2023 drop in sessions lead by the Development Management Team Leader and Policy officers were held to enable discussions around how NPF4 policies should be applied and to raise any concerns or opportunity for further local guidance. These sessions were valuable to officers from both teams to ensure officers were aware of issues and policy application so that we quickly achieved consistency in development management decisions.

These drop in clinics now no longer take place as the approach to NPF4 policies has now bedded in within the team.

#### Outcomes:

The conservation drop in clinics have been positive and well received and officers are looking to extend the drop in sessions to cover other Development Planning officers including Archaeology and Urban Design to reduce the number of formal consultation requests and to also further enhance skills and knowledge of Development Management officers.



## Case Study 3 – Forthside Levelling Up Fund

### Quality of Service and Engagement

**Key Markers:** PM12 – Corporate working across services

**Key Areas of Work:** Placemaking, Interdisciplinary Working, Collaborative Working, Regeneration, Masterplanning, Economic Development

**Lead Officer:** Dorothy Irvine (Senior Planning Officer – Urban Design)

### Overview:

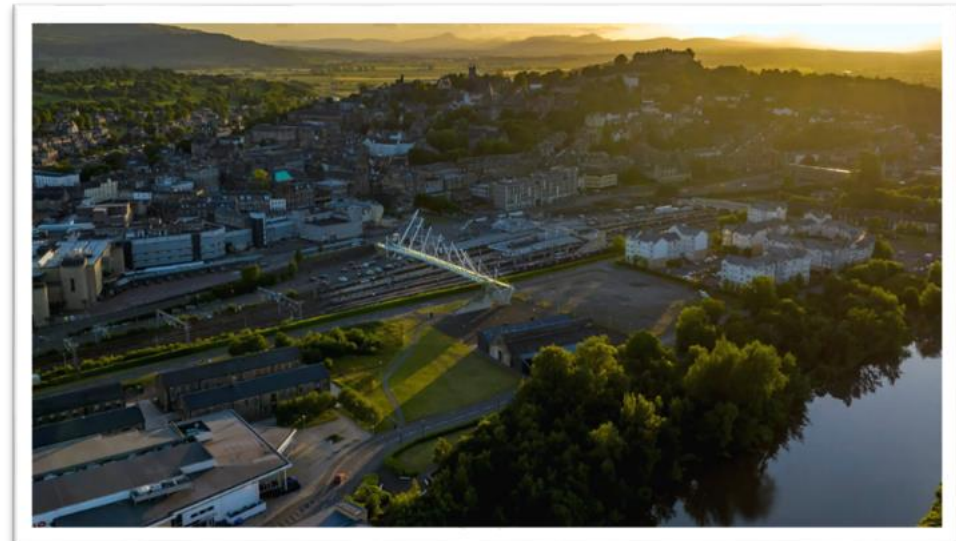
Forthside is an area of Stirling adjacent to the City Centre, public transport hubs, and river frontage. Home to a mix of existing uses it also includes a number of vacant and under used sites – including the 40 acre Ministry of Defence site – allocated in the LDP for residential and employment uses.

The potential of the area and its importance to the City is acknowledged, strategically located as it is with access to natural assets such as the river it offers the opportunity for sustainable mixed use-development, including economic and residential components, complementing the wider City Centre and beyond.

Its attributes reflect and align with NPF4 concepts such as the 20-minute neighbourhood and using development – including residential – as a driver to regenerate, diversify and increase footfall within town and city centres.

The LDP states an intention to realise, and maximising the opportunities, Forthside brings, using a Place Principle approach, with an emphasis on Placemaking, by requiring the production of a comprehensive Masterplan/Development Framework for the area, and which includes the MOD site, as Planning guidance.

Following a successful series of cross – service workshops with stakeholders to progress this work, this year we continued to collaborate with Architecture and Design Scotland to produce a Report on the exercise. This brought together and re-emphasised the need for a Place based approach to its redevelopment. It started to map projects, plans and strategies across the Council which could help reinforce the Masterplan/Development Framework's



emerging vision and overall direction. It also mapped opportunities and priorities that emerged from the workshops discussion, and concluded by providing a series of recommended next steps.

The collaborative, place based approach, information gathered through the process, and the Report – and that of previous work – were then used to help inform and support the Council’s bid for Levelling Up Funding (LUF) from UK government in respect of the MOD site.

#### Goals:

The work continues to meet with the Planning Service aims for a place based, collaborative approach to the delivery of a key Local Development Site, within the context of the wider Forthside area. In doing so, it also positively supports sustainable economic growth.

#### Outcomes & Future Work:

The LUF bid was ultimately successful, with c £20m secured to help unlock the MOD site, and ready it for redevelopment.

The Planning Service continues to be involved in cross-service project to further develop and deliver a vision and framework for development for the MOD site within the wider Forthside context, which will be produced as Planning Guidance.

## Case Study 4 – Governance

<b>Governance</b>
<b>Key Markers:</b> PM1 – Decision-making, PM6 – Continuous Improvement
<b>Key Areas of Work:</b> Development Management Processes, Performance Monitoring, Process Improvement, Online Systems
<b>Lead Officer:</b> Michael Mulgrew (Development Management Team Leader)

### Overview:

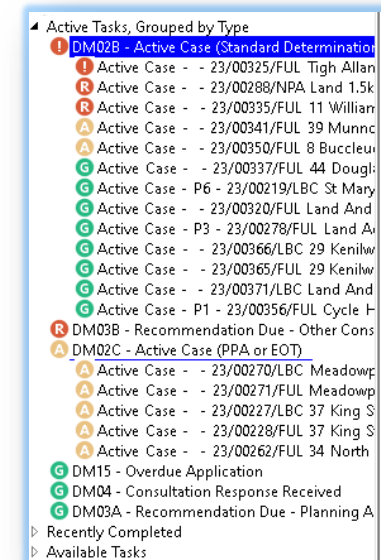
#### Enterprise Tasks/Performance Enhancement

In November 2022, a review of the Enterprise workflow tasks on Uniform was undertaken. Management discussions alongside officers feedback on what was and was not working about the current system took place alongside a review of team performance and reasons for applications being overdue. This review concluded that some tasks could be altered and enhanced to ensure that officers had up to date performance and task information in order to assist with their daily priorities. For example, the existing Active Case task was split to show those cases that were subject to standard determination timescales and those cases that were subject to Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) or Extensions of Time (EOT) requests to better show where cases were in the workflow. A review of the traffic light system that accompanies the tasks was also undertaken to align the priority of each case with other tasks such as those informing officers that a PPA or EOT deadline was approaching. Associated tasks for recommendations and overdue applications, for example, were also updated to align with the splitting of the Active Case task.

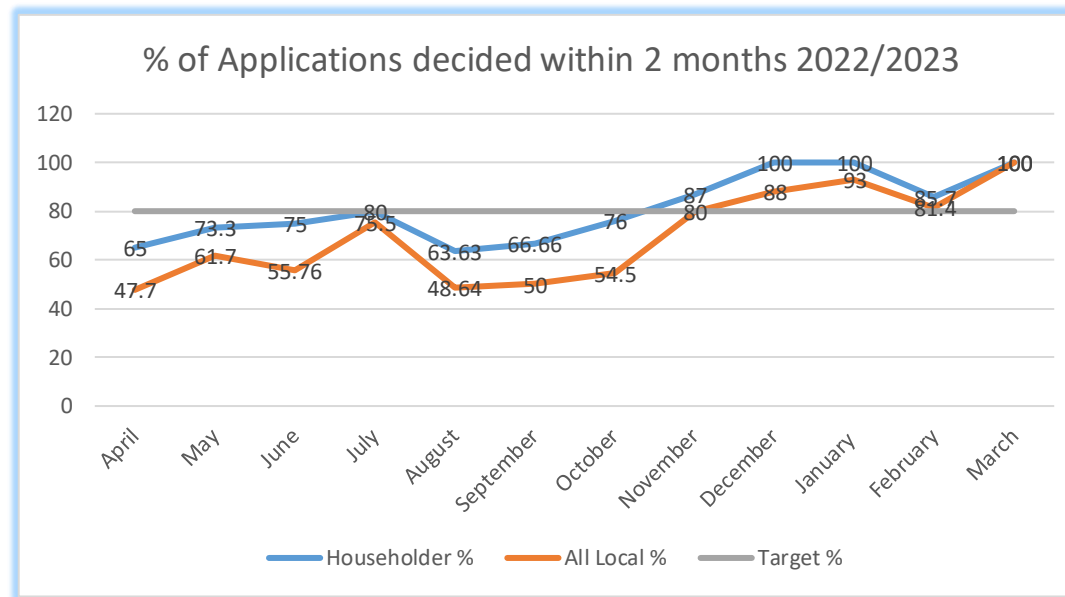
This splitting of the tasks has led to a noticeable immediate, and sustained, improvement in performance as previously the task system and priority assigned to each task wasn't effectively letting officers know a deadline was approaching. For example, in October 66.6% of Householder applications were determined in timescales and PPA/EOT deadlines for All Locals frequently missed. However, this had risen to 100% in December and overall All Local performance above the 80% target was sustained from November.

Alongside the review of the tasks, officers continue to be supported by a weekly email from the Team Leader highlighting if the officer has any applications with a target date within the next 7 days and to consider the use of a project management tool if the determination date is unlikely to be achieved.

It is notable that by the end of the reporting period, All Local performance was 100% and with 100% of all PPA/EOT



apps decided within their agreed timescales. This shows a significant performance improvement reflective of the enhanced project management approach taken to the determination of applications.



Officers are made aware at the beginning of each month team performance for the previous month and each officer also receives personalised performance information relating to their specific caseload.

### **Phase 1 Review of Pre-application Advice Service**

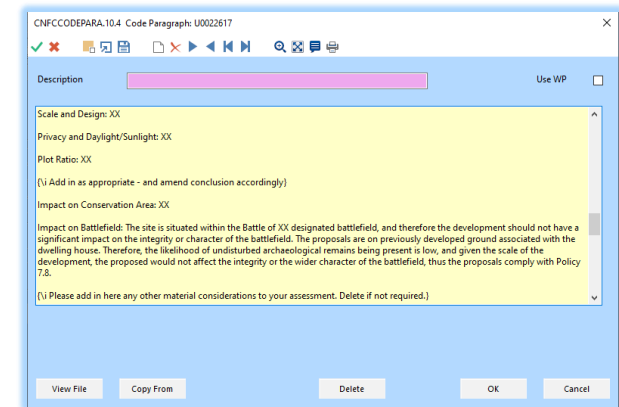
In November, to align with the changes to Enterprise Tasks, a review of the pre-application service was also undertaken with a goal of providing clearer advice on what sort of developments we would give Pre-application advice on and how requests would be handled. A review of the types of queries received and complaint/feedback analysis showed that there was a lack of clarity around timescales, quantity of response and follow up queries. The service was working towards a goal of implementing a complete review and introducing charging by April 2023 but it was considered necessary to make immediate changes to the existing process in an attempt to ease officer workload and bring clarity to processes for our customers.

The revised guidance was launched in December 2022 and included a prioritisation matrix setting out how we would consider requests and our timescales

for doing so. It also included guidance on other matters such as meetings, site visits and follow up requests for information. The priority level assigned to each request allowed officers to determine at an early stage how high a priority the request was and to work effectively to achieve this.

Despite some initial additional management and officer time as customers moved to the new process, the guidance has proven useful in providing clear and proportionate advice and ensuring that officer time is best spent on priority requests.

From January 2023, officers moved to preparing further revised guidance and process changes to allow for the introduction of charging for requests from the start of the new financial year (Phase 2). An update on the implementation of that process will be provided in the next reporting year.



### **Phase 1 Review of Report of Handling Templates**

To streamline delegated reports, and with impending changes as a result of NPF4, a review was conducted of the Report of Handling Templates in Uniform. This work is to be carried out over multiple phases and seeks to standardise reports to reduce officer time spent preparing reports. Phase 1 was a review of the General Local and Householder reports. The reports introduced set topic areas to cover and the householder one was tailored to the specific policy criteria. Standard wording for certain sections have also been included.

The new templates have allowed officers to focus their thoughts on an application and ensure that the relevant considerations are shown to have been clearly considered in the officer's report. The standardised approach has also enabled Appointed Officers to review reports quicker as it is more immediately clear if there is any consideration that has not been fully considered.

Phase 2 was intended to have been carried out during the reporting period but this has been pushed back until the 2023/2024 reporting year and will include standardised templates for Planning Panel Reports.

#### Goals:

All the actions set out above have contributed to wider service goals to reduce double handling of data/tasks to streamline our procedures with the end goal of ensuring robust planning performance by the team.

#### Outcomes:

Outcomes for each task are noted above, however, each have delivered performance benefits and streamlining of each process. As noted above, further work is underway in regards to further revisions to the Pre-application process and Reports of Handling.

## Case Study 5 – APC Support Group & Staff Learning Sessions

### Culture of Continuous Improvement

**Key Markers:** PM6 – Continuous Improvement

**Key Areas of Work:** Skills Sharing, Staff Training

**Lead Officer:** Charlotte Brown (Planning Officer), Michael Mulgrew (Development Management Team Leader), Mark Laird (Development Planning Team Leader)

#### Overview:

With an increase in new staff members across the Planning Service, including a number of graduates, existing staff members recognised that a support group would be beneficial to help new staff undertake their Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) to become chartered members of the RTPI.

An APC Support Group was set up with bi-monthly meetings during the 2022/23 period. The support group allowed existing members of staff, who had most recently been through the APC process, to share knowledge and experience with new staff members who were seeking to gain insight into the APC process. This group also allowed new staff members time to discuss any issues and ask questions related to the APC process.

Furthermore, this group was also viewed as an opportunity to restart staff Learning Sessions which had operated pre-pandemic. These Learning Sessions provide staff with an opportunity to share their knowledge, learn from each other and provides time to discuss planning issues. At the beginning of 2023, a programme of Learning Sessions for the year was created, primarily delivered/organised by members of the APC Support Group. Within the PPF period, two sessions occurred, the first session covering tips on how to use the new ArcGIS online system that was implemented in 2022 and another session about Developer Contributions, which included information on the process improvements implemented by the Planning Compliance Officer.

#### Goals:

The APC Support Group and Learning Sessions contribute to one of Stirling Council's Strategic Outcomes of 'Achieving'. This outcome aims that 'people are skilled and supported to make a positive contribution to communities'. Furthermore, one of the six key areas of improvement for the Planning Service in the PPF is Learning and Development.

#### Outcomes:

The APC Support Group has been beneficial in providing an environment for shared experience, sharing knowledge between existing and new staff and building team morale by providing support and encouraging the continuing personal development (CPD) of staff members.

The programme of Learning Sessions will continue until the end of 2023 with further sessions planned including a session delivered internally about Employment Land, a site visit/tour of Stirling's Conservation Area Regeneration Project (CARS) and a presentation by NatureScot on their 'Developing with Nature' guidance regarding local developments and biodiversity. The Learning Session programme will be reviewed at the beginning of 2024.

## Case Study 6 – Local Place Plans: Phase 1 (Preparatory Work)

### Quality of Service and Engagement

**Key Markers:** PM12 – Corporate working across services, PM7 – Local Development Plan, PM9 & PM10 – LDP Engagement

**Key Areas of Work:** Community Engagement, Interdisciplinary Working, Collaborative Working, Local Development Plan

**Lead Officer:** Mark Laird (Development Planning Team Leader) and Charlotte Brown (Planning Officer)

### Overview:

Early preparatory work has begun to support and enable the provision of Local Place Plans (LPPs), newly introduced in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and The Town and Country Planning (Local Place Plans) (Scotland) Regulations 2021.

The service began early engagement with communities, discussing what the provision in the legislation would allow, and how this would be different from the community plans that had come before. The Planning service worked closely with the Community Development team in the Council, given the recognised need for joint-working and valuable experience held across the teams.

An information session was also held to introduce and update communities on Local Place Plans. We were able to also provide a survey to get some feedback on key issues for the production of LPPs e.g. communication preferences, key concerns, themes of interest and required assistance. This allowed us to form a strategy to assist the communities, whilst also inform the potential resource implications this may have on the Planning service and wider Council.

### Goals:

The assistance statement was produced after careful review of the legislation and above survey to detail how we could best assist communities to produce a Local Place Plan, and detail how we will go about prioritising resources. Whilst adaptable, this statement sets a minimum level for how we will assist, and balance the limited resources whilst ensuring we meet the wider goals of the Council to focus resource on the priority communities as identified, with the recognition that the gap for these communities to proactively participate may be larger than elsewhere.

### Outcome:

This is the preparatory stage that will set the foundation for the next PPF period, when the invitation to prepare a Local Place Plan will be issued and work with the communities begins.



## Part 2: Performance Update

### Including National Headline Indicators & Official Statistics

This section provides evidence of the key Performance Markers by outlining the Scottish Government’s 2021/22 feedback and commentary on Stirling Council’s progress in 2022/23.

► Supporting evidence can be found in Appendix 1

► A key for Performance Markers and symbols can be found on page 37.

### Development Management

The Development Management statistics for this PPF period reflect the continual bedding in of a series of changes sought to improve efficiency and performance in the long-term, as well as further process enhancements, see Case Study 4 above.

Indicators & Statistics	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-2023	
Percentage of applications valid upon receipt	35.6%	26.6%	35.1%	16.4%	25.4%	↑
Application approval rate	94.6%	94.3%	94.0%	94.1%	93.3%	↓
Delegation rate	96.4%	97.1%	98.3%	96.2%	97.9%	↑
Number of applications determined	759	759	768	788	719	↓

#### PM1. Decision Making

##### 2021/22 ●

Major Applications: Your average timescale of 70.8 weeks is slower than last year and slower than the Scottish average of 44.6 weeks.

Local (Non-Householder) Applications: Your average timescale of 13.3 weeks is slower than the previous year but faster than the Scottish

average of 13.5 weeks.

Householder Applications: Your average timescale of 7.7 weeks is faster than the previous year and faster than the Scottish average of 8.7 weeks and the statutory timescale.

**2022/23** Numbers of applications determined have fallen to 719 from previous years, however the drop is not considered substantial and not unsurprising due to general economic factors relating to the cost of living and energy crises. The planning team have used the slight freeing of capacity to continue to develop and implement service change initiatives to enhance planning performance (see case studies). This can be seen in the increase in performance for local (non-householder) and local housing applications. For these application types both the number of decisions made within the 2 month period, and the average weeks to decisions, are at record levels over the past 5 year period. Many indicators show an improvement on last year and these figures represent the impact of previous performance enhancement measures set out in last year's PPF and in Case Study 4 above. It should be noted that in addition to clock stopping, reflected in the figures below, 114 applications were determined using a performance management tool (Planning Performance Agreement

or Extension of Time) and we progressed 72.8 % of these within the agreed timescale. Analysis of the figures shows that performance for PPA's and EOT's increased substantially post the implementation of the revision to the Enterprise workflow set out in Case Study 4.

Major application timescales were impacted by a number of complex applications in the system at the same time and is to be an area of focus for next year.

The planning service performs well against national average timescales. We are faster than the national average for householders (7.4 weeks v 8.9 national), Local Non-householder (11.1 weeks v 14.4 national), and All local applications (9 weeks v 11.5 national). We also achieve faster performance for Local Housing applications (12.1 weeks v 17.2 national), and local business and industry applications (10.7 weeks v 12.4 national).

<i>Major Development</i>		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
Number of decisions		4	3	5	6	2	↓
Average number of weeks to decision		20.6	79.1	52.3	70.8	125.1	↘
<i>Local Development (non-householder)</i>							
Number of decisions		256	299	213	253	202	↓
Average number of weeks to decision		11.2	11.5	13.4	13.3	11.1	↗
< 2 months	Percentage of decisions	43%	39.5%	41.8%	37.9%	60.9%	↑
	Average number of weeks to decision	6.1	6.5	6.7	7.0	7.0	→
> 2 months	Percentage of decisions	57%	60.5%	58.2%	62.1%	39.1%	↓
	Average number of weeks to decision	15	14.7	18.2	17.1	17.4	↘

<i>Householder developments</i>		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
Number of decisions		296	270	359	357	247	↓
Average number of weeks to decision		6.5	7.4	7.9	7.7	7.4	↗
< 2 months	Percentage of decisions	84.5%	74.1%	74.9%	78.4%	86.6%	↑
	Average number of weeks to decision	5.4	5.8	6.0	6.6	6.5	↗
> 2 months	Percentage of decisions	15.5%	25.9%	25.1%	21.6%	13.4%	↗
	Average number of weeks to decision	12.5	11.9	13.8	11.4	13.2	↘

*Housing developments – Major*

Number of decisions		2	2	0	1	1	→
Average number of weeks to decision (Major)		16.1	111.9	-	124.7	109.6	↗

*Housing developments - Local*

Number of decisions		101	124	103	103	70	↓
Average number of weeks to decision		12.8	12.3	15.0	15.0	12.1	↗
< 2 months	Percentage of decisions	32.7%	38.7%	38.8%	36.9%	55.7%	↑
	Average number of weeks to decision	6.2	6.5	6.4	7.1	7.3	↘
> 2 months	Percentage of decisions	67.3%	61.3%	61.2%	63.1%	44.3%	↓
	Average number of weeks to decision	15.9	16	20.4	19.7	18.2	↗

*Business and Industry developments – Major*

Number of decisions		1	0	2	0	0	→
Average number of weeks to decision		14.57	-	21.8	-	-	

<i>Business and Industry developments - Local</i>		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
Number of decisions		23	44	43	41	20	↓
Average number of weeks to decision		11.2	10.1	10.6	12.2	10.7	↗
< 2 months	Percentage of decisions	34.8%	45.5%	51.2%	29.3%	60%	↑
	Average number of weeks to decision	5.9	6.6	6.6	7.3	6.7	↗

> 2 months	Percentage of decisions	65.2%	54.5%	48.8%	70.7%	40%	↓
	Average number of weeks to decision	14.1	12.9	14.8	14.2	16.8	↘

*Listed Building and Conservation Area Consent*

Number of Decisions	100	89	95	100	75	↓
Average number of weeks to decision	10.56	12	12.7	11.8	12.4	↘

*Advertisements*

Number of Decisions	26	43	40	20	31	↑
Average number of weeks to decision	4.9	10.2	9.6	6.9	6.3	↗

*Hazardous substances consents*

Number of Decisions	0	0	0	0	0
Average number of weeks to decision	-	-	-	-	-

*Other consents and certificates*

Number of Decisions	48	44	51	25	14	↓
Average number of weeks to decision	5.32	7.6	5.1	7.3	6.4	↗

*EIA Developments*

Number of Decisions	0	0	0	0	0
Average number of weeks to decision	-	-	-	-	-

*Local Reviews*

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
Number of Decisions	7	13	20	15	12	↓
Original decisions upheld (No. / %)	2/ 29%	4/31%	14/70%	4/26.7 %	4/33.3 %	↑

*Appeals to Scottish Ministers*

Number of Appeals	7	6	3	3	5	↑
Original decisions upheld (No. / %)	3/43%	0/0%	2/67%	3/100%	4/80%	↓

## PM2. Project Management (formerly Processing Agreements)

### Indicators & Statistics

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Number and percentage of major applications subject to processing agreement	1 (25%)	7 (70%)	0 (100%)	0 (100%)	2 (50%)



### 2022/22 ●

You continue to encourage processing agreements for all major applications with an uptake around 13%. Processing agreements information is provided on your website.

### 2022/23

We continue to offer processing agreements for major applications at the pre-application stage and encourage applicants to sign up to them as part of our performance management tools. See Case Study 4.

► [Information about Processing Agreements is on the Planning Application webpage](#)

### Processing Agreements Summary 2022/23

	Total no. of decisions	% within agreed timescales
Total	114	72.8%
Major Applications	2	0.0%
Local Applications	105	73.3%
EIA Applications	0	-
Other Applications	7	85.7%

### 2022/23

As set out in Case Study 4, changes were undertaken to the enterprise workflow to allow better visibility of applications subject to PPA's and EOT's and that there has been significant benefit in terms of performance. The data below is reflective of the entire reporting period but analysis of the data shows a sustained increase in numbers of PPA and EOT apps where a decision was issued by the agreed date.

### PM3. Early Collaboration

Indicators & Statistics	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
Number and percentage of applications subject to pre-application advice	101 (14.5%)	133 (12.8%)	96 (12.9%)	104 (13.1%)	90 (14.9%)	↓ ↑

**2021/22** ● You continue to promote pre-application discussions and the number of applications utilising the service have continued increased up 0.2%. Your case studies help to demonstrate how you ensure that requests for additional information are kept proportionate.

**2022/23** In percentage terms, the number of application subject to pre-application advice is at record levels over the past 5-year period. We continue to promote the benefits of pre-application advice and the positive impact it has on highlighting early planning issues to applicants. As set out in Case Study 4, we have enhanced the pre-application process during this reporting period. In total, the planning service received 229 pre-application advice enquiries over the reporting period.

► [Pre Application Advice](#)

#### PM4. Legal Agreements

Indicators & Statistics	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	
Number (Major)	0	1	1	0	2	↑
Average number of weeks (Major)	-	196	21	-	125.1	
Number (Local)	7	2	5	8	3	↓
Average number of weeks (Local)	82.2	63	54	52.2	48.9	↗

**2021/22** ● The statistics show that there were no applications with legal agreements without processing agreements determined during this reporting period. You have identified you have different statistics from the official Scottish Government Statistics and a Uniform System will be put in place going forward.

**2022/23** There were five applications subject to a legal agreement and the average timescale for local applications has fallen to its lowest level in 5 years. Unfortunately, due to complex major applications, the average time is significantly slower than 2020/21, although it is noted that this shows a significant decrease from 2019/20.

## Enforcement

Indicators & Statistics	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Time since enforcement charter published or reviewed (requirement: every 2 years)	1 month	1 year, 1 month	3 months	1 year, 3 months	< 1 month
Complaints lodged/Cases taken up	160	142	118	91	72
Breaches identified (no further action)	42	60	36	54	51
Cases resolved/closed	143	218	63	46	95
Notices solved	6	0	0	7	6
Direct Action	0	0	0	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0	0	0	1
Prosecutions	0	0	0	0	0

**2021/22** ● Your enforcement charter was 3 months old at the end of the reporting period.

**2022/23** The number of enforcement cases taken up have fallen during the reporting period, however, the number of general enforcement enquires remains high and Enforcement Officers continue to proactively screen all enforcement queries before being registered as a potential breach.

The Enforcement Team are supported by a Monitoring and Compliance Officer whose role is to implement a proactive condition monitoring framework to ensure compliance with conditions for major applications. The officer has also been placed into an acting role as Assistant Enforcement Officer to cover an absence which allow backlogs to be cleared and to free up time for process improvements and enhancements.

► [Stirling Council Planning Enforcement Charter 2023](#)



## Development Planning

The preparation of the Development Plan Scheme (DPS) has been ongoing during the PPF period. The DPS will be published in summer 2023, marking the beginning of the process of producing the new Local Development Plan.

Both historic work of the Planning Service and work within this PPF period played an important role in Stirling Council receiving funding in January 2023 through the Levelling Up Fund for the regeneration of the Ministry of Defence site at Forthside. Further information can be found in Case Study 3.

In February 2023, updated Planning Guidance on Developer Contributions was published and adopted. In addition, a Customer Guidance Note was published to support the application of National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and LDP in decision-making. Furthermore, ongoing work took place during the PPF period for the revision of existing planning guidance documents to ensure these remain up-to-date.

► LDP webpage: [The Statutory Development Plan | Stirling Council](#)

### PM7. Local Development Plan ●

### PM8. Development Plan Scheme

Stirling Council's Development Plan Scheme (DPS) will be seeking approval for publication and adoption in June 2023. This would mark the start of the process of producing the next LDP. An indicative LDP programme, which will be set out in the DPS, is summarised as follows:

- undertake early engagement to inform the preparation of Evidence Report from **July to October 2023**
- consult on a draft Evidence Report from **April to June 2024**
- present a final Evidence Report to Full Council in **October 2024**
- Gate Check assessment by a reporter appointed by Scottish Ministers – **November 2024 – February 2025**
- prepare Proposed Plan (following successful completion of the Gate Check) **March 2025**
- publish a Proposed Local Development Plan for consultation in **2026**
- adopt and publish the new Local Development Plan in **2027**

► LDP webpage: [Stirling Development Plan Scheme](#)

Indicators & Statistics	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Age of local development plan at end of reporting period (requirement: < 5 years)	0 years, 5 months	1 year, 8 months	2 years, 8 months	3 years, 7 months	4 years, 7 months
Will the local development plan be replaced by its fifth anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Was the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes

**2021/22** ● An interim Development Plan Scheme has published in September 2021, which sets out broad timescales for the next LDP. It is noted a more detailed DPS will be provided in 2023 once the new LDP Regulations come into force.

**2022/23** The adopted Development Plan Scheme aims to be published in July 2023, which sets out our programme for preparing the next LDP under the new system for development plans. In accordance with the above programme, we expect to adopt the Plan within 5 years of the new LDP Regulations coming into force in line with Scottish Ministers' expectations.

**PM9. Stakeholders including Elected Members, industry, agencies, the public and Scottish Government are engaged appropriately through all key stages of Development Plan preparation**

**2021/22** ● You have started to provide a series of meetings with Community bodies regarding the preparation of the LDP as well as begin to brief elected members on their role in the process.

## 2022/23

We have begun initial engagement and evidence gathering to define the scope of an Evidence Report and Strategic Environmental Assessment that will support the next LDP. The intention is to consult on a series of draft topic papers in spring 2024, which will come together to form the final Evidence Report in autumn 2024. This early engagement builds on a number of informing and capacity building sessions undertaken between late 2022 and early 2023, as noted in the Development Plan Scheme.

### PM11. Production of relevant and up to date policy advice (formerly Regular and Proportionate Advice)

#### 2021/22 ●

You produced the Housing Land Audit 2021 during the reporting period and have stated you will review the Supplementary Guidance programme in 2023.

#### 2022/23

In February 2023, the Environment, Transport and Net Zero (ETNZ) committee approved the updated Planning Guidance: Developer Contributions for publication and adoption. Also in February, following the adoption of NPF4, we published a Customer Guidance Note: The Application of Development Plan Policy in the Assessment of Planning Applications, which supports the application of NPF4 and LDP in decision-making.

Additionally, we are currently working on a set of revised planning guidance documents that will be presented to ETNZ in September 2023. We anticipate adopting these updates sometime between late 2023 and early 2024. The purpose of these revisions is to maintain transparency in decision-making by ensuring that our guidance remains up-to-date and relevant under the new statutory development plan.

► [Planning guidance | Stirling Council](#)

## PM12. Corporate working across services

**2021/22** ● You have stated that you work closely with other council series to deliver corporate objectives with a case study provided on Developer Contribution Processes, showing cross-working with Finance colleagues.

This reporting period has also seen early work begin on the Forthside Development Framework which is supported by Architecture and Design Scotland (A&DS) and other Council Services.

**2022/23** In January 2023, the Council was informed that its bid for Levelling-Up funding was successful, which will be used for the regeneration of the Ministry of Defence site. Its redevelopment will be carried out as a part of the Forthside Masterplan, building on the historic work of the Planning Service in allocating and master planning the site for development. Latterly, the service's Urban Designer played an important role in engaging with stakeholders to gather views and evidence to inform the preparation of a Development Framework. This early engagement significantly contributed to the Council receiving the funding award. Currently, Officers have been involved in supporting a multi-disciplinary team that was established to achieve the objectives of the award. See Case Study 3 for further information on Forthside Levelling Up Fund.

Since the adoption of Developer Contributions Planning Guidance in February 2023, Officers have been assisting legal and finance colleagues in planning and modelling the costs for school and transport infrastructure. This information will be used to inform the section 75 and a decision that Stirling Council needs to make in order to provide additional funding for the infrastructure's delivery to do the need to fund a gap in developers' contributions.

## Land Supply and Development

Indicators & Statistics	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Housing approvals (units)	573	573	153*	212*	104*
Housing completions over last 5 years (units)	1448	1271	1076	991	726***
Marketable employment land supply (ha)	86.03	87.13**		87.37	84.6
Employment land take-up (ha)	2.99	4.56**		5.91	7.11

\* This figure does not include applications approved for change of house type or major applications.

\*\* These figures are from the 2020 Employment Land Audit, which covered the period 1st July 2018 to 30th June 2020. This was to take account of the non-completion of the 2019 audit.

\*\*\* Completions cover the period 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 to 30th June 2022.

### PM13. Sharing Good Practice, Skills and Knowledge between Authorities

**2020/21** ● You are working with Falkirk and Clackmannanshire on an iRSS for the Forth Valley Area. You are also represented on the Local Place Plans Benchmarking Group in order to share good practice in relation to Community Planning.

#### 2022/23

Officers continue to share good practice with other authorities through both the HOPS Development Management and Development Planning Sub-Committees, attending the HOPS conference and feeding into HOPS sessions on NPF4. During the reporting year, the Development Management Team Leader also carried out a learning session on Uniform and Enterprise with the Development Management Team at Renfrewshire Council.

Officers continue to hold regular liaison meetings with the National Park Planning Authority, Falkirk Council, and Clackmannanshire Council. These meetings are ongoing and are intended to provide support for the work being done on the Local Development Plan (LDP) and forthcoming Regional Spatial Strategy.

Additionally, we are providing assistance to communities in preparing Local Place Plans (LPP) as per our commitments outlined on the [LPP Resource Hub](#). This support has been made available through early information and capacity building sessions held throughout 2023. These sessions covered the LPP process, its connection to the LDP, and effective engagement methods. Going forward, the support will specific to the work of each community.

### PM14. Legacy Cases

Indicators & Statistics	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Number of cases cleared during reporting period	11	3	7	15	11
Number remaining	21	22	18	21	16

**2021/22** ● You have cleared 15 cases during the reporting year, with 21 cases still awaiting conclusion. This is an increase on cases remaining however we do note that you put in a concentration effort to clear more cases than the previous years.

**2022/23** The service continues to make concerted efforts to clear legacy cases with a further 11 cases cleared in the reporting period. This has reduced the number of legacy cases to 16, the lowest number of cases in the past 5 year period.

### PM15. Developer Contributions

**2021/22** ● You have developed a developer contributions tool which enables users to insert details of their proposed development and the tool produces a list of likely contributions. You updated the revised Draft Supplementary Guidance: Developer Contributions in February 2022. The new developer contributions tool is used as part of pre-application discussions.

**2022/23** Planning Guidance: Developer Contributions and Background Report was approved and published in February 2023. The guidance will be reviewed early 2024 to ensure that the evidence that underpins the education contributions remains robust and accurate.

- ▶ [Planning Guidance: Developer Contributions](#)
- ▶ [Developer Contributions Background Report](#)









## Service Improvements

Actions outlined below are integrated actions to enable the service to achieve the goals of the Stirling Council Planning Improvement Plan. Whilst some actions stand alone in progressing the service in a single area, many of the actions are integrated and connected, each progressing the works of the service to achieve wider outcomes of consistency, transparency and reliability.

Our actions remain ambitious for the coming year, such commitments have meant that many areas of action have been partially but not yet fully implemented. Whilst work is ongoing, it is hoped that the steady progression across 6 key areas will achieve an integrated package of improvements that will have a fundamental improvement upon how the service operated internally, and its interaction with others.



## Delivery of service improvement actions committed in previous year (2022/23)

Commitments 2022/23	Progress update 
<b>Frontloading</b>	
a. Implement improved validation standards following workshop, validation standards update and review of implementation, include assessment requirement pack for EH requirements online and as part of pre-app	 Initial validation work on this had been completed in November 2022 but was delayed due to NPF4 implementation. The proposed validation standards are currently being reviewed in light of NPF4 and being benchmarked with other authorities. It is expected that the revised standards will be implemented late summer/autumn 2023.
b. Implement standard conditions for consultees within the Development Management process	 This work has been delayed due to other workload priorities but it is expected to be picked up and phase 1 of standard conditions implemented by the end of the current 2023/24 reporting year.
<b>Improving Determination Timescales</b>	
c. Workshop on managing caseload performance and implement proactive review of all planning applications approach target to ensure proper caseload performance management.	 Work has been completed on this action in the 2022/2023 reporting year and implemented early in the 2023/2024 reporting year.
d. Review of Pre-apps being validated as part of Phase 2 of Gateway	 This action is complete - see Case Study 4.
e. Review and implement improved Committee Procedures	 This action is complete.
<b>Meeting Customer Expectations</b>	
f. Implement Phase 2 of Gateway including flow-charts, FAQs to reduce duty calls	 Work on this action commenced in the 2022/2023 reporting year but has been delayed to the 2023/2024 reporting year pending further work to be carried out regarding the duty service and to enhance the quality and quantity of information available on the Council's website via the Planning Toolkit.
g. Review Customer Charter, converting into a customer journey, informed by timescales defined in officer handbook	 This action is tied to Commitment f above and will be incorporated into the review of the Planning Toolkit.



Minimising Risk	
h. Full business QA in Gateway	● This action is complete and the Gateway Supervisor has sufficient capacity to carry out quality assurance checks on gateway tasks and procedures relating to both incoming and outgoing applications.
i. Roll out environmental compliance monitoring for major developments	● This action has been partially completed for existing applications and a process for new applications in the 2023/2024 year is being progressed.
Learning and Development	
j. Develop and implement a rolling programme of elected member training	● Elected Member training was implemented in the reporting year and a programme is being developed for the 2023/2024 year to ensure relevant training for members
k. Initiate a review of developments on site scheme	● A joint all day Development Management and Development Planning Learning Session and site visit to review developments on the ground took place in October 2022. A similar all day event is being planned for the 2023/2024 reporting period.

## Planned Service Improvements in 2023/24

### Commitments

#### Frontloading

- a. Implement improved validation standards following workshop, validation standards update and review of implementation, include assessment requirement pack for EH requirements online and as part of pre-app
- b. Implement standard conditions for consultees within the Development Management process

#### Improving Determination Timescales

- c. Review of all remaining Reports of Handling templates and Panel Report templates

#### Meeting Customer Expectations

- d. Implement Phase 2 of Gateway including flow-charts and FAQs to reduce duty calls and review the Planning Toolkit

#### Minimising Risk

- e. Finalise and implement Local Development Plan risk register in tandem with resource planning.
- f. Establish and support Infrastructure Delivery Work Group to ensure effective project management, monitoring and investment planning for the infrastructure needs of the Durieshill new settlement development.

#### Learning and Development

- g. Further develop and implement a rolling programme of Elected Member training
- h. Initiate a review of developments on site scheme

#### Placemaking and Collaboration

- i. Start a comprehensive review of Placemaking Guidance, which involves updating the existing guidance and creating new guidance as required, specifically guidance to support biodiversity gain, the climate change adaptation and mitigation, water and drainage, green networks, play and amenity space, and rural housing and buildings.
- j. Support the adoption of a new masterplan for Forthside to inform the Levelling-Up fund works.

## Workforce Information

Stirling Council Planning Service is a relatively small team split across three key areas of delivery: Development Planning, Development Management and Gateway. The following information is correct as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

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

<b>Staff Age Profile</b>	<b>Headcount</b>
Under 30	7
30-39	7
40-49	3
50 and over	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

	<b>Headcount</b>		<b>FTE</b>	
	RTPI	Total	RTPI	Total
Development Management	6	11	6.2	9.7
Development Planning	4	5	4	5
Enforcement & Compliance	0	3	0	3
Specialist	1	5	1	3.8
Support	0	8	0	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>28.2</b>

## Planning Committee Information

Committee & Site Visits	Number per year (2022/23)
Full Council meetings	9
Planning committees	10
Area committees	N/A
Committee site visits	0
Local Review Body	15
Local Review Body site visits	2

## Key

### Performance Markers

1. Decision-making	2. Project Management	3. Early Collaboration	4. Legal Agreements	5. Enforcement Charter
6. Continuous Improvements	7. Local Development Plan	8. Development Plan Scheme	9. Stakeholders	10. N/A
11. Production of relevant and up to date policy advice	12. Corporate working Across services	13. Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge	14. Stalled sites/legacy sites	15. Developer Contributions

### Demonstrating a high-quality planning service

A. Quality of Outcomes	B. Quality of Service and Engagement	C. Governance	D. Culture of Continuous Improvement
------------------------	--------------------------------------	---------------	--------------------------------------

✓	Performance meeting target
✗	Performance not meeting target
*	Corrected figure
↗	Performance improving
→	Performance maintained
↘	Performance declining
↑	Number increasing
↓	Number decreasing

The PPF also reports on 'National Headline Indicators' – developed by Heads of Planning Scotland to measure and promote a successful planning service, and 'Official Statistics' – planning authority performance data collected quarterly by the Scottish Government Communities Analysis Division on the detail of planning decisions and timescales.

These indicators and statistics are presented within the PPF with the symbols on the left used to provide additional detail and context.

## Appendix 1 – Supporting Evidence

### Web Links signposted

Supporting evidence is signposted throughout this PPF Report and has been brought together as a single list here:

Content	Links
Scottish Government Feedback	<a href="#">Planning performance framework   Stirling Council</a>
Processing Agreements	<a href="#">Planning   Stirling Council</a>
Stirling Council Enforcement Charter	<a href="#">enf-charter-2021-08_03_2023.pdf (stirling.gov.uk)</a>
Local Development Plan	<a href="#">The Statutory Development Plan   Stirling Council</a>
Supplementary Guidance	<a href="#">Planning guidance   Stirling Council</a>
Pre Application Advice	<a href="#">Pre-application advice   Stirling Council</a>
Development Plan Scheme (DPS)	<a href="#">2023-development-plan-scheme-adopted-version.pdf (stirling.gov.uk)</a>
Local Place Plans – Resource Hub	<a href="#">Local place plans - Resource hub   Stirling Council</a>
Developer Contributions Guidance	<a href="#">dc-planning-guidance-final-approved-feb-2023-web-copy.pdf (stirling.gov.uk)</a>
Developer Contributions Report	<a href="#">dc-background-report-feb-2023-web-copy.pdf (stirling.gov.uk)</a>

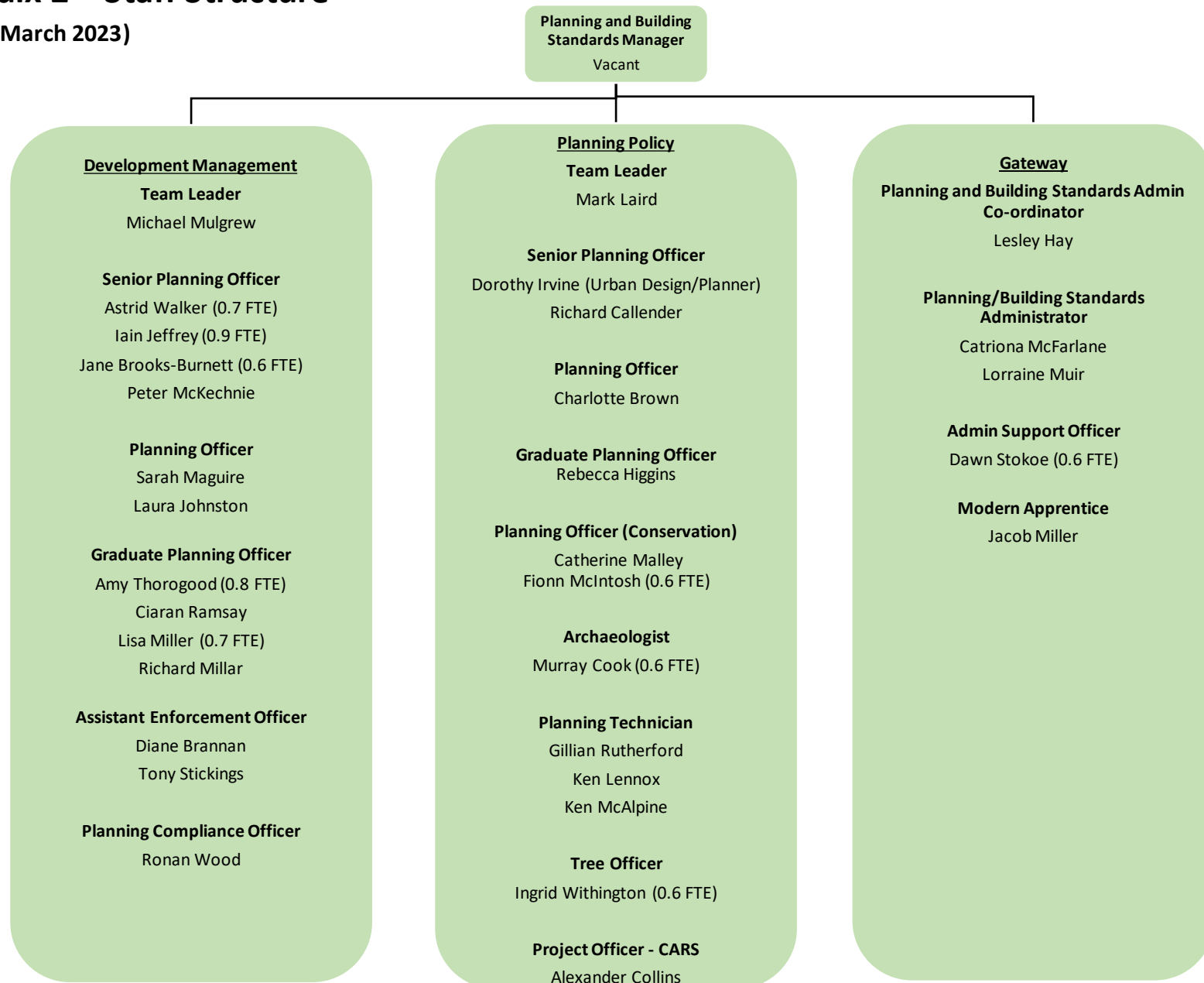
### Case Study Overview

This table tracks the case study topics included in the last three PPFs (2021-2023). This is in order to improve the range of case study topics discussed in future PPFs. The PPF12 box references the case study number within this document, as this information shall be collated by HOPS for all local authorities.

Case Study Topics	PPF10	PPF11	PPF12	Case Study Topics	PPF10	PPF11	PPF12	Case Study Topics	PPF10	PPF11	PPF12
Design	✓	✓		Economic Development	✓		3	Performance Monitoring	✓	✓	4
Conservation	✓		2	Enforcement	✓			Process Improvement	✓	✓	4
Regeneration	✓	✓	1, 3	DM Processes	✓	✓	4	Project Management	✓		
Environment				Planning Applications	✓	✓	1	Skills Sharing	✓	✓	2, 5
Greenspace				Interdisciplinary Working		✓	3, 6	Staff Training	✓	✓	2, 5
Town Centres	✓			Collaborative Working	✓	✓	3, 6	Online Systems	✓	✓	4
Masterplanning		✓	3	Community Engagement	✓		6	Transport			
LDP & Supplementary Guidance			6	Placemaking	✓	✓	3	Active Travel			
Housing Supply			1	Charrettes				Other: please note			
Affordable Housing		✓		Place Standard				Accessibility			

## Appendix 2 – Staff Structure

(as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023)



## Further Information

Please contact:

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### Formats

Copies of this report are available by request in a range of other languages, large print and on audio tape. To request articles in any of these formats please email or call 0845 277 700



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