

A map of Scotland is shown in the background, with the county of Aberdeenshire highlighted in a lighter shade of blue. The rest of the map is in a darker blue.

PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 8

2018/2019

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Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

The best area

Helping to create and sustain the best quality of life for all through . . .

- happy, healthy and confident people
- safe, friendly and lively communities
- an enterprising and adaptable economy
- our special environment and diverse culture

The best council

Aiming to provide excellent services for all by . . .

- involving, responding and enabling
- finding new and more efficient ways of doing things
- providing elected leadership for our area
- working with our partners in the North East and beyond
- always looking to the future

FOREWORD

There are definite signs of a change in the economy of the north east. There are still challenges – oil and gas assets continue to be the subject of acquisition and that brings with it job pressure. Uncertainty around Brexit also brings doubt and where there is doubt development and investment are curtailed. The ‘however’ is that there are real signs of tangible positive change. House completions are rising as is, slightly, house prices. Land valuations are also moving upwards and office accommodation is being utilised. Investment is taking place with significant infrastructure such as the completion of the AWPR and investment in rail ongoing. Newer and bigger rolling stock, dualling of the line north to Inverness and the delivery of the new station at Kintore are evidence in themselves of a more positive outlook.



STEPHEN ARCHER –
DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES

Further positives include the new Events Centre – TECA – nearing completion and the significant investment by Aberdeenshire Council in digital fibre provision. City Region Deal remains a strong public / private partnership, facilitating investment and growth, supporting the Energy Sector, Food and Drink and Life Sciences. Investment in key industries ie Fishing / Seafood, has been significant building on the related economic strength of both Fraserburgh and Peterhead. Ship working in Macduff goes from strength to strength, with local employment increasing, showing that marine related activity is on the rise. The new AWPR has significantly improved transport connectivity, of critical importance to the seafood sector. And against that backdrop, Planning has continued to play a key role in brokering, supporting and influencing positive outcomes for Aberdeenshire.

There are two Strategic Documents that the Planning Service have been developing. Firstly the Proposed Strategic Development Plan. This was completed as a Proposal document in August 2018. The Documents sets out Aberdeenshire and

Aberdeen City Council's vision of creating an innovative, sustainable and diverse economy. The historic environment is also highlighted. The document creates a strong framework for investment decisions and pushes the creation of sustainable and mixed communities.

The Local Development Plan 2021 Main Issues Report highlights that four of Aberdeenshire Council's Priorities are addressed by the new Plan and of course is also consistent with the Proposed Strategic Development Plan. The Document links the strategic thinking to the places of Aberdeenshire, the Historic Environment, sustainable development, housing provision and supporting business investment. These have been and continue to be key themes that the Planning Service drive forward on, for the communities and business sectors of Aberdeenshire.

In 2018/2019 the Planning Service processed in excess of 3000 Planning Applications, still a relatively high number compared to other areas of Scotland. Applying that focus on development is integral to facilitating the growth agenda.

This is not applied to the detriment of our historic buildings and landscapes and a strong balanced approach is applied by Officers and Councillors alike and is integral to the decision making process.

Against a backdrop of a weakened economy the Planning Service have continued to look to steer, promote, support and facilitate investment, development and change to the benefit of those that work, live and visit Aberdeenshire – to represent the very best of Scotland.

Stephen Archer
Director of Infrastructure Services

INTRODUCTION



This Planning Performance Framework document continues to be read in conjunction with the suite of high-level documents that embody **Aberdeenshire Council**.

The Council Plan gives strategic direction to the wider Council and will be used to inform decision making in the coming years. The Plan is laid out in full below, all centred around the 11 priorities.

The Council Plan 2017-2022 (Council's Strategic Priorities)

The Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership (CPP) is responsible for delivering positive changes for the communities of Aberdeenshire, with a specific focus on reducing socioeconomic inequality, primarily through the priorities identified in **Aberdeenshire's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2017-2027**. This sets out how we work with our main partners and Aberdeenshire's communities, and our overall vision.

Infrastructure Services 2017-2020

(The Key Objectives within support the Council's Strategic Priorities)

Each of the six areas has produced a Local Community Plan for the next four years. These can be found on the **Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership** web site.

The current **Economic Development Strategy** and **Regional Economic Strategy** remains valid.

The **Local Development Plan** and **Strategic Development Plan** are similarly a major tool in delivering the Service Objectives.

PROGRESS AND IMPROVEMENT IN THE PLANNING SERVICE IN 2018/19

SUMMARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING YEAR

Throughout 2018-2019 the work rate of the Local Development Plan Team has increased significantly through analysing bids submitted to us on potential development sites, analysing policies for the need to update them for the forthcoming [Local Development Plan 2021](#) and preparing and finally analysing the comments made on the 2019 Main Issues Report. As is our habit we have tried very hard to engage with communities and stakeholders through this process.

By the end of the period for receiving bids over 600 had been received. Each of these was assessed using a standardised form to identify which were sufficiently well thought out to be considered deliverable within the Plan period, and which met the Council's wider objectives. Checklists on a range of issues were assessed to ensure that we fully understood the bids received.

Allied to this we completed a six-week process of early engagement on the bid submissions with Area Committee Members and Community Council Representatives. This was a particularly useful exercise confirming our own thoughts on bids, while gathering additional local information that assisted us in the assessment. To our knowledge this was the first time that Members and Community Council Representatives had ever attended the same formal meeting, even if the results were to remain confidential until the publication of the Main Issues Report.

Early autumn saw us working to produce the Main Issues Report itself, and a draft Proposed Local Development Plan to illustrate how our ideas could be expressed in a new Plan. October and November were spent finalising and printing the Main Issues Report for an Infrastructure Services Committee meeting on 29 November 2018.



The [Main Issues Report](#) was finally published on 8 January 2019 with a series of 19 public “drop in” sessions to allow people to come and talk to the planning staff about the options presented. While this was moderately successful, in some areas less than 20 people “dropped in” to the afternoon / evening events, but in general they were well attended and we are sure stakeholders were provided with a clear message about land requirements and housing allocations at each of the meetings. We also prepared and presented [two short films on the MIR / Development Planning process](#) to inform and educate.

While the MIR was out for public consultation the team returned to policy work and updated the appendices and Supplementary Guidance from the previous Plan, updating and converting much of the Supplementary Guidance into a form that would now be found in the covers of the Plan itself and subject to Examination by the Scottish Ministers.

The final actions of 2018 to 2019 were receiving the first early Main Issues Report submissions and testing the systems that we had put in place to deal with the 1083 submissions we received in an efficient and timely manner, ready for the production of a Proposed Local Development Plan in December 2019.

SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT YEAR



THE QUAY, NEWBURGH

As with previous years, within this PPF reporting year, the emphasis has remained on maintaining and improving, where possible, performance in relation to planning application determinations and quality of outcomes. The evidence provided shows that overall performance has been consistent with the previous year and that areas where performance was a concern prior to that have been retained at a satisfactory level.

The overall number of planning applications received has once again fallen this year but by less than the previous year. This shows that the economic climate where it relates to development, while still challenging, is showing signs of stabilisation. It remains the case that Aberdeenshire Council is still one of the busiest Planning Authorities in the country with a throughput of processing over 3000 planning applications within the reporting year.

Despite the decrease in numbers of planning applications, Development Management staff have remained busy and, as in previous years, in order to provide continued professional development, staff resources have been distributed to aid, where necessary, other areas of planning work. This includes working with the LDP Planning Policy Team on the assessment of Bids and Main Issues and with the formulation of Draft Planning Policies and Supplementary Guidance. In particular a group has been involved in developing Design Guidance. This work continues. There have also been significant on-going contributions to investigating initial planning enforcement cases.

Another significant element of work undertaken by Development Management staff relates to Improvement Projects some of which have been established commitments. These have included progress to Customer Service Excellence Accreditation, the Review of Pre-application Processes, and the Review of Masterplan Processes and Guidance. These have been significant and complex areas of work which have progressed considerably but still require to be continued to formal implementation. Other Improvement Projects have included work on developing a consistent approach to the use of Planning Processing Agreements and Planning Application Validation Guidance and Information. Again these areas of work will continue into the next reporting year.

SUMMARY OF ENFORCEMENT YEAR

The Enforcement year has focussed on progressing and implementing Service Improvement initiatives identified within previous reporting periods alongside dealing with a continued demanding level of casework. As a result, several commitments have now been completed and new procedures are in place which has resulted in improved in-house protocols and most notably enhanced engagement with both the Public and Local Members.

A significant improvement to the service provided to the Public has been the transformation of the Enforcement Content on Aberdeenshire Council's [website](#) and the introduction of "Report a Breach of Planning Control" within the "[Report it](#)" function on the website. This system directs the public to essential information regarding the Enforcement Process and is now used by the majority of individuals submitting a complaint. This improved level of Information has enabled transparency in the Enforcement Process and coupled with the recently revised Planning Enforcement Charter 2019 enables the Public to have a clear and realistic understanding of how their complaint will be dealt with. The Charter now includes an Enforcement Policy and clearly identifies examples of priority and non-priority cases. The amended Charter is more user friendly and provides detailed information on the Enforcement Process.

The Team undertook bi-annual visits to the Development Management Team within each geographical area. This ensures that good communication links are maintained between the services and to share information as well as assist the understanding of the function and limits of the enforcement powers. The meetings also provided an opportunity to explain the new in house consultation protocol with development management and the procedures for engaging with Councillors and keeping them informed of cases where a number of complaints are received.

A networking / benchmarking event was held in January which was attended by all neighbouring enforcement teams. Following positive feedback a further event is to be hosted by an adjacent Authority later in the year.

The Enforcement Team have been pro-active in developing guidance on agricultural drainage following a number of high profile Enforcement complaints. This is to be developed further as detailed within a case study in this PPF and local hauliers and SEPA will be contacted in relation to our approach. The Team have also been reviewing extant Enforcement Notices to ensure that where a Notice has been served it continues to serve a purpose. The Team are progressing with engagement with the Procurator Fiscal Office to ensure cases which we wish to report in the future can be taken forward.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENT YEAR

The Environment and Specialist Services Teams continue to make an important contribution to the quality of design, placemaking, regeneration and environmental and biodiversity agendas through a wide variety of project work, and by providing specialist support to planners and other Council professionals, partners and stakeholders. Working with other Services, partners and community groups continues to be an important part of our activity. We continue to review our processes and seek customer feedback to make sure we add value. Following the successful drawdown of Historic Environment Scotland, Heritage Lottery and other external funding the [Banff CARS](#) (see case study) is nearing completion and the [Fraserburgh 2021](#) project is well underway. The success of our Smiddy project in Banff was recognised in a nomination as a finalist in the [RTPI Award for Excellence in Planning](#). We have begun scoping plans for our next major project in Peterhead. Spend across the built and natural environment is better planned by an asset management approach and a process for improved budget monitoring is in place. The majority of our work is supported by strategies, action plans and performance indicators, to ensure alignment with national and corporate priorities and that our activities make the best use of resources available.



DUFF HOUSE, BANFF

SUMMARY OF PLANNING INFORMATION AND DELIVERY YEAR

The Planning Information and Delivery Team has had a busy year focussing on making efficiencies to its workload and sharing knowledge and information. The completion of a joint database, which holds data for the [Housing](#) and [Employment Land](#) Audits as well as the [Action Programme](#), will make information sharing and reporting much easier going forward.

The Team's structure and joint goals have now been formalised within a Team Strategy document. On publication of this Team Plan, the Team visited various offices across the Shire to help raise awareness of what our capabilities are and how we can assist other Services within the Council.

As well as the usual reports that are produced on a regular basis, in Summer 2018 the Team published the first edition of the Aberdeenshire [Economic Annual Review](#) which was well received. To complement this and provide updates in between annual reviews, the Team are now publishing quarterly bulletins on Aberdeenshire's economy and monthly unemployment figures.

A new 'Settlement database' has been created which collates many sources of information for each settlement across the Shire including statistics for population, employment and age profiles, for example. Providing an accessible, single source of information will ensure that data usage within the Council is consistent and up to date. It is intended that this source of information will become known as a 'Centre of Excellence' and will be made publicly available as well as via the Council's website.

The Team aims to facilitate cross-Service working across Council Services and working with the development industry/stakeholders to aid the progression and delivery of allocated sites identified within the Council's Local Development Plan (LDP). Following the first publication of the Site [Prospectus in 2018](#), a series of landowner workshops were held to provide advice and support to landowners with sites which are allocated in the LDP. This pro-active approach was appreciated by those who attended and the majority left positive feedback about the events and have subsequently kept in touch about their progress. Over the last year, the Team have also been assisting the Policy Team consider the next LDP for 2021 onwards.

Work has continued on various regeneration projects including the Small Grant Improvement Scheme at Macduff and the Bridge Street Public Realm Improvement Project in Banff (please see separate case studies). At Kingseat, the Team has led an enforcement project to deliver a long awaited play park which has now opened for the community (please see separate case study).

The Planning Information and Delivery Team will continue to work to unlock sites and projects across the Shire and - embracing a 'One Council' approach - the Team will assist the Council to realise its full potential.

DOLPHIN STRUCTURE - PORTSOY



PERFORMANCE MARKERS – PRIORITY FOCUS FROM 2017-2018 FEEDBACK

The priority focus comes from the **Feedback** of the previous **PPF (2017/18)** under the relevant Performance Markers. These are summarised/reported back with outcomes. These outcomes are further detailed throughout PPF.

PERFORMANCE MARKERS - PRIORITY OUTCOMES SUMMARY FOR 2018/19 FROM FEEDBACK 2017/18

PERFORMANCE MARKER	PRIORITY - AMBER	OUTCOMES	PRIORITY - GREEN	OUTCOMES
Decision Making			Decision making faster than national average.	Focus on maintaining & improving performance.
Processing agreements	It was apparently not clear where Processing Agreements were on the Council website.	A link to the advice on Processing Agreements has been provided in the body of the PPF. Use of a search engine also provides this information. PPA Group setting up process of using PPA.		
Early collaboration			Major Service review on pre application service.	Building on existing methods of collaboration by reviewing Pre application service. Project group working on the review – local pre application service update. Major pre application service review on going.
Legal Agreements			Performance faster than last year and the National performance.	Continue improvement focus and joint work with Legal Services.

PERFORMANCE MARKER	PRIORITY - AMBER	OUTCOMES	PRIORITY - GREEN	OUTCOMES
Enforcement charter			Enforcement Charter 2 years old.	<u>Enforcement Charter</u> updated.
Continuous improvement	Completed 16 out of 25 of our service commitments. Coming year identifies a continuation of some improvements and a number of new commitments, particularly around enforcement. Future reports should clearly indicate if improvement commitments have been completed.	Focus to progress to completion improvement projects where resources allow. Looking to rationalise the number of projects with focus on Enforcement projects. Cognisance, however, must be given to the size/scale of Aberdeenshire as an Authority and the scale of the planning processes within. Continuous improvement in all aspects of the Planning Service is vital to ensure improvement and maintenance of high-level performance. The number of improvement projects reflects the desire to improve and the volume of work that is required to maintain that focus.		
Stalled sites/ legacy/cases	70 cases reached legacy status overall. 64 cleared and 49 awaiting conclusion.	A refocus on eliminating legacy cases was taken forward. The Legacy Team enabled a dedicated Officer per area team to keep momentum and priorities towards the legacy cases and the pre-empting of cases that were coming up to one year. Reduced numbers - now 35 - 9 of which do not have PPA To be noted: previous figures recorded all legacy cases irrespective whether they were on PPA's or not.		



PERFORMANCE MARKERS - PRIORITY FOCUS FOR 2018/19

PERFORMANCE MARKER	PRIORITY - AMBER	PRIORITY - GREEN
Decision Making		Continue focus on maintaining and improving performance
Processing Agreements	Provide clear link to <u>Processing Agreements</u> on website for search purposes	
Early Collaboration		Review of all Pre-Application Processes
Continuous Improvement		Completion and rationalisation of commitments. Progress to completions of Enforcement Commitments
Stalled Sites/Legacy cases	Reduction of legacy case and re-focus on Legacy Team and pre-empting legacy cases at early stage. Considering the use of Processing Agreements (PPA'S) and the recording as part of the Legacy numbers.	

[\(Refer to Part 3A Service Improvements for 2017-19\)](#)

PART 1: QUALITATIVE NARRATIVE AND CASE STUDIES



SHERIDAN PLACE, BALLATER



MIDMILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

QUALITY OF OUTCOMES

CASE STUDY 1 - ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL PLANNING PERFORMANCE 2018-19

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire Council – April 2018 – March 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

1 – Decision-Making
12 – Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement
- Project Management

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Hard to reach groups
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

As with previous years, throughout the PPF reporting year, there has continued to be an emphasis on retention and where possible improvement, on performance in terms of delivery of Local Development application decision making. The feedback from last years PPF provided a green rating in this key marker category with all the categories of development (Major, Local, and Householder) showing improvements in speed from the previous year and/or timescales faster than the Scottish averages.

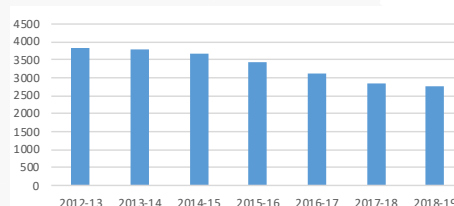


Factors that have affected the economy of Aberdeenshire in recent years continue to have an impact on the numbers and types of planning applications received and consequently this, along with Council budget efficiencies, has affected how the Development Management Service channel its workloads and resources. Priorities remain though with customer care, efficient processes for decision making, collaborative working between services and performance monitoring. There remains a careful balance to be had between performance in decision making and the outcomes of the decisions taking account of the [Council's priorities](#).

The total number of [planning applications received](#) and made valid reduced by a further 105 (2748) from the number received in 2017-18 (2853). It is noted though that throughput of all applications processed exceeds 3000. While still a reduction in numbers received, it is though noted that the number of local business and industry development type applications increased which may suggest an indication of some stability and improvement in economic activity.

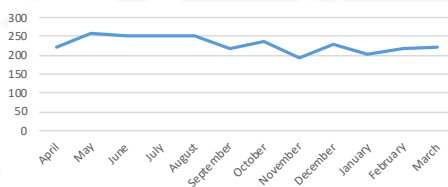
NUMBER OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS/NOTIFICATIONS RECEIVED (VALID), INCLUDES ALL TYPES OF SUBMISSION

YEAR	APPLICATIONS
2012-13	3831
2013-14	3775
2014-15	3674
2015-16	3421
2016-17	3106
2017-18	2853
2018-19	2748



2018-19 BREAKDOWN BY MONTH

YEAR	APPLICATIONS
APRIL	220
MAY	258
JUNE	251
JULY	253
AUGUST	251
SEPTEMBER	216
OCTOBER	236
NOVEMBER	193
DECEMBER	227
JANUARY	203
FEBRUARY	219
MARCH	221
TOTAL	2748



Performance in **Householder decision making** has remained a priority and as such has remained high with 95% of applications determined in less than 2 months. While there is a marginal increase of 0.3 in average weeks timescales from those recorded last year, this has not caused any significant fall in overall service delivery in the determination of this category of development. At 7.1 average weeks this still falls within the National average weeks timescale of 7.3 weeks recorded last year.

Performance in **Non-householder decision making** has also remained a priority and as such there has been a marginal improvement from last year with 82% of applications determined in less than 2 months compared to 81.6%. There has been a very marginal increase of 0.1 average weeks taken compared to last year with a figure of 9.2 weeks recorded. This still remains within the National average weeks timescale of 10.7 weeks recorded last year.

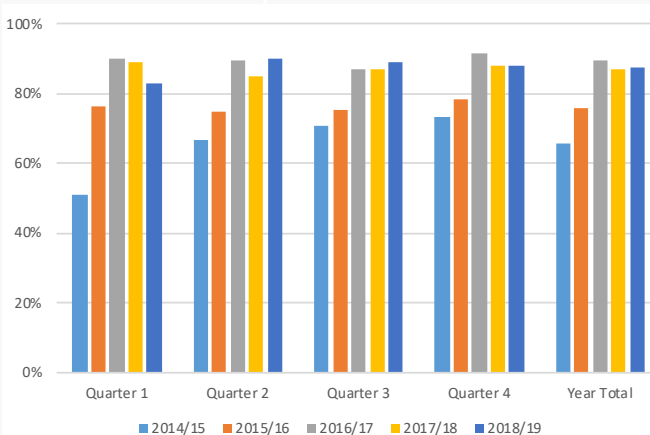
The increase in the number of business and industrial applications determined has not affected the determination timescales in this category. Indeed 88% of these types of application were determined in less than 2 months with an overall average weeks timescale of 7.9 weeks recorded. This compares favourably with 78.6% and 9.7 recorded respectively last year. The improvement on the efficient delivery of decisions on these types of application reflects the commitment by the Planning Service and the Council as a whole to provide a quality customer service to the business community in order to promote economic activity.

Rates of approval and delegation continue to remain consistent with 94% of applications approved and 91% of applications decided through delegated powers. Monitoring of these rates continues in order to provide the Planning Service with any indicators of change that may result in the need to identify any factors that need to be reviewed or improved. Overall, the effectiveness of processes and collaboration between the Planning Service and Elected Members continues to provide appropriate levels of outcomes.

Overall performance has therefore shown consistency with some marginal falls but also improvements. In 2017-18, 87% of local development applications were decided in less than 2 months, equating to 8.2 average weeks timescales. In 2018-19, 88% of local development applications were decided in less than two months, equating to 8.3 average weeks timescales.

% ALL LOCAL APPLICATIONS DETERMINED WITHIN 2 MONTHS

%S ONLY	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YEAR TOTAL
2017/18	89%	85%	87%	88%	87%
2018/19	83%	90%	89%	88%	88%



National Comparison All Locals

Note: At the time of preparation – Scottish Government performance statistics for 2018-19 not published

GOALS:

Aberdeenshire Council continues with the aim of meeting Scottish Government Statutory Performance Indicators while still seeking quality outcomes and maintaining quality customer service.

OUTCOMES:

Overall Aberdeenshire Council has successfully maintained its level of performance across all categories of Local Development planning applications. Maintaining performance remains a priority and in particular it is noted that in areas where performance improvement had been identified in previous years (such as non-householder applications) levels have continued to be retained. Through completion and implementation of the Pre-Application Review Project it is hoped that high levels of performance in all categories of Local Development will continue and hopefully improve. This is on the basis of improved quality of process and response that will aid applicants in the quality of submission and the required supporting information.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Neil C Stewart (Team Manager)

CASE STUDY 2 – ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL – PLANNING PERFORMANCE – MAJOR APPLICATIONS 2018-19

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire Council – April 2018 – March 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

1 – Decision-Making

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- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW

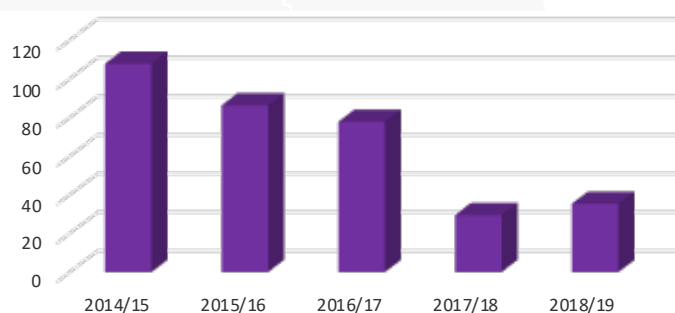
The previous Case Study focusses on Aberdeenshire Council's overall performance on local and other development types. Previous PPFs have reiterated a commitment to improve the timescales for determining Major planning applications. This included working with Legal colleagues on S75 Legal Agreement processes, use of Planning Processing Agreements to foster a more project management approach, and reviewing Pre-application and Masterplan processes. These projects continue to be developed and implemented when appropriate to do so, as is evidenced in other Case Studies in this PPF. Work continues on some of these projects with a view to formal roll out and implementation in the next reporting year. The work involved in some (Pre-Application Review and Masterplans Review) has progressed but not to the extent that they have been completed as yet. This is due to other work pressures, the complexity of the projects, and Development Management resources being distributed on other areas of work within the Planning Service.

The Scottish Government Statistics (Part 5 of this PPF) provides details of the number of Major Applications determined in the reporting year but excludes those that were the subject of Planning Processing Agreements (PPAs). As such the overall figure shows that 4 Major Applications were determined without PPAs with the timescale for decision being recorded at 35.3 average weeks representing a marginal increase on the same figure achieved last year (29.5 weeks). This figure is only slightly longer than the National figure of 33.6 average weeks reported last year.

Major Average timescales

DECISION TIMESCALES - MAJOR APPLICATIONS

YEAR	AVERAGE WEEKS
2014/15	107.8
2015/16	86.3
2016/17	77.8
2017/18	29.5
2018/19	35.3



NOTE: These are the official figures provided from Scottish Government and exclude applications where a processing agreement was in place.

For the purposes of this Case Study it should be noted that a total of 18 **Major Applications** were determined in the reporting year with 14 the subject of PPAs and only 2 of these determined beyond the agreed PPA timescale. It should also be noted that 2 Major Applications that were not the subject of PPAs were determined within the statutory 4 month determination period. These demonstrate that despite no PPA, collaborative working with developers and good project management can achieve quality and efficient outcomes.

Summary breakdown of all Major Applications is below:

- 18 – total number of Major Applications issued during the reporting period
- 14 – number issued with a PPA in place
- 12 – number issued within the agreed PPA timescale
- 4 – number issued with either no PPA or outwith agreed PPA timescale (see below explanations)
- 2 – number issued with no PPA but within 4 months statutory timescale

Major Application 1 – Delay explanation ([APP/2017/1366](#))

This relates to an application for Roadside Services, including hotel, shops, business units, restaurants and petrol station on a site adjacent to the A90 trunk road in the countryside.

Whilst an initial PPA was entered into, once it was apparent that the proposal would not be supported by the Planning Service

as it represented a departure from LDP policies the applicant sought alternative ways to promote and justify the proposal in the planning policy context. In order to explore these further and keep an open mind, and to allow further consideration of economic benefits, the Planning Service accommodated the applicant's desire to provide further economic justification to support the proposal. This led to delays. Despite the ultimate recommendation of refusal by the Planning Service, the method for determination, as directed by the Scheme of Governance, required the application to be determined by the Infrastructure Services Committee (ISC) following consideration and support from the local Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee (K&MAC). This increased the determination period. Post final ISC decision, which was to refuse, additional time was required to construct an additional reason for refusal. The applicant did not agree to enter into an extension of the PPA from that initially agreed.

Major Application 2 – Delay explanation ([APP/2018/1213](#))

This relates to a residential development on an LDP allocated site. It involved an increase in the number of houses proposed to that stated in the LDP settlement statement. A concurrent Masterplan application had been applied for formal approval as required by LDP policy. This needed to be agreed before the planning application could be decided. The Masterplan application was deferred twice by the local Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee (K&MAC) – once for a site visit and once for amendments. Eventually the Masterplan was agreed but with specific reference to not agreeing the housing numbers. The planning application was then reported to the K&MAC with a recommendation of approval whereupon the K&MAC refused. There was a PPA agreed which was amended to take account of the additional Masterplan and application processes but due to significant administrative requirements in the issuing of the decision and the time of year (Festive Period), the refusal decision was eventually issued in January 2019 some 8 days beyond the agreed PPA period.

Major Application 3 – Delay explanation ([APP/2017/0050](#))

This relates to a residential development on allocated land. There were Pre-application discussions and there was a Masterplan agreed. Notwithstanding there were still a number of technical and policy issues (such as details on actual housing numbers including affordable provision) to resolve between validation and reporting to the Buchan Area Committee (BAC). Due to changes to the plans throughout the process there was a need to advertise the development on three separate occasions with time given for receipt of representations. Post approval by the BAC, the S75 Legal Agreement instruction was instigated immediately. Various drafts of the S75 and legal clarifications between the Council's Legal Service and the applicant's solicitors took place with the conclusion of these processes carried out within 6 months which is a target for major developments. The S75 was sent for registration and recording but for various reasons outwith the Council's control was rejected twice by the Keeper. This took another 2 months to resolve. There was a further subsequent delay with a recording issue of an additional month before it was confirmed that the planning decision could be issued. The developer did not agree to a PPA.

Major Application 4 – Delay explanation ([APP/2017/3188](#))

Please refer to Case Study 8. This application for residential development was subject to extensive Pre-application discussions and early on it was established that it represented a departure as part of the site was outwith the LDP allocation. There still required to be extensive collaborative working with the developer to resolve outstanding issues once the application was valid. With a recommendation of approval and as a departure, under the Scheme of Governance, it was required to be reported to both the local Garioch Area Committee (GAC) and subsequently the Council's Infrastructure Services Committee (ISC). It is noted that it was deferred the first time at GAC for submission of further information in the form of a further indicative layout plan. Prior to the first GAC it was decided to initiate the S75 Legal Agreement process. As a result of this early initiation and concurrent work on the S75 Agreement with the application process, post ISC final decision the S75 Legal Agreement was signed and the decision issued within 1 week. The overall time taken can be explained by the collaborative working to achieve a high quality design and layout and the governance processes related to Committees. A PPA was discussed with the agent but there was no agreement recorded.

GOALS:

The Planning Service continues to demonstrate a commitment to maintaining and improving performance in the assessment and determination of Major planning applications through the use of project management tools, collaborative working, and improving pre-application and masterplanning processes.

OUTCOMES:

The marginal increase in the average weeks determination timescales for Major applications is noted but the number of Major applications this represents is only a small proportion of the number of Major applications determined within the reporting period. The emphasis has been on collaborative working to achieve quality outcomes and the use of project management tools with the majority of cases being the subject of PPAs and meeting their agreed PPA timescales. The early initiation of S75s processes where appropriate will continue and one of the cases above demonstrates the benefits of this with the final legal process only taking 1 week post Committee decision.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Neil C Stewart Team Manager

CASE STUDY 3 - SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AND COMMITMENT: ABERDEENSHIRE DESIGN REVIEW PANEL - THE NEXT STEPS

LOCATION AND DATES:

Ongoing 2017-2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of outcomes

KEY MARKERS:

6 - Continuous improvements - show progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Environment
- Greenspace
- Masterplanning
- Development Management Processes
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Placemaking
- Place Standard
- Process Improvement
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- External Professionals (Panel Members)
- Developers

OVERVIEW:

The Design Review Panel Project has formed part of previous iterations of the PPF - notably as a case study in [2017/2018 \(Case Study 5, Page 19/20\)](#). The previous case study focused on a review of the Council's participation in the joint Aberdeen City and Shire Panel, and the search for an alternative. This culminated in the decision to form an Aberdeenshire Design Review Panel and develop the Design Quality Audit tool (DQA).

This case study outlines the continuing work in relation to the Design Review Panel Project. At this stage the Design Quality Audit and Design Review Panel have both been utilised on a pilot application. The experience has enabled the Service to further refine the process and the DQA.

Moving forward, the Service is exploring mechanisms through which to roll out the Design Review Panel and Design Quality Audit for wider use within Aberdeenshire. In the short term this will require measures to increase awareness of the tool for all stakeholders. In the longer term this will require measures to be taken in order to reinforce and support the Design Review Panel.

GOALS:

- To establish an Aberdeenshire Design Review Panel
- To develop the Design Quality Audit Tool

OUTCOMES:

The Aberdeenshire Design Review Panel has been formed and the Design Quality Audit tool has been developed.

The inaugural meeting of the Design Review Panel was held on 22 January 2019 in order to review a live application for a mixed use development at the Menie Estate, Aberdeenshire. Prior to the Panel meeting, the applicant and Officers from the Planning Service carried out independent assessments of the design quality using the Design Quality Audit. These assessments provided prompts for the Panel discussion. The application remains under consideration, with a decision expected in Autumn 2019 - this would be the appropriate time at which to consider the impact and effectiveness of the design review process.



The Design Quality Audit has been discussed at the annual Architecture + Design Scotland Design Panel Forum as an alternative approach to a traditional Design Panel, with Aberdeenshire Council sharing our experience thus far. The draft version of the DQA and associated User Guidance has been circulated amongst interested Local Authorities in order to share our approach.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

James Hewitt, Planner

CASE STUDY 4 - ACHIEVING QUALITY OUTCOMES IN DELIVERING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS – ONSHORE WORKS ASSOCIATED WITH MORAY EAST AND MORAY WEST OFFSHORE WINDFARMS

LOCATION AND DATES:

Outer Moray Firth as well as onshore locations in Aberdeenshire (Banff to New Deer and Sandend to Fordyce), 2018 and 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

- 2 – Project management
- 3 – Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on onshore planning submissions
- 12 – Corporate working across Services to improve customer outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Conservation
- Environment
- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Economic Development
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Process Improvement
- Project Management
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

Within the 2017/18 PPF, Aberdeenshire Council reported on the progress of both [Moray East](#) and [Moray West](#) onshore works associated with respective offshore wind farm developments – both complex National applications. The [2017/18 PPF \(Case Studies 19 and 20, Pages 34/35/36\)](#) outlined the pre application and initial stages of the consideration of the applications. This updated 2018/19 case study builds on these early application stages and outlines how the applications were then assessed and determined as well as the outcomes of these processes. The Moray East project involved Matters Specified in Conditions applications concerning onshore cabling and a new onshore substation, while the Moray West development involved working closely with Moray Council on a Planning Permission in Principle application for a proposed onshore cable corridor. Both projects would connect to neighbouring offshore wind farms in the Moray Firth.

The previous reporting on these projects had outlined the joined-up approach taken in terms of cross-boundary working and overarching project management throughout the early stages of each application. This joined up, coordinated working,

across both projects continued throughout the application and EIA processes, ultimately leading to a timely determination for each – following Committee and Pre-Determination Hearing processes as required, as well as the full and robust assessment of National applications.



GOALS:

Within the 2018/19 PPF reporting period, the Planning Service aimed to successfully navigate these large scale and highly complex projects through the Planning System in line with over-arching timescales to suit the delivery of this national development infrastructure.

OUTCOMES:

All applications have been successfully determined in line with the timelines agreed by all parties. This included reporting each application to multiple [Council Committees](#) and promptly sharing updates with other stakeholders to ensure that the applications could be successfully navigated through the planning system and successful outcomes reached.

National applications, including those also falling under the EIA Regulations such as these, present added complexities with regard to assessment and also timescales. A fully thought out and coordinated approach was therefore essential to achieving desirable outcomes. A measure of the successful outcomes is the testimonial from the applicants (EDPR) as set out below.

Sarah Pirie, Head of Development EDPR UK:

Moray East

The key work in 2018/19 related to the submission of two applications for MSC approvals for the Moray East onshore transmission works including a 33km cable route and 70 acre substation site.

Approvals were required to meet challenging timelines to enable the works to commence according to programme aligned to the Moray East financial close. As we have found previously with Aberdeenshire Council the development and implementation of a Processing Agreement was pivotal to securing an efficient delivery programme and good understanding of the requirements to ensure a high quality application. All target dates in the Processing Agreement were achieved. The Processing Agreement also enabled the Strategic Development Delivery Team to allocate suitable resources and in particular the continuity in Officers throughout the Moray East applications has led to a very high quality, effective and efficient processing of our applications.

We believe that the process adopted was further streamlined by preparing Area Committees in advance of the application. The Area Committee process was also used to capture developer information supplied in response to Committee questions

so the final Report to the Infrastructure Services Committee was comprehensive and captured all commitments that had been given through the process which supported the final decision making. In addition, statutory consultees were well managed and briefed to enable responses within the processing agreement time limits.

Throughout this MSC process we have received responsive, timely and comprehensive responses from officials which was key to developing and processing the application. In addition, we were very impressed by the rapid assimilation of complex and detailed information and the subsequent concise and informative Reports to Committee.

Moray West

The Moray West planning application was probably the largest application by area processed by the Scottish planning system at present (following in the footsteps of the Moray East). This fact demonstrates the scale and potential for complexity that existed in manoeuvring the application through to consent, a matter further complicated by the backdrop of a newly emerging EIA regulatory environment and the fact that the application boundary is located extensively across two different Planning Authorities.

Moray West benefitted from the earliest stages throughout from clear and open dialogue at all stages, ensuring that the application could be front loaded with adequate information and ensuring that very little additional material needed to be brought forward during the determination process. The two Planning Authorities worked coherently together, and showed a strong determination to deal with the application in as timeous manner as possible. The Processing Agreement allowed for clear commitments to be made by all three parties to deliver the consent and a strong understanding as to what would be a viable timeline.

We consider that the resourcing and knowledge from the Strategic Development Delivery Team of the Planning Authority meant that a complex, major infrastructure project supported the submission of a high-quality application which was progressed by the Planning Authority efficiently and according to agreed timelines despite the added complexities of the application boundary crossing into another Planning Authority.

The quality of the scoping process allowed for the delivery of an EIA that allowed for prompt determination. We further benefitted from the clear guidance we received in relation to pre-application consultation from Aberdeenshire Council particularly when the project encountered local concern within a localised part of Aberdeenshire and we welcomed open and transparent dialogue with the Planning Authority throughout this period. We believe this process allowed us to revise our proposals and address local concerns successfully.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Stuart Murison, Senior Planner



CONSTRUCTION WORK AT LANDFALL SITE



EXAMPLE OF DRAINAGE TRENCH PREPARATIONS



CABLE DUCTING



MORAY WEST WINDFARM (PROPOSED)

CASE STUDY 5 - CHANGE OF USE FROM CLASS 1 (RETAIL) TO CLASS 3 (FOOD AND DRINK) 21 THE SQUARE, ELLON

LOCATION AND DATES:

Planning Application submitted and validated on 06/12/2017
(Application Reference: [APP/2017/3076](#))
Processing Agreement Target Date: 06/07/2018
Reported to Area Committee 26/06/2017
Decision Issued: 03/07/2018

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of Outcomes
- Quality of Service and Engagement

Key Markers:

2 - Project management
3 - Early collaboration with applicant and consultees on planning applications
12 - Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Project Management
- Town Centres
- Economic Development

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developers
- Authority Other Staff
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

The application site was a vacant shop that had been lying empty for several years within Ellon Town Centre. The Service collaborated with internal departments and the applicant's agent to resolve numerous technical issues in order to support this development. Through a Processing Agreement, the application was project managed by setting out agreed target dates with the agent as well as consultees in order that the proposal proceeded appropriately from start to finish through the planning process.

Early engagement with the agent and other interested parties ensured that agreed target dates were met and subsequently allowed the proposal to materialise on the ground to allow an economically viable development in a Town Centre.

Throughout the duration of the application, there were many obstacles to overcome and requirements to meet in order that the proposal was considered to be acceptable. Through collaborative working, project management and decision-making skills, the application proceeded to a successful outcome. If these objectives had not been met, then the existing unit would likely have remained vacant. Subsequently, the development is now fully operational.



ELLON COFFEE SHOP

GOALS:

To bring a vacant retail unit back into use to enhance the vitality, viability and economy of the Town Centre whilst reflecting the collaborative approach taken by Aberdeenshire Council.

OUTCOMES:

The key outcome from this case study is a clear demonstration of how the Council is committed to collaborating with relevant interested parties to ensure that relevant target deadlines are set and achieved in order that planning decisions can be made in a timely manner, whilst delivering a quality development on the ground thus boosting the local economy.

NAME OF KEY OFFICERS

Darren Ross Team Manager and Colin Campbell Planner

CASE STUDY 6 - PRE-APPLICATION AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT FOR QUALITY OUTCOMES AND SERVICE - KINTORE STATION AND STATION CARPARK



KINTORE STATION AND STATION CARPARK

LOCATION AND DATES:

APP/2018/0731: Kintore Station and Station car park, site adjacent to Northern Road, Kintore: June 2015 - ongoing EIA Screening opinions submitted for station and car park January 2017.

POAN submitted for car park element in August 2017

Formal Planning applications lodged for car park

[APP/2018/0731](#) and station [APP/2018/0778](#) in April 2018, determined June 2018

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of Outcomes
- Quality of Service and Engagement

Key Markers:

2 - Project management

3 - Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications

12 - Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Project Management
- Transport

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Network Rail
- External consultants

OVERVIEW:

The Planning Service was aware of the proposal for a new rail station in Kintore from the Local Development Plan and wider strategic discussions. From the initial approach in 2015, the Planning Service was able to provide a single point of contact for this complex project. The Senior Planner built a relationship with the Council and Network Rail Teams, where planning advice, queries on the process, engagement with key consultees and understanding of timescales and deadlines could be discussed to ensure the two eventual applications that were submitted proceeded smoothly through the application stage. Two applications were considered necessary due to funding and other requirements of the overall project.

Nonetheless, the applicants were encouraged to work together on one coherent project and present this to the public, despite only one element (the car park) being a major planning application. Working closely with the applicants allowed EIA regulations, statutory pre-application requirements, timetabling of application submission, reporting to Committee and target determination dates to be agreed that would satisfy the work

programme for the development to commence in Autumn / Winter 2018.

Through regular meetings and ongoing dialogue with the applicants, the Planning Service was able to ensure design, landscaping and public access were fully considered and all technical matters around flood risk, contamination and noise were investigated. External consultants working on surveys and screening opinions were provided with advice, meaning the full package of information was provided upfront.

GOALS:

This case study is considered to be an example of collaborative and interdisciplinary working, not just within the Council, but with the applicants and their representatives. The establishment of positive working relationships is considered to have facilitated delivery of a high-quality and much anticipated piece of strategic rail infrastructure for the community with all of the resulting benefits. The new station is expected to open in early 2020.

Work is currently progressing on purifying suspensive conditions. This requires ongoing dialogue with the applicants and consultants to progress matters and ensure compliance with all requirements in the decision notices.

Ongoing upgrading of the rail network is a project identified in the National Planning Framework and it is anticipated the experience with Kintore Station has created the conditions between the Planning Service and Network Rail to work together to progress this project.

OUTCOMES:

The car park planning application was granted full planning permission at the meeting of [Garioch Area Committee on 19 June 2018](#) subject to a number of conditions. The decision was issued on 28 June, well in advance of the 25 August target date. The railway station was determined under delegated powers, with the decision also issued on 28 June 2018, in advance of the 1 July target date.

The front-loading of the process, single point of contact within the Planning Service and awareness of the applicant's deadlines meant decisions were able to be issued within the statutory time periods for the local and major development.

Other Strategic Documents:

[Nestrans Regional Transport Strategy Refresh 2013](#)

Comments from Paul Finch (Strategic Transportation Manager, Aberdeenshire Council) – applicant for the Kintore Railway Station Car Park (APP/2018/0731)

The development of a new railway station at Kintore has been a long-term aspiration of Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans.

A successful bid to the Scottish Stations Fund process in 2016 enabled this project to move from aspiration to becoming an established part of the Aberdeen to Inverness rail improvement project, with construction planned for the summer of 2019.

During this process, with early plans being subject to formal consultation in 2014, we have received consistent and timely planning advice from the Planning Service on both the specifics of the application, and also with regards to process. This has extended to EIA screening, support during compulsory purchase process, pre-application advice, planning application submission guidance, and support during the purification of conditions. As we now move to implementation phase, we look forward successful conclusion of the consents process.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Bruce Strachan - Senior Planner

CASE STUDY 7 - PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOWARDS QUALITY OUTCOMES AND SERVICE - SCOTBEEF ABATTOIR, THAINSTONE, INVERURIE

LOCATION AND DATES:

APP/2018/0428: Full Planning Permission for Full Planning Permission for Erection of Abattoir and Meat Production Facility with Associated Roads, Infrastructure and Landscaping at Thainstone, Business Park, Inverurie
POAN submitted October 2015.
Formal planning application validated February 2018, determined August 2018

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

- 2 - Project management
- 3 - Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
- 12 - Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Environment
- Economic Development
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Project Management

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

This case study relates to a proposal for a new abattoir and meat production facility within the Inverurie and Port Elphinstone Settlement. The approval of this application would see the existing abattoir in the town centre being closed and a new modern facility being re-established on this proposed site adjacent to an existing Business Park at Thainstone.

There was a significant planning history to this site. The overall principle of development of this part of the Thainstone Business Park proposal was granted planning permission in principle [APP/2015/3793](#) under a Scottish Government DPEA appeal. It was for the expansion of the Business Park for Use Class 4, 5 and 6. This 2015 planning in principle application was refused by the Council in September 2016.

As an abattoir the Planning Service concluded that the proposal would not fall within either of the approved Use classes established by the planning permission in principle approval. As such the Planning Service requested the submission of a formal full planning application. Prior to the submission of the formal

planning application, the agent had been in discussions with the Planning Service since 2015 to discuss the initial proposal and examine options for a development site within the locality of Inverurie. This was the start of the working relationship between the Council and ensured that any specific planning matters were highlighted at an early stage.

A POAN was submitted in October 2015 and an EIA screening was also issued that same year. A consultation event was held in September 2017 and this ensured that comments could be incorporated into the proposal and reviewed prior to submission of the formal planning application.

The formal planning [application](#) was submitted in February 2018 ([APP/2018/0428](#)) once the outcome of the DPEA planning appeal for the wider Thainstone Business Park was issued in January 2018. A Planning Process Agreement (PPA) was drafted at the start of the process to ensure that all parties were clear on the process to be followed and the critical deadlines. The application was subsequently determined in accordance with the PPA agreed with the agent.



The submission of this application raised concerns for the local community as to whether the site was an appropriate location for a development and the potential impact on the amenity and character of the area. These objections were highlighted in letters of representation. With the help of both internal and external stakeholders who reviewed the submitted documentation, as well as a full assessment undertaken by the Planning Service, it was recommended that the site was an appropriate location. It would remove the existing abattoir from the centre of Inverurie, whilst still keeping it in the wider locality, therefore not having an impact on the economy of the area.

As this application was a major development, the application was submitted to the Garioch Area [Committee meeting on 19 June 2018](#). The Area Committee, having reviewed the proposal, resolved to Grant Full Planning Permission in line with the recommendation and subject to a number of conditions. Full Planning Permission was thereafter granted in August 2018 in line with the agreed PPA timescales.

GOALS:

To provide the settlement of Inverurie with a site considered appropriate for an abattoir and meat production facility, which would remove an existing, older built abattoir from the town centre, therefore maintaining the infrastructure required for developing a long-term sustainable future for the beef processing sector and to help future proof the long-term viability of Scotbeef in the North East.

The Planning Service adopted a proactive approach providing considerable input to ensure that all concerns highlighted by consultees and the local community were resolved during the assessment process.

The Planning Service now has a good working relationship with the agent, and this proved beneficial during the assessment process. This working relationship ensured competent project management through the determination process from initial discussions through to the formal decision stage.

OUTCOMES:

The case study shows that a pragmatic outlook on the wider benefits of this proposal play an important role. The loss of the abattoir from the settlement of Inverurie and Port Elphinstone could have proved detrimental to the economy, due to the loss of jobs. The proposed site is appropriate as it removes the development from the town centre and places it on a more appropriate site.

While the development has not commenced, it is believed that the scheme will work well in this locality without any impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Aoife Murphy - Senior Planner

CASE STUDY 8 - PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOWARDS QUALITY OUTCOMES AND SERVICE - MAJOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT CONGLASS, CRAWFORD ROAD, INVERURIE

LOCATION AND DATES:

Site at Conglass, Crawford Road, Inverurie
APP/2017/3188: Full Planning Permission - Residential Development and Associated Infrastructure, Site at Conglass, Inverurie
POAN submitted September 2017
Formal application validated 22 December 2018
Decision issued 30 August 2018

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

- 2 - Project management
- 3 - Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
- 12 - Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Environment
- Greenspace
- Affordable housing
- Masterplanning
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Placemaking
- Project Management



STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

This Case Study involves the development of an allocated housing site within Inverurie as contained within Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017. An initial meeting took place between the agent and the Planning Service in January 2017 to discuss the initial proposal and examine options for development. It was identified that this was a major application site and furthermore part of the development

was outwith the allocated site and also beyond the Local Development Plan settlement boundary.

This Case Study involves the development of an allocated housing site within Inverurie as contained within Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017. An initial meeting took place between the agent and the Planning Service in January 2017 to discuss the initial proposal and examine options for development. It was identified that this was a major application site and furthermore part of the development was outwith the allocated site and also beyond the Local Development Plan settlement boundary.

These pre-application discussions were the beginning of the working relationship between the applicant and Aberdeenshire Council and ensured initial thoughts on the proposal could be discussed early in the process. A number of issues were highlighted including the need to follow potential departure procedures to allow due process for the determination of the application.

The agent presented the proposal at a Major Application meeting in September 2017 to gather further information on the proposal. Several internal and external parties were represented and provided important feedback on the proposal at the time and this allowed further refinement of the proposal prior to submission.

A POAN was submitted in September 2017 and further input from the Planning Service ensured that the community and other interested parties were involved from the start of the process. This ensured that comments and observations could be incorporated into the proposal before submission of the planning application.

Further meetings took place throughout 2017, to discuss the finalised proposal prior to the submission of the planning application. The proposal was revised to incorporate all the input received. The planning application ([APP/2017/3188](#)) was lodged in December 2017 with a four-month determination target in line with the determination dates of all major applications.

From the outset, it was understood that the proposal would be a departure from the extant local development plan and therefore would need to be presented to the Garioch Area Committee and the Infrastructure Services Committee (ISC). This was reflected in the timescale that was discussed and agreed.

The value of the extensive pre-application discussion and collaborative working between the parties was apparent as many of the potential issues had already been discussed and resolved. This allowed the Team to focus on resolving any outstanding issues and that a timetable could be formulated to ensure the various deadlines could be met. The application was submitted to Garioch Area Committee in May 2018 with a favourable recommendation. The Committee recommended that a masterplan was produced to ensure future development in the area was



coherent with this proposal. A return to [Garioch Area Committee in June 2018](#) gained approval and likewise approval was granted at [Infrastructure Services Committee](#).

Prior to the first Area Committee meeting it was decided to initiate the drafting of the Section 75 Legal Agreement between the applicant and the Council's Legal Team. It was acknowledged that risks were involved with this approach, however this was to accelerate the conclusion of the Legal Agreement. Following the final decision at the ISC meeting on 23 August 2018, the S75 Agreement was concluded on 27 August 2018, 4 days after the ISC.

The Decision Notice was issued on 30 August 2018. This was followed up with a further meeting to discuss the outstanding planning conditions. Development has now commenced on the site.

GOALS:

This site was allocated in the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 to deliver housing within the settlement. It was acknowledged that delivery of the site was technically challenging and the Planning Service accepted that in order to deliver housing some concessions would be required.

The objective on this site was to get a high quality masterplanned development, affordable housing and an improved approach to the west side of Inverurie. Through negotiation with the applicant the objective was fully met and a high quality residential development has now commenced.

OUTCOMES:

The early and proactive engagement between the applicant and the Planning Service ensured that the principle of the development could be established and supported as a departure. Following this the proposal was refined and further input from various consultees fed into the process and this ensured that the application was well advanced when submitted. The various elements of the formal planning process added value at each stage of the application and ultimately although it was recognised that it was a departure from the Local Development Plan, there was merit in supporting the development.

The initiation of the Section 75 Agreement before a decision was made had inherent risks, however in this case it was justified and the registration of the agreement and the issuing of the Decision Notice were completed very soon after the final decision was made.

It is noted that the application was not the subject of an agreed PPA. It is therefore a Major application where statutory timescales were not met. However, this case study demonstrates that, despite that, through collaborative working and agreements with the developer and good project management, good outcomes were achieved in terms of the quality of development and decision. This may not have been possible if shorter timescales were rigidly adhered to.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Matthew Watt - Planner

CASE STUDY 9 - PROJECT MANAGEMENT TOWARDS QUALITY OUTCOMES AND SERVICE – EXTENSION TO THAINSTONE BUSINESS PARK INVERURIE

THAINSTONE, INVERURIE



LOCATION AND DATES:

Extension to Thainstone Business Park, land adjacent to Thainstone Business Park, Inverurie

Approval of Matters Specified in Conditions 1 (a Phasing, b Levels, c Strategic Landscaping, d Drainage Connection, e Public Access Plan, f Travel Plan), 3 (Archaeological WSI), 5 (Camie's Stone Method Statement), 13 (Public Transport Accessibility) of Planning Permission in Principle Ref. APP/2015/3793, land to the west of Thainstone Business Park, Inverurie (APP/2018/0140)

Formal application validated February 2018, determined October 2018.

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

- 2 - Project management
- 3 - Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
- 12 - Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Environment
- Economic Development
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Project Management
- Transport
- Active Travel

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

This project related to the expansion of Thainstone Business Park and was seeking assessment of the **Matters Specified in Conditions** associated with the principle planning approval for commercial development (Use Classes 4,5 and 6)

APP/2015/3793. This site has a long, complex planning history that includes allocation within the Local Development Plan and previous planning applications for business development. The principle approval was granted on appeal by the Scottish Government following refusal by Aberdeenshire Council in September 2016. There was significant Elected Member and public interest in this site due to the planning history and ongoing concerns regarding the implications of development upon the local road network.



The approved permission and Matters Specified in Conditions application were in essence the strategic part of the development and included many elements of the essential infrastructure to serve the site. The development of these elements of the site would allow individual plots to come forward in a logical and coherent manner.

As would be expected a number of planning conditions were attached to the principle approval and therefore these had to be satisfactorily met as part of the assessment.

This application raised a number of issues specifically in relation to transportation to the site, the built heritage associated with the site and the visual impact of the proposed development. Significant dialogue took place between the Planning Service, Aberdeenshire Council's Transport and Archaeology Sections to address concerns and ensure that all issues were satisfactorily addressed.

The application was reported to the Garioch Area Committee (GAC) of 8 May 2018 due to the number of objections to the proposal. Discussion took place at GAC and the item was deferred for further consideration of some of the material considerations. Further dialogue took place between the Planning Service and the agent to ensure the issues raised by Members were satisfactorily addressed. The application was returned to the [Garioch Area Committee 19 June 2018](#) meeting and was approved by Members.

The development has now started on the site and further proposals have come forward to begin development on the individual plots.

OUTCOMES:

The following outcomes can be summarised; good working relationship between agent, Planning Service and consultees; quality solution; useful Member input; the development now commenced; a strategic approach established for further applications/proposals.

This case study demonstrated the advantages of developing a strong working relationship with the agent and the various consultees. All of the issues were thoroughly discussed and a number of options were considered and analysed to ensure that the proposal was acceptable and also deliverable. The value of face to face meetings was apparent as it ensured issues could be identified and decisions made quickly.

The negotiations between the various parties involved ensured that a quality outcome was delivered and that the applicant was comfortable that it could be delivered. The role of Members on the Garioch Area Committee added value to the final proposal including improved transportation linkages and landscaping.

A number of barriers were overcome to deliver the best solution for the site including improved transport links to the site, delivery of strategic landscaping and ensuring the long term retention of the archaeology of the site.

The approval of this application should allow future proposals on the site to come forward in a coherent manner. This has been demonstrated through the approval of specific business uses within the site.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Matthew Watt - Planner

CASE STUDY 10 - PRE-APPLICATION AND ENGAGEMENT FOR QUALITY OF OUTCOME AND SERVICE - GIRL GUIDE SHEILING, BRAEMAR

LOCATION AND DATES:

Girl Guide Sheiling, Broombank Terrace, Braemar. July- October 2018 (Determined 15th October 2018)

[APP/2018/2034](#) (Full Planning Permission)

[APP/2018/2035](#) (Conservation Area Consent)

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

- 1 - Decision making
- 3 - Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
- 12 - Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Conservation
- Environment
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Skills sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

Full Planning Permission and Conservation Area Consent were sought for the demolition and replacement of an existing Girl Guide Sheiling building (Class 10 use) within the Braemar Conservation Area and Cairngorms National Park.



The site is situated in a sensitive and prominent location in the Cairngorms National Park adjacent to listed buildings of cultural and historical significance. It was evident from site observations and supporting justification that the building was no longer fit for purpose, and therefore the principle of replacement was established at pre-application stage as it would provide improved community facilities.

The proposal was the subject of extensive pre-application discussions in relation to the proposed layout, siting and design. Initially the Planning Service, in consultation with Infrastructure Services (Environment), raised strong concerns regarding the proposed design of the replacement building as it was considered that the proposed style, form and mono-pitch roof did not entirely fit with the sensitive character adjacent properties/buildings, as it was not commonly found throughout Braemar. Furthermore, the proposal did not take design cues from traditional buildings in terms of materials, scale and form. Overall, the proposal was not considered suitable for the Conservation Area setting.

The Planning Service therefore gave constructive written feedback at pre-application stage, and suggested that it would be useful to work up street elevations or visualisations to allow potential impacts on the street scene of the character of the area to be assessed. Further pre-application advice outlined supporting information to be submitted such as a tree survey, bat survey, walkover survey and design statement.

However, the applications came forward without any amendments.



WITHDRAWN DESIGN DRAWING



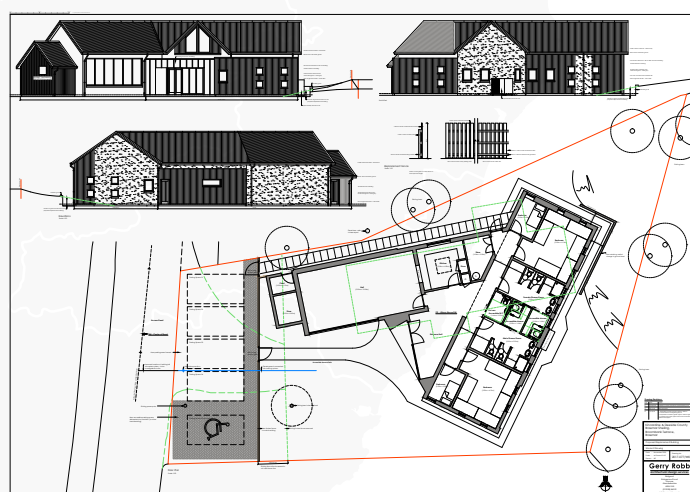
WITHDRAWN VISUALISATIONS

The Planner, therefore, wrote to the agent again, outlining in detail the significance of the site, and emphasising why the proposal did not comply with relevant cultural heritage policy. This included consultee input and made specific reference to relevant planning policy. In addition to this, the Case Officer and Built Heritage Environment Planner held a meeting with the agent to discuss the concerns. It was considered constructive to

review alternative design proposals at the meeting, therefore the agent was advised to bring sketches and revised drawings to the meeting for discussion.

Following a productive and positive meeting, where the agent took on board our feedback and negotiations took place, a revised scheme was proposed. Upon further review, it was then considered that the revised proposals were much more appropriate. A pitched roof and breaks in the form, including a projecting single storey store, and the use of a high quality mix of materials alleviated the concerns previously held. This balanced the requirements for the new community facility to perform the functions expected of it, while ensuring a high quality design appropriate for the sensitive setting.

The agent was therefore advised to withdraw the applications and submit revised proposals as it was considered a material change which would warrant a fresh application. Upon resubmission this was met with a positive response from internal consultees, and no objections or concerns were raised by Historic Environment Scotland. As such, the application was determined as a delegated matter for approval within statutory timescales.



APPROVED DESIGN DRAWING



APPROVED VISUALISATIONS

It is clear from this case study that working collaboratively with consultees and engaging throughout the process with the agent, using effective communication both written and verbal, resolved any concerns early in the process which subsequently avoided delays. It allowed for the site to be suitably replaced to an acceptable level whilst achieving increased space and provision for the community group.

GOALS:

The main goals were to ensure collaborative working with the developer and consultees to achieve sustainable development which balanced the requirements of the applicant and delivered high quality design. Close engagement with other internal Services ensured that a suitable development was put forward which fitted within the sensitive site. This development demonstrated the importance of protecting the valuable Conservation Area setting through collaborative working.

OUTCOMES:

The development is not currently underway on site, however subsequent non-material variation requests have been made which have been acceptable, and the project continues to progress. Visually, it is expected that the building will sit

comfortably in the setting and respect the character of the surrounding area. It is expected that the building will be more useable for members of the public.

Effective engagement allowed for a robust submission with full supporting information upfront to ensure a smooth process. 3D visualisations of the proposal proved to be beneficial to allow the Planning Service to assess this further and were easily interpreted. Facilitating a meeting allowed for productive discussions and led to a pragmatic and efficient handling of the case. This demonstrates the benefits of early engagement and how this results in a smoother process.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Jane Weir- Planner

CASE STUDY 11 - ALTERATIONS & EXTENSION TO LISTED BUILDING - STRICHEN TOWN HALL, STRICHEN

LOCATION AND DATES:

Strichen Town Hall – March 2018 – May 2018

Alterations & Extension to Listed Building ([APP/2018/0494](#) – Listed Building Consent) & ([APP/2018/0495](#) – Full Planning Permission)

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of outcomes

KEY MARKERS:

- 1 - Decision Making
- 3: Early Collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Conservation
- Regeneration
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working
- Project Management
- Environment
- Development Management Processes

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

The applicant sought to extend the Category 'A' Listed Strichen Town Hall, in order to bring the building back into a viable use.

The proposals introduced a disabled toilet and lift, thereby improving the accessibility of the building, as part of a wider effort to re-open the building to the public. Following a detailed justification statement from the agent, outlining a variety of options considered, as well as discussions over the finishing materials, the Planning Service and Historic Environment Scotland were satisfied with the proposed development and the deferential contrast achieved in the modern extension.

OUTCOMES:

The case study demonstrated the value of a good working relationship between the applicant, agent and the Planning

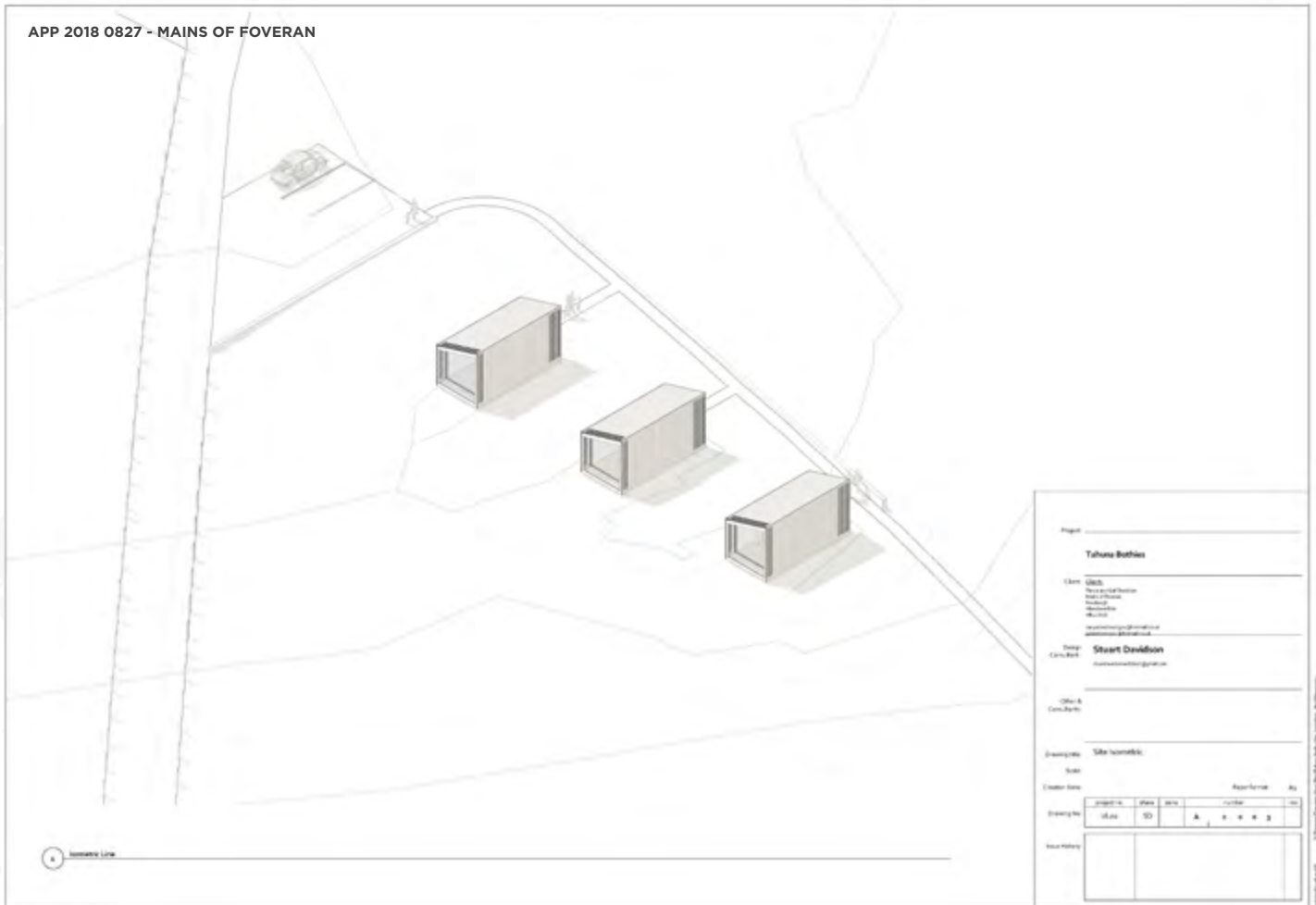


Service, and facilitated productive discussions towards providing a high-quality design of extension that would respect the character of the Listed Building and Strichen Conservation Area. Early engagement with the Built Heritage Planner also ensured that the resulting application contained the required information, and concisely addressed all pertinent issues within the applications. This co-operation also streamlined the process and ensured that the application was determined timeously, with a favourable outcome for the applicant.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Rory Hume - Planner

CASE STUDY 12 - ERECTION OF 3 SELF CATERING TOURIST ACCOMMODATION UNITS / SITE AT MAINS OF FOVERAN NEWBURGH



LOCATION AND DATES:

Erection of 3 Self Catering Tourist Accommodation Units Site at Mains of Foveran Newburgh (APP/2018/0827)
Pre-application November 2017
Decision June 2018

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

- 1 - Decision Making
- 3 - Early Collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Environment
- Development Management processes
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

The Planning Service was approached at a pre-application enquiry stage with regard to the possible erection of 3 self-catering tourist lets in the Coastal Zone near Newburgh. Following pre-application advice, an **application** was received (APP/2018/0827) which addressed the concerns raised. The applicant had demonstrated a pro-active approach with regard to preparing a business case, including discussions with Tourism Scotland and local businesses. Consequently, the Council was able to support the application and approve the development.

GOALS:

The pre-application advice was intended to provide the applicant with the knowledge to make an informed decision on whether to proceed with an application and provide a high level of customer service. The early engagement also ensured that a better quality of **application** was received, which could be processed timeously by the Council.

OUTCOMES:

The case demonstrated the value of good dialogue between the applicant and Planning Service, and a willingness of both parties to work towards solutions to the potential obstacles. The pre-application process enabled the tailoring of the application so that the potential conflict with developing in the coastal zone could be overcome. It also helped inform the eventual design

of the holiday lets with a view to minimising their visual impact, and impact on the landscape. It also demonstrated the value of the early engagement from the applicant with local businesses and tourism organisations in order to bolster their business case, and ultimately submit a good quality of application. The co-operation between both parties enabled the application to be determined timeously, with a favourable outcome for the applicant.

The applicant had the following to say on the process:

"Our experience with the planning process was overall very positive. We got in touch with our local Planning Department fairly early on in our own planning process as we knew there had been changes in planning policies in our local area

The response was quick, and we received information on which policies we needed to adhere to.

This information allowed us to concentrate our design efforts in the right area and allowed us to focus on achieving a strong link between our holiday accommodation and our local tourist attractions and businesses. We then set up a meeting with

our assigned Planning Officer where we discussed some of the options we had come up with and were able to receive feedback on these in terms of how they fitted in with local planning policies.

We feel that this allowed us to better channel our resources going forward with the application and that the early collaboration with our Planning Officer saved us a lot of time as we were able to focus our research on the correct priorities to allow the application to be put through. Also, we felt that it made the final application process easier for the Planning Authorities to deal with effectively as we had been made aware of potential hurdles along the way which we had tried to resolve before submitting the application. This definitely made the process run more smoothly and we feel our time was used much more efficiently due to this and helped us to achieve a positive result from it."

Gail & Tanya Davidson

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Rory Hume - Planner

CASE STUDY 13 - CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING BUILDING TO HOUSE BIOMASS BOILER INCLUDING FLUE - EWEBRAE, CUMINESTOWN

LOCATION AND DATES:

Ewebrae Cuminestown
Full Planning Permission ([APP/2018/0159](#))
Validated 26 January 2018
Reported to Area Committee initially on 15 May 2018.
Final approval at Area Committee on 26 June 2018.
Enforcement carried out site visit on 15 November 2018.

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

13 - Culture of continuous improvement

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Planning Applications
- Development Management Processes
- Enforcement
- Environment
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Other Staff
- Consultees
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

The 2017/2018 Planning Performance Framework included a case study entitled – "[Collectively Addressing Live Issues – Biomass in Aberdeenshire](#)" – case study 33 Page 51. This aimed to provide assistance to the farming community to make them aware when permission is required for biomass installations and the standard of information required by the Planning Authority.

The purpose of this case study is to follow on from this 2017-18 PPF case study to provide a 'real life' example of a 'retrospective' application for a biomass boiler and how communication between all relevant parties can achieve practical solutions.

Full Retrospective Planning Application was submitted in January 2018. The main consideration was the impact of the boiler on the amenity of the neighbouring dwellinghouses which were located within 400m of the application site. Environmental Health accepted the findings within the requested Air Quality Impact Assessment, however, they still had concerns regarding smoke and odour associated with the emissions as a result of burning the 'approved' fuel – this fuel was causing a nuisance to nearby sensitive receptors. The nearby properties were having to endure smoke/odour during favourable wind directions and wind speeds. As a result

of these concerns the application was recommended for refusal.

Following on from discussions and a meeting with the applicant, agent and Environmental Health, Environmental Health removed their earlier objection to this proposal on the grounds that a condition could be attached in relation to the fitting of a Weather Station Control to the biomass boiler. As a result, Environmental Health were then satisfied that the retrospective proposal and the imposition of the condition would mitigate the above issues.

It should be noted however, that this type of solution is very much site specific, in terms of physical geography, distance and position of neighbouring prevailing winds.

Monitoring has shown that the requirements of the condition have been met and no further complaints have been received demonstrating 'to date' that the mitigation measures are working.

GOALS:

As a result of consultation with Environmental Health, the Planning Service had to ensure that the retrospective biomass boiler did not impact on any neighbouring properties within close proximity to the application site. In order to recommend approval to the Area Committee a Condition was attached.

OUTCOMES:

The key outcome from this study was that as a result of these discussions an element of collaborative working resulting in flexibility was demonstrated. It was agreed that mitigation could be fitted to the biomass boiler in association with a weather station, which would control the combustion process of the boiler during specified wind directions and would avoid smoke and odour from affecting neighbouring properties by shutting down the boiler during such wind directions. Subsequent to the decision the mitigation has been installed

and a site visit has been carried out by an Enforcement Officer. This showed that the installation of the weather station, as proposed, has been carried out. No complaints have been received by either Planning Enforcement or Environmental Health since its installation.

This demonstrates a collaborative way of working to address an issue within Aberdeenshire and builds upon the work set out in the **2017-18 PPF** case study which raised awareness of issues and sought collective solutions.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Jennifer Chalmers - Planner

CASE STUDY 14 - INVERURIE PICTISH STONES SHELTER

LOCATION AND DATES:

Inverurie, Aberdeenshire – Sept 2016 to Mar 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

6 – Continuous improvements: progress ambitious and relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report.

12 – Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customers benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Conservation
- Community Engagement
- Economic Development
- Project Management

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Authority Other Staff
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee

OVERVIEW:

The project has been developed over a two-and-a-half-year period following on from concerns raised by the local community about the state of four Early Medieval Pictish stones in the Council's ownership. Instead of pursuing a quick short-term solution it was decided to implement a long-term solution that not only secured the future of the stones, but ensured they contributed positively as a visitor attraction.



In September 2016 concerns were raised about the state of 4 Scheduled Pictish symbol stones owned by the Council within Inverurie Old Churchyard. Subject to flood risk, frost and tree sap damage, while also being poorly accessible, the stones were identified as a priority historic asset to improve by the Council's Archaeology Service. Community consultation events, developed in partnership with the Community Council, were held during the Inverurie Farmer's Market and the Garioch Heritage Centre's Open Day with 147 responses received.

Between October 2016 and January 2017, a plan for the removal and conservation of the 4 Pictish symbol stones was drawn up in conjunction with the Community Council and a conservation specialist, with the stones removed for conservation in May 2017.

Following on from this between April and July 2017 a plan for the relocation of

the stones was drawn up based on the results of the community consultation and discussions with Historic Environment Scotland. This allowed in August 2017 for a tender to be issued for the design and build of a new shelter for the stones. In October 2017 a consortium of an architect, conservation specialist, and design studio were appointed to design and build a modern contemporary shelter which met conservation standards while minimising visual impact on the new location in the Old Churchyard which includes a Scheduled motte and bailey. From January to November 2018 the design and plans were finalised with input from local community representatives, Historic Environment Scotland, and the Council's Landscape Services. Components of the shelter were manufactured, including custom brackets made from laser scans of the stones themselves. Construction of the new shelter on site, and return and installation of the stones, using where possible local



companies (concrete foundation build, heavy lifting equipment, plant hire, path improvements) was undertaken between February and March 2019.

GOALS:

The principal goals of this project were:

- To conserve and protect 4 Pictish Symbol stones dating to the Early Medieval period in the Council's ownership in line with the Service's commitment to maintain and repair historic assets in its ownership.
- Enhance a local historic asset to become more of an accessible visitor attraction.
- Engage with the local community to help understand what they want, and to help them understand conservation needs.

OUTCOMES:

Aberdeenshire Council has successfully engaged with the local community in

Inverurie, taking time to not only discuss options with them over how to protect the nationally important stones, but also to listen to their preferences over location and accessibility. This has led to a successful project partnership between the Council and the architect, conservator, design studio, local business, and community council. Furthermore, it has allowed the development of a template for future projects on these types of assets, considering how to ensure shelter design makes a positive contribution to a location. The final path improvements at the site and installation of new interpretation boards will be undertaken in May 2019, with a formal opening later in 2019.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Bruce Mann - Archaeologist

CASE STUDY 15 - ABERDEENSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL AND LANDSCAPE DESIGN AWARDS 2018

LOCATION AND DATES:

Woodend Barn 4 October 2018

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

13 - Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between Authorities

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Conservation
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Greenspace
- Masterplanning
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Process Improvement
- Project Management
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Architecture Students



AWARDS CEREMONY



AWARDS CEREMONY

OVERVIEW:

The approach involved the following key steps: call for entries; collating information from entrants; preparation of material for judging (2 rounds); preparations for and carrying out of 25 site visits along with judges; preparations for Award Ceremony and hosting of event, with a guest speaker and Master of Ceremonies, for approximately 120 people. Inclusion of CPD Event with

guest speaker open to Planners from Aberdeenshire and other Authorities. Session with guest speaker presenting to secondary school students. Finally, preparation of End of Project Report to inform any future event.

GOALS:

The biennial Scheme is designed to be a cost-effective means of obtaining a benchmark for the quality of recent development, the effectiveness of policies and the development management process. It has also been an excellent means of not only stimulating greater awareness of good design but promoting excellence and innovation.

OUTCOMES:

The Aberdeenshire Design Award Scheme has operated successfully since 1997 as a means of raising the profile of good design. Rather than repeating the same formula every year, in terms of categories and location of venue for example, the process has been benchmarked against other Authorities and public bodies in Scotland, as well as amended in response to Elected Members' requests for certain changes. This has allowed the Planning Service to continuously improve and identify what works best in terms of our approach. Notably, this has brought about the inclusion of a conceptual category to allow greater participation of students from the RGU School of Architecture, as well as a public vote. The [Aberdeenshire Design Awards](#) have become well recognised amongst the local professional community as a reflection of high quality and innovation across the Area.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Shaun Norman – Environment Planner



CASE STUDY 16 - BANFF CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME (CARS) – 2017-18 PPF COMMITMENT



THE SMIDDY FRONT VIEW

LOCATION AND DATES:

Banff Conservation Area - Bridge Street and Low Street
(2014 - 2019)

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

12 - Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit.

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Conservation
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Town Centres
- Economic Development
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Project Management

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies

- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Funding bodies

OVERVIEW:

Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) with funding of £500K from Historic Environment Scotland and £115K from Aberdeenshire Council. The CARS programme targets derelict historic buildings, funding repairs and encouraging private investment and in doing so improves the local environment for current and future generations. This Scheme involved the restoration of 4 priority projects, a small grants scheme for private owners (10 grants), creation of a heritage trail, website and mobile app and other ancillary projects.

GOALS:

The Scheme was rooted in the wider economic development goals of the Council and Planning Service with a focus on heritage regeneration and conservation of the built heritage. The CARS programme is part of a planned approach to the restoration and regeneration of Banff town centre, bringing back into use a range of vernacular buildings of significant quality while developing a variety of community amenities and assets. The townscape of Banff is one of its greatest assets, and the Scheme enhances a number of key buildings in prominent locations in the Town Centre.



THE SMIDDY - INTERNAL VIEW

OUTCOMES:

The Scheme ended in March 2019 - although one project is planned to complete Summer 2019. In the short term the project has benefitted the environment by restoring derelict and run down listed buildings in Banff town centre. The buildings had a negative impact on the streetscape and the developments have made a distinct improvement to the town. In the medium term the new use brought to one of the buildings has established an exciting social enterprise based on silversmithing in the town which aims to work to the wider public good. This was a case study in [PPF 2017-18 \(Case Study 1, Pages 15, 16\)](#). It has a strong community focus in terms of teaching and sharing skills and techniques, both within formal education and with the wider community and is undertaking programmes particularly in support of young people and those with mental health conditions. In the longer term the vision is that the Centre will

provide business support to new start-ups and established business to further develop Banff as a creative town, offering opportunities to the wider public. Another CARS project is developing 3 townhouses for use by visiting students to the Silversmithing Centre. The project demonstrates the potential that historic buildings offer to the town and the opportunity for other neglected sites. These examples also illustrate how the project supports economic, social and environmental objectives. Some restoration projects have been unable to progress during the course of the CARS Scheme and these will continue to be worked on by the Planning Service together with proposals for streetscape/public realm improvements to Bridge Street.

NAME OF KEY OFFICERS

Deborah Burroughs – Team Leader Environment and
Yvonne Clark – Environment Planner

CASE STUDY 17 - BRIDGE STREET BANFF REGENERATION

LOCATION AND DATES:

Bridge Street, Banff - June 2016-Ongoing

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of outcomes
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

12 – Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Conservation
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Greenspace
- Town Centres
- Masterplanning
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Placemaking

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Private Sector Architects

OVERVIEW:

On 28th March 2017, a Regeneration Options Appraisal for Bridge Street and Deveronside was welcomed by Elected Members at Banff and Buchan Area Committee. The [report](#) looked at opportunities for redeveloping disused and neglected buildings within the study area and identified areas which would benefit from improved linkages and/or appearance.

Following on from this, the Planning Information & Delivery Team (PIDT) is leading a detailed design project for street scene improvements along Bridge Street in Banff. Officers have been working with private sector consultants for the design work for Bridge Street, as well as redeveloping the car park on Temple View and improving connections through to the car park.

The PIDT coordinated the production of a [Design Statement](#) with input from relevant colleagues in Planning, Roads Development, Flood Prevention, Car Parking, Lighting and Roads Policy.



The main issues that were considered for the street improvements included street lighting, drainage, pedestrian/traffic conflicts and general appearance.

GOALS:

The aim of the project is to regenerate this area of lower Banff which has been identified as a priority regeneration area. The goal is to improve the environment of Bridge Street and make it more attractive for businesses, visitors and residents. Embracing 'One Council' principles, this project is part of a multi-faceted approach to regeneration involving all relevant Services as well as external Stakeholders.

OUTCOMES:

On the 19 September 2018, Members of Banff and Buchan Area Committee agreed that the proposed changes would be 'transformational' for Banff Town Centre and encouraged Officers to progress with public consultation and to find a source of external funding.

Two public consultation events were arranged in December 2018 and January 2019, which supplemented information shared on social media and an online questionnaire. The majority of people attending the events and completing the questionnaire agreed that the proposals would be positive for Bridge Street and Banff. The results of the consultation were presented to Members at Committee

on the 11 February 2019 who agreed that the consultation effort had been 'first class'. The Committee Report can be found [here](#).

An application for Scottish Government Town Centre Funding is underway and the PIDT are preparing to submit a planning application and to instruct Fairhurst to commence with the detailed design stage of the project. More information about the Town Centre Fund can be found [here](#).

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Kirsty Black – Senior Project Co-ordinator



QUALITY OF SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT

OFFSHORE WINDFARM



CASE STUDY 18 - NORTH CONNECT – A NATIONAL PLANNING APPLICATION AND EUROPEAN PROJECT OF COMMON INTEREST

LOCATION AND DATES:

North Connect onshore – Site south of Boddam, connecting from Landfall Point to Interconnector station site.
(APP/2018/1831)
Validated 27 August 2018
Decision Issued 17 January 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

2 – Project management
3 – Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
12 – Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Environment
- Economic Development
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Project Management

Stakeholders Involved:

- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

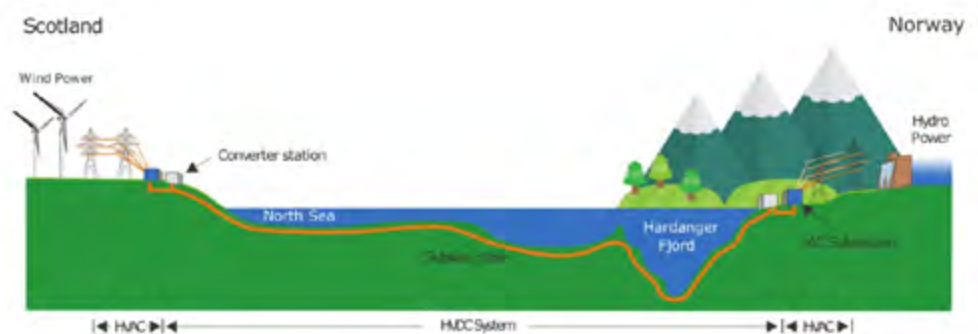
OVERVIEW:

The Strategic Development Delivery Team (SDDT) assessed and processed a complex **planning application** (APP/2018/1831) concerning the installation of an electricity transmission cable, connecting to a previously approved Interconnector Station (APP/2015/1121) to an offshore transmission cable which in turn is proposed to connect to similar infrastructure in Norway.

The project, known as North Connect, is a National Development in terms of the National Planning Framework 3. The project is also classed as a “Project of Common Interest” by the European Commission, which establishes the project as a key cross border infrastructure project. Further to this, as well as Scottish terrestrial planning policy and regulation, the proposal was also subject to the Trans-European Networks – Energy (TEN-E) Regulations. The TEN-E



PPF NORTH CONNECT SECTION DIAGRAM



Regulations outlined a broader process which the terrestrial planning application had to fit into, alongside the related Marine Licensing process.

The above regulatory matters added further layers of complexity to the processing and assessing of the planning application. Cognisance of European and Marine regulations was required.

GOALS:

This cross border infrastructure project was a UK National Development and EC Project of Common Interest. As such the Planning Service were required to successfully liaise with the developers and Marine Scotland in order to navigate the planning application through the planning system, including statutory time periods, Committees and public consultation within over-arching European level timescales.

OUTCOMES:

To this end, the SDDT liaised with the developer and Marine Scotland as the key stakeholders in terms of the processing of the application. Discussions centred around the implementation of the TEN-E Regulations and how these would impact upon both the terrestrial and marine aspects of the proposal. A coordinated approach was adopted, with joint EIA Scoping and joint Processing Agreement prepared between these stakeholders to ensure that the terrestrial planning process could be conducted and finalised in advance of the Marine Licence process and all within timescales dictated by the aforementioned TEN-E Regulations.

The planning application was of a National status, with added complexities through the EIA Regulations and requirements for an Appropriate Assessment through the Habitats Regulations. The planning process was successfully managed and

a decision issued timeously in line with the agreed timelines set out and agreed amongst all parties. This fed into a wider process, which was also completed on schedule.

The successful management and navigation of a highly complex application through terrestrial, marine and international regulatory requirements, following detailed engagement with the developer and other stakeholders at all stages of the process represents a good example of the quality of service and engagement offered by Aberdeenshire Council, even on the most complex of cases.

Testimonial from North Connect:

Richard Blanchfield, Head of Development; Fiona Henderson, UK Permitting Lead; Fiona Milligan, Communications Manager

Aberdeenshire Council Planning worked in a collaborative manner with Marine Scotland and the NorthConnect project to ensure that the TEN-E commitments and timescales were agreed, met and signed off.

The Senior Planner - Stuart Murison was very helpful with regard to the application submission and in explaining the determination process and associated meetings. The reports produced by the Senior Planner for the Council meeting were well written and incorporated appropriate accurate information with regard to the project. The presentations given at the Council meetings were very professional and at an appropriate level for the audience. The consent conditions given, aligned to the previously award consent for other elements of the project which will facilitate good implementation and compliance moving forward.

We look forward to working with the Planning Department in closing out consent conditions, knowing we can have open, honest and constructive discussion with them.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Stuart Murison - Senior Planner

CASE STUDY 19 - ABERDEEN TO INVERURIE RAILWAY UPGRADES

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeen to Inverurie
October 2018 – March 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

2 - Project Management
3 - Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
12 - Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Project Management
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Transport

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

As part of a large scale infrastructure project to upgrade the railway line from Aberdeen to Inverurie, the Planning Service have dealt with a large number of planning applications and Prior Approval requests to facilitate upgrades and alterations to features and infrastructure



along the route. This is further to wider liaison and project management work as part of the wider process.

GOALS:

The Strategic Development Delivery Team (SDDT) offer a focussed service for large scale infrastructure developers, applying project management expertise and an understanding of the requirements and time critical nature of these projects and the various consenting processes they fall under to assist in delivering positive and timeous planning outcomes.

To this end, the aim of the SDDT in this instance was to provide a single point of contact for the coordination and prompt assessment of a number of **applications** such as APP/2019/0304 or prior approval requests for works along the length of the railway. These included the establishment of construction compounds, change of use of land and alterations to bridges along the route.

OUTCOMES:

To assist in the delivery of a high quality service with respect to the

aforementioned objectives for the upgrades, the SDDT had requested a list of applications/sites and timescales of when these would be submitted for review. This was to allow the whole process to be successfully project managed and to ensure that where required, **applications** such as APP/2019/0309 could be assessed and decisions issued timeously. This would also allow workloads within the team to be managed and effectively space allocated to accommodate forthcoming applications and submissions.

Notwithstanding the above request, the developer was unable to provide a comprehensive list or timeline for the forthcoming applications, which made the project management of the wider process more difficult, particularly in terms of managing workload resources within the team.

Submissions were therefore ad hoc with single or multiple applications being submitted at various intervals, with time constraints emphasised on most occasions. The SDDT however were able to work round this and deal with some 13 individual projects all within short

timeframes. All were fully assessed, analysed and issued promptly.

The processing of these applications and other approvals timeously, sometimes within challenging timescales, demonstrates the high quality of service being offered, alongside an open and willing engagement.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

James Hewitt – Planner and Stuart Murison – Senior Planner

CASE STUDY 20 - HEADS OF PLANNING SCOTLAND VALIDATION GUIDANCE – THE “ABERDEENSHIRE” WAY

LOCATION AND DATES:

On-going throughout 2018 and 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

- 6 – Continuous improvement
- 12 – Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working
- Process Improvement

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Local Developers/Agents

OVERVIEW:

Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) produced a guidance note on **National Validation Standards** in October 2017. This set out a set of guidelines for the validation of planning applications and is framed in the context of the legislation. Aberdeenshire Council, who already had a number of checklists relating to validation, has agreed to adopt much of the HoPS Guidance but has produced a **checklist** for internal staff and agents/applicants alike. The aim is to provide greater clarity for applicants and agents on what Aberdeenshire Council require to validate planning applications.

GOALS:

As part of the continuous improvement agenda we engaged with agents at a **workshop** where we promoted the HoPS guidance and sought views on the proposed Aberdeenshire Council interpretation of aspects of the guidance. Following this session, a small cross section of staff from across the Service formed a working group to collate the Aberdeenshire Council interpretation of certain key aspects of the HoPS Guidance. A number of internal and external **guidance notes** were prepared to support the process.

OUTCOMES:

A key outcome is that consistency will be delivered in terms of validation of planning applications across all parts of Aberdeenshire. From the customer perspective this means that, irrespective of the area office or which member of staff validated the application there should be clear consistency of approach. Continued engagement with customers will ensure that this process is monitored and reviewed. Formal roll out and dissemination of information to customers is still being progressed.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Darren Ross - Team Manager and Sally Wood - Senior Planner

CASE STUDY 21 - PUTTING THE CUSTOMER FIRST: CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE (CSE) ACCREDITATION -COMMITMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

Late 2018 and ongoing
CSE pre assessment with Auditor: 18
March 2019, Viewmount, Stonehaven

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

6 – Continuous improvement

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement
- Project Management
- Skills Sharing
- Staff Training

Stakeholders Involved:

- General Public
- Hard to reach groups
- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Private sector Architects

OVERVIEW:

This case study follows on case study 18 (Pages 33/34) of **PPF 2017-18**. The Customer Service Excellence (CSE) pre assessment for Development Management, held on 18 March 2019 with

the Auditor, assessed progress against the 57 components that make up the standard. The key elements are: delivery; timeliness; information; professionalism; staff attitudes and customer insight, ensuring that the customer is placed at the heart of the decision making process, driving change and service improvements through feedback.

A key element of CSE that was presented at the pre assessment was the review of the **Development Management Charter** and the work undertaken to include service standards. The inclusion of service standards ensures that we have parameters in place that the customer can expect when they interact with our organisation. It also provides information on how to provide feedback, suggest improvements or complain if they are dissatisfied with the service they have received. Setting service standards also provides Development Management with a mechanism for measuring performance.

The **service standards** were developed collectively by staff through workshops and consultation. The next phase in the adoption of the Charter is to present the service standards to our customers at our scheduled agent focus groups.

The **Customer Consultation Strategy** was also assessed at the pre audit. This document collates all the mechanisms that we use to gain customer feedback, ensures there is an agreed timetable along with how we analyse the results and use the feedback to prioritise service improvements.

GOALS:

To use the Customer Service Excellence Standard not only as an independent validation of achievement, but also as a skills development tool and driver for continuous improvement and culture change – ensuring that the customer is always at the heart of the decision making process and when the Development Management Service considers changes and improvements.

OUTCOMES:

The work for the pre assessment has developed a Customer Charter which now sets out the service standards that a customer can expect when they interact with the Planning Service. It also ensures a uniform approach for staff as they understand the guidelines that they are working to achieve. The Customer Consultation Strategy has set out a framework as to who and when we consult and most importantly, how we use the feedback to drive customer focussed service improvements. The CSE accreditation assessment has been scheduled for December 2019 therefore further work continues to ensure all the criteria will be met and accreditation achieved.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Kathleen Fraser- Project Officer

CASE STUDY 22 - MAIN ISSUES REPORT - PUBLIC CONSULTATION DROP-IN SESSIONS

LOCATION AND DATES:

6 February 2019-28 March 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of service and engagement
- Quality of outcomes

KEY MARKERS:

10 – Cross-sector stakeholder engagement in development plan preparation

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Local Developers

OVERVIEW:

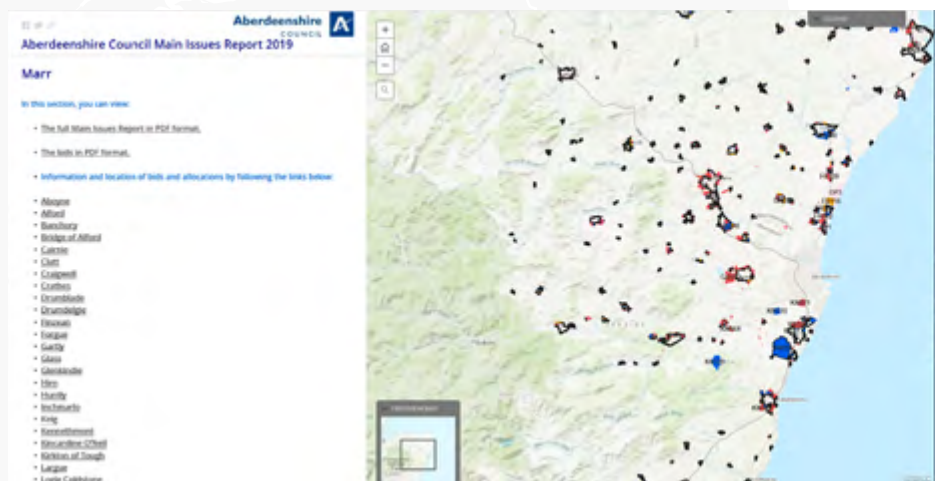
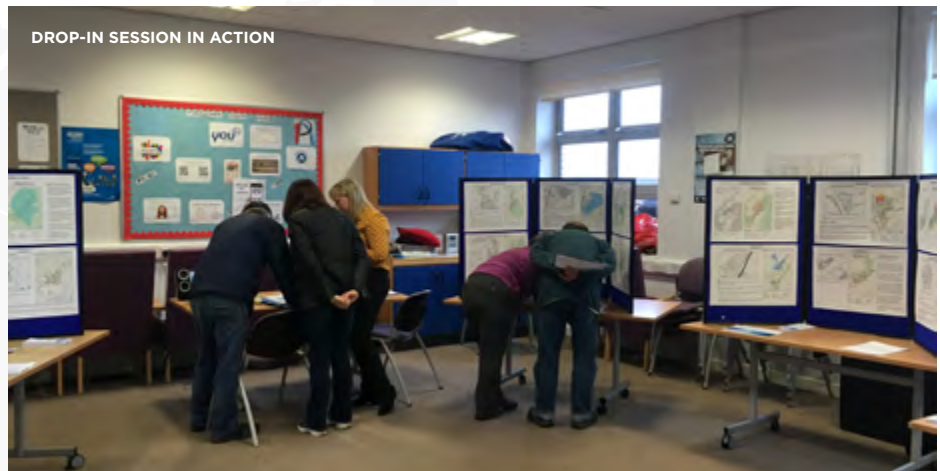
A series of seventeen drop-in sessions were held to allow local stakeholders to engage and discuss the **Main Issue Report** (MIR) topics with Planning Officers in advance of the close of the deadline for submission of that consultation. These sessions were each supported by a unique collection of visual and audio-visual presentations, substantial printed reference material, and supported by at least two Planning Officers (including the Team Leader or Senior). Opportunity was given for stakeholders to discuss the content of the Main Issues Report with Officers and to be advised of the best and most appropriate way of forming an email or written response. Sessions spanned from 12 noon to 19.00hrs to maximise availability of expert staff and to accommodate the community in terms of working hours etc.

In addition, and to increase the reach and availability of the MIR, a map based **Interactive Main Issues Report** has been created to allow greater and easier interaction with the area's bids received and Main Issues identified.

GOALS:

The bid process preceding the Main Issues Report generated in excess of 600 potential development sites across Aberdeenshire. In addition, cross Service working with national agencies, local interest groups, and other Services in

DROP-IN SESSION IN ACTION



the Council produced a limited, but challenging, suite of main issues that could be taken forward.

The public drop-in sessions reinforced a history of engagement with communities on their "places", and supported the public facing role that the Local Development Plan Team has in the development of the **Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021**. Likewise, it reinforced the very strong links that the team has with local development interests in the area.

The sessions gave comfort to those who perhaps did/did not wish to see development bid sites developed and assisted them, through discussion with policy planners, in articulating good planning reasons why the position in the development plan should/should not be supported. Likewise, for developers it gave early notice of what might need to change in their development proposal to make it acceptable from a planning perspective.

OUTCOMES:

Over 800 individuals attended the drop-in sessions. It is anticipated that when the results of the consultation are analysed this will have had the effect of increasing the quality of submissions made and reducing speculative comments on sites which are clearly undeliverable at this time. An additional benefit is increasing the efficiency of the Policy Team in assessing the responses.

The value of returning to communities and developers with plans that reflect the conversations held and points made over the preceding 14 months contributes significantly to the credibility of the Planning Service and the value of the Local Development Plan.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Piers Blaxter – Team Leader

CASE STUDY 23 - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021 - SEMINARS INVOLVING AREA COMMITTEES AND COMMUNITY COUNCILLORS

LOCATION AND DATES:

Tuesdays and Wednesdays 15 May 2018 to 27 June 2018

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of service and engagement
- Governance

KEY MARKERS:

9 - Elected Members engaged early (pre-MIR) in development plan preparation

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Community Engagement
- Process Improvement
- Collaborative Working

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Planning Committee
- Other: Community Councillors

OVERVIEW:

Six Area Committee seminars were held to discuss both emerging **Main Issues Report** policy issues and development bids, with the assistance of Community Council spokespersons. These were primarily pre-information events to inform the content of the Main Issues Report and the recommendations being made by the Policy Team in the forthcoming Main Issues Report.

As an innovation Community Council spokespersons were invited to attend and participate in the seminars to ensure that the Elected Members could have the confidence that the issues that were being identified had been discussed and were relevant to local communities.

GOALS:

Each seminar followed a similar pattern where the policy issues identified from early engagement with stakeholders, and initial views on bids submitted for inclusion in the **Local Development Plan 2021** were explored. Members respected the principle that they were not able to make decisions at this point, as that had to wait until they had seen the representations made to the Main Issues Report.



The process delivered two outcomes. Firstly, it reinforced the value that Aberdeenshire Council places on the views of Community Councils in representing the diverse views of residents over relatively large land areas. Secondly, it ensured that the Policy Team gave the appropriate weight to issues in the Main Issues Report itself. This was demonstrated where what may have been considered a “preferred” option reverting to a “reasonable alternative” in the Main Issues Report text.

Both goals were achieved. Several Community Councils confirmed how pleased they were with the process that was employed and felt genuinely empowered by being able to present the views of their community to the whole Area Committee. It reinforced the very strong links that have been developed between the Policy Team and Community Councils and, in the final analysis, there was very little disagreement between the recommendations of the Policy Team and the views of Community Councils.

Councillors were also genuinely pleased to be able to “cross check” the recommendations of the Policy Team with the views of Community Councils,

and some have expressed that this has given them confidence that the issues and potential development sites identified have community support.

With the moves that may be made towards “Local Place Plans” as a component of the Local Development Plan and as part of the additional duties identified in the Planning (Scotland) Bill, engagement with Community Councils at this stage of the Plan preparation process has to be seen as a positive outcome for community led place planning.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Piers Blaxter – Policy Team Leader

CASE STUDY 24 - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021 - MAIN ISSUES REPORT - PUBLIC CONSULTATION SHORT FILMS

LOCATION AND DATES:

14 January to 8 April 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of service and engagement
- Culture of continuous improvement

KEY MARKERS:

None

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Process Improvement
- Community Engagement

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Hard to reach groups

OVERVIEW:

The **Aberdeenshire Council Development Plan Scheme** was published in January 2019.

Aberdeenshire Council has adopted the principles of the updated **National Standards for Community Engagement**. The seven standards provide a best practice approach to achieving influential community participation, ensuring that any barriers to engagement in the process are overcome based on the needs and available resources of those groups.

To enable further understanding and engagement in the processes and stages of the Local Development Plan two short films were produced and published on the internet to support the consultation on the **Main Issues Report**. These films provide answers to the most frequently asked questions regarding the production of the **Local Development Plan 2021** and the way to make submissions to the Main Issues Report. This was done through an informative dialogue using members of the Policy Team supported by dynamic graphics.



Film 1:

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 - Process

Published on 10 Jan 2019

This short video shows how our Local Development Plan is produced and how your views can be included. If you email ldp@Aberdeenshire.gov.uk or in writing Planning Policy Team, Infrastructure Services, have any questions about the local development plan please contact the Planning Policy Team, Aberdeenshire Council, Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB

Film 2:

Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 - Main Issues Report

Published on 10 Jan 2019

We have produced a Main Issues Report for the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021. We are now seeking your views. The consultation period runs from January 14 to April 8, 2019. There will be drop in events across Aberdeenshire throughout February and March 2019.

GOALS:

Some elements of understanding the development plan process are common amongst stakeholders, and these films were specifically designed as a primer for subsequent engagement. The language used is simple and great care was taken to ensure that the content is understandable by all viewers. Contact information for the Policy Team, and mail addresses were provided for those wishing to gain further explanation or further advice.

OUTCOMES:

Each of these films have been viewed over 350 times each through the Aberdeenshire YouTube channel. This represents a very good way of disseminating information throughout a diverse rural area such as Aberdeenshire. It has also ensured that stakeholders who might not attend one of the "drop-in" sessions, undertaken at the same time, have access to the most basic information on the Local Development Plan and the associated processes.

The first film (“The Local Development Plan Process”) will have a lifespan beyond the Main Issues Report consultation and will be highlighted again in future Local Development Plan consultation exercises. The resources spent on producing the films was relatively small and represents an effective way of engaging with hard to reach groups such as young people, where the use of a YouTube film clip would appear an appropriate and familiar vehicle for their use.

Improvements could be made to the production of the films, such as greater promotion or dedicated sub-titles but these improvements will be considered in the future with regards to reviewing and improving our tools of engagement in the Local Development Plan process.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Piers Blaxter – Policy Team Leader & Policy Team members



CASE STUDY 25 - DOORS OPEN DAYS 2018

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire Wide 15- 16 September 2018

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

12 – Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Conservation
- Economic Development
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Project Management
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Community Groups
- Local Businesses
- Elected Members

OVERVIEW:

The project sought to open as many of Aberdeenshire's unique and interesting sites of built and cultural heritage for free to residents and visitors over a 2 day period as part of the Scottish Civic Trust's Doors Open Day programme.

The project was delivered in accordance with the principles and documentation of Prince2. The Project Lead set up a Project Team with representation from Environment Team, Historic Asset Management Project, Economic Development, Communications, Visit Aberdeenshire with assistance from Admin Support.

January to May 2018 – Project Team members contacted property owners and confirmed they wished to take part. Engaged with local communities to support the involvement of new venues.

May 2018 – Project Team requested venues complete participant's forms and send images to be used in promotion.

May to July 2018 – Project Lead worked with graphics to produce posters and brochures. The Civic Trust's National Door Open Day website was continually updated.



July to August 2018 - Distributed posters and brochures, ensured venues receive venue packs, updated Aberdeenshire Council website, worked with Communications to promote event through internal and external media and social media as identified in the Communications Plan.

September 2018 - On the days Project Team members visited properties and issued Certificates of Recognition.

September – December 2018 - Post event arranged collection of banners, questionnaires etc. Submitted statistics to national co-ordinator. Sent out Survey Monkey to participants. Arrange mop up session+ lessons learnt report.

GOALS:

The principal goals of this project are:

- To open as many of Aberdeenshire's unique and interesting sites of built and cultural heritage, (new and old) for free for two days in September involving open engagement with the local communities of Aberdeenshire.
- To increase the number of visitors and locals taking part in Doors Open

Days and delivering good quality project management at an Aberdeenshire wide level.

- To promote and clearly communicate the value of built and cultural heritage to all stakeholders across Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeenshire Doors Open Days Website

OUTCOMES:

Aberdeenshire Council has participated successfully, in collaboration with the Scottish Civic Trust, Community Councils, local community groups and volunteers and businesses to deliver and promote Doors Open Days Aberdeenshire wide.

Expanding the number of properties and the area of coverage within Aberdeenshire from previous years' through the employment of good project management principles and clear communication with stakeholders. The quality of outcome has improved and can be demonstrated by an increase in visitor numbers, favourable feedback from venues and an increased involvement and engagement with venues throughout Aberdeenshire.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Clare Tierney – Environment Planner

CASE STUDY 26 - TULLICH CHURCH AND CARVED SYMBOL STONES NEAR BALLATER

LOCATION AND DATES:

Tullich Ballater 2017 - 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of service and engagement
- Quality of outcomes

KEY MARKERS:

12 – Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Conservation
- Environment
- Economic Development
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Project Management
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Hard to reach groups
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Community Groups
- Local Businesses
- Elected Members
- Funding bodies
- Robert Gordon University
- Local Schools.

OVERVIEW:

Tullich Church forms a Scheduled Ancient Monument in the care of the Planning Service and is an important site historically to the local community.



The project is intended to consolidate and repair Tullich Church which was in imminent danger of collapse and conserve the important collection of carved Pictish symbol stones, returning them to site in a bespoke shelter which will not only put them back on display to the public but also ensure their protection from the elements for future generations.



The project aims to demonstrate how excellence in collaboration with community groups, external funders and stakeholders can lead to enhancements in project delivery, such as excellence in recording, conservation, new design and management of our historic sites. Also, how the incorporation of tactile and mainstream interpretation can enhance engagement and understanding by a wider group of visitors, so that Tullich can not only be preserved but can be developed as an additional tourist offering in the Ballater area..

GOALS:

The Planning Service leads on the Council's commitment to conservation, management, enhancement and promotion of built heritage. The project highlights the Service's commitment to improved conservation and management of Scheduled Monuments in its care. The project is further a demonstration of effective project management undertaken in accordance with Prince 2 to deliver not only the Service's basic obligations in terms of the heritage asset. Also to seek enhancements by collaborating with the local community, Councillors and external funders to develop the site as a cultural, tourist destination with links back to Ballater.

OUTCOMES:

Phase one of this project is now complete and has successfully shown that through collaborative working with the local community, Councillors and external funders, this has allowed the Service to conserve a Scheduled Monument in imminent danger of collapse, undertake detailed recording and laser scanning to inform future management of the site, enhance the tourism offering in Ballater through a permanent exhibition in Ballater station and, promote greater awareness of Aberdeenshire's cultural heritage through training and outreach opportunities.

Phase two of the project which will commence in April 2019, and will ensure the complete consolidation and repair of the historic church; the construction of an innovative bespoke shelter to house the important collection of carved symbol stones; improve access and interpretation at the site to promote the history and understanding of the site to a wider audience; and continue training and outreach opportunities with the local community.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Cheryl Roberts – Environment Planner



STATION SQUARE, BALLATER TULLICH STONES

CASE STUDY 27 - JOINT WORKING: IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT - KINGSEAT

LOCATION AND DATES:

Kingseat village: Summer 2017-Ongoing

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of service and engagement
- Quality of outcomes

KEY MARKERS:

12 – Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Regeneration
- Environment
- Greenspace
- Enforcement
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Placemaking
- Project Management

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Key Agencies
- Planning Committee
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

This case study provides an update to case study 23 (page 40) of [PPF 2017-18](#).

Planning permission was approved for the site in Kingseat for several housing units and to redevelop the old hospital buildings in 2003.

All of the new housing stock was built, however, there are a number of parts of the original planning permission that were never finished, namely the renovation of the old hospital buildings (4 remain vacant and derelict) and also the lack of community facilities including a children's playpark and open space area.

The Planning Information and Delivery Team (PIDT) have been involved with the project since summer 2017. Background information on the site was reviewed in order to determine the best course of action to address some of the issues that had been identified by both Elected Members and residents as a priority for the community.

One of the main issues identified by both was the lack of the open space/playpark area. As a result, two Enforcement Notices were served on the landowner, one to clear the site where the playpark was to be situated, which was being used for waste storage, and the other was to install the play equipment. This was not a decision taken lightly given the complex history of the site. The Notices were not appealed by the landowner but also were not complied with by the end of the timeframe for doing so. Council Officers held a non-compliance meeting to discuss the next steps in moving the site forward. At the meeting it was decided that it was in the public interest to undertake works so the PIDT then investigated the next steps required in order to take direct action.

The direct action work started in September 2018 with the site clearance works initially in order to ensure the land was prepared in a way that the playpark equipment would then be able to be installed. The installation of the playpark equipment followed the site clearance work and started in November 2018. Due to the weather conditions at the end of 2018, and to allow for the ground to settle and the grass to grow through, providing a surface for the children, it was decided that the playpark would remain closed over the winter months. As of April 2019, the playpark was opened for the residents to use with the wider area of open space scheduled to open in Autumn 2019.

GOALS:

The work at Kingseat is to address historical issues which have blighted the Community and deliver the provisions of an improved environment and services for residents.

OUTCOMES:

Direct action has been taken and the playpark was installed in November 2018, with the final works being completed to the wider open space area in April 2019. During this period Delivery Officers have been working proactively with the residents within Kingseat, the local Elected Members and the Area Manager to keep them up to date with the progress on the site. This work has provided the local community with an area of open space as well as play equipment for children to use creating a central area for residents to use. The difference in terms of appearance can be seen in the

photographs which shows the amount of work that has been completed in the area.

One resident commented:

"Fantastic!! Great to finally see something for the kids" while another stated:

"We are thrilled that it's finally here ...Hopefully, this will help the community feel a little more united and will give the children somewhere safe to play"

Along with undertaking this larger piece of work, Delivery Officers have also been liaising with Officers from other Council Services, and external agencies, including Scottish Water, to look into other issues which have been raised by both Local Members and residents including the unfinished state of development, lack of facilities, landscaping and drainage.

This work is an example of a positive approach that has been taken, acknowledging the issues/past problems to move forward and work collaboratively

with Elected Members, residents, and other stakeholders to improve the existing environment for the community.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Fiona Thompson - Project Officer



CASE STUDY 28 - YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PILOT PROJECT

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire Wide: November 2018 - Ongoing

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of service and engagement
- Quality of outcomes

KEY MARKERS:

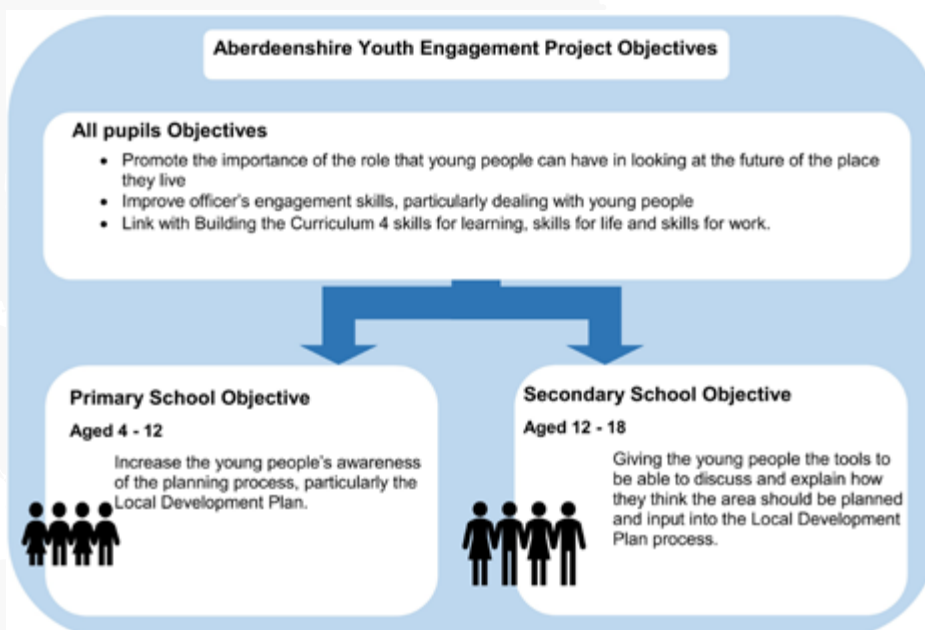
10 - Cross-sector stakeholders engaged early in development plan preparation

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Master planning
- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Placemaking
- Process Improvement
- Project Management

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff
- General Public (Youth)
- Authority Other Staff



OVERVIEW:

Aberdeenshire Council are committed to providing a transparent and efficient preparation process for the Local Development Plan. This means that there is a strong commitment to public engagement. It has been recognised

though, that the youth of the community while not a protected group, have been under represented from the standard community engagement previously conducted by the Council. This is something that the Council are keen to change, and this view is reflected within



the Review of the Planning System that is currently in progress at Government level. To address this issue, development of a programme that specifically targeted young people through engagement within schools, both primary and secondary was instigated.

As the project was multi-disciplinary there were overarching aims to improve participation. In addition to this overarching aim there were also more targeted aims for each of the groups to align with their educational development. The main aim, targeted at primary aged children, was to try and increase the young people's awareness of the planning process, particularly the Local Development Plan. Whilst the main aim for the secondary aged pupils was similar, it contained more detail to give the young people the tools to be able to discuss and explain how they think their area should be planned and input in the Local Development Plan process.

In order to create the methodology for the project it was important to link the work to the experiences and outcomes within the Curriculum for Excellence, applicable to both primary and secondary pupils to show the school how this would benefit the pupils and not just the planners.

This information was included in an email which was sent out to the schools along with an explanation of the project and the expected outcomes. It was also highlighted that as this was a pilot project only a few schools were required to undertake the project. Within the email it highlighted the activities that the children were to be involved in. The Primary pupils were being asked to design their own small housing development which required the children to think about several different planning concepts including developments requiring open space and a mix of house types.



For Secondary pupils, it was highlighted that the session would take the form of an interactive opening activity to set the scene for the pupils followed by two map based activities to get the pupils thinking about their town.

GOALS:

The aim of this pilot project was to introduce the concept of planning to children of Primary age and then to further develop this for the Secondary pupils by providing them with the opportunity to discuss and explain how their area should be planned in the future, linking in with the preparation of the Local Development Plan.

OUTCOMES:

The two different branches of the project were both received well by the schools that participated in the pilot project. In terms of the work that was undertaken in the Primary Schools this allowed the children to understand a term that they were not familiar with prior to undertaking the exercise. Several of the schools also expanded on the work by considering what would be required in terms of what new facilities would be required by the people living in the houses, for example community facilities and shops, if all of the smaller developments were considered together.

For the Secondary project, the pupils undertook the two different activities with the first getting the pupils to think about the positives and negatives of the town as well as looking to see what areas they felt could be improved. This work was then followed by the second activity which asked the pupils to look at the potential development sites within the town and provide their views on where they think development should be located. The information from these activities was then collated into a document summarising all the views received.



This then allowed Officers to review which comments could be used to make a change to the Proposed Plan and which comments needed to be passed to other Council Services to act upon. The work completed with the Primary pupils achieved its outcome of raising awareness of what planning is, and pupils also showed an understanding of difficulties faced when designing a new housing development.

One pupil stated that they now *“Realised the time and planning that goes into planning a housing development after trying the activity today.”*

Pleasingly, some of the primary schools have developed upon the understanding that the children gained from the exercise. This includes thinking about what is required in a bigger development by joining up all the individual developments completed by the class. This developed children's thinking to include information on community facilities, shops and even schools.

One of the secondary schools where we undertook the exercise has since completed the project again as it sparked the interest of the pupils who completed the exercise the first time. This is due to not all of the children within the catchment for the school living in that particular town so they wanted to have the opportunity to understand the issues for the different towns they live in.

The project was a success in terms of achieving the aims that were set out. The project will be adopted again in the future and form part of the formal programme for preparing the Local Development Plan with rolling engagement of primary schools to continue to develop understanding of planning and the environment in young people.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Fiona Thompson – Project Officer

CASE STUDY 29 - SITE PROSPECTUS AND LANDOWNER DROP-IN SESSIONS

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire Wide: March 2018 - Ongoing

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of service and engagement
- Quality of outcomes

KEY MARKERS:

- 3 - early collaboration with applicants
- 11- production of regular and proportionate policy advice etc.
- 12 - Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit
- 14 - stalled sites/legacy cases

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Masterplanning
- Local Development Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Housing Supply
- Affordable Housing
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Placemaking
- Process Improvement
- Project Management

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

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

OVERVIEW:

This case study builds on case study 21 (page 380) of [PPF 2017-18](#). The Planning Information and Delivery Team (PIDT) has been undertaking work in association with the [Housing Site Prospectus](#) since the first publication in March 2018. This document links with the [Action Programme](#) and provides a proactive resource which identifies the sites where there is currently no developer interest, but landowners are keen to see developed. This is in order to try and improve the awareness to developers/ local builders that these sites are available for development.

The document contains information on each of the sites including what it is allocated for, a brief description of the site and information on the delivery considerations which will need to be



addressed in order to bring the site forward. The document also provides a contact name for a member of the Delivery Team who will act as the first point of contact between the interested party and the landowner in the first instance. The Delivery Team can then also facilitate any meetings between the interested party and the landowner should this be required.

Once completed the document was published on the Council's website and distributed to all the landowners who have a site included in the document. It was also emailed to national housebuilders, local housebuilders, joiners, planning agents and Registered Social Landowners to try and increase the awareness that these sites are available to be developed. The publication was well received by those that received it and was successful in highlighting a number of sites to developers which they were not previously aware of. This is due to the size of Aberdeenshire and the number of sites allocated through the [Local Development Plan 2017](#).

In order to continually improve, when work began on preparing the second edition of the Site Prospectus it was considered that more work was required to help the landowners who have sites included in the Site Prospectus. This was thought to be of increased importance



for this edition as the [Main Issues Report](#) for the Local Development Plan (LDP) 2021 was published in January 2019 which highlighted that there were a number of allocated sites to be removed from the next LDP including some of the sites included in the Prospectus. For this reason, the Delivery Team set up Landowner Drop-In meetings. These events took the format of Officers going out to locations within Aberdeenshire which were more central where the landowners were located. The events allowed for people to drop-in at any point throughout the day and each discussion was tailored to each individual site and landowner's requirements.

The discussions generally covered topics including the information that was within the Main Issues Report about the site, information relating to different marketing techniques that could be used along with general information relating to the planning system and how the landowner could progress the site. In order to ensure that the drop-in sessions were as informative as possible it was arranged that a Development Management Officer was also in attendance in order to discuss, if required, the planning application process with the landowner.

We received a number of positive comments in relation to the landowner drop in sessions that we conducted with one comment stating:

"that the opportunity was gratefully received and was constructive in terms of simplifying the planning process which allowed me to understand the process required to move the site forward"

It was also noted by several attendees that undertaking these meetings out with the formality of general planning meetings made for a more productive and tailored meeting.

The second edition of the Site Prospectus was published earlier this year and takes on a similar format to the first edition. There are aspirations for the next edition to make some changes to ensure that the prospectus is evolving over the years as well as containing the most relevant information for each site.

GOALS:

The aim of the Site Prospectus is to try and raise awareness of allocated sites within the Local Development Plan that have no developer associated with them.

OUTCOMES:

The Site Prospectus is an ongoing project which is evolving from its first annual edition in March 2018. The document has increased the awareness of a number

of different sites, located in a number of locations, across Aberdeenshire.

The landowner's drop-in sessions were very well received by the landowners with a number of different landowners emailing Officers to thank them for an informative session. Since these meetings several of the landowners have followed up on the discussions that took place. It is worth noting that since these meetings one landowner has acted upon the advice given and now has an interested developer for their site which previously had very limited progress.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Fiona Thompson - Project Officer

CASE STUDY 30 - MACDUFF PROPERTY GRANT SCHEME

LOCATION AND DATES:

Macduff Town Centre September 2017 - Ongoing

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Quality of service and engagement
- Quality of outcomes

KEY MARKERS:

12 – Corporate working across Services to improve customer outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Design
- Regeneration
- Environment
- Town Centres
- Economic Development
- Enforcement
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Placemaking
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Hard to reach groups
- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff

OVERVIEW:

This case study provides an update on case study 3 (pages 17/18) from **PPF 2017-18**.

By way of background the Macduff Property Grant Scheme focussed on the main thoroughfares of Macduff and was designed to identify works which would improve the appearance of the town for residents and visitors as part of ongoing efforts to rejuvenate the town.

Delivery Officers from Planning Information & Delivery Team (PIDT) and Officers from the Council's Economic Development Team worked together in the design and implementation of the Scheme. The PIDT conducted a site visit to the grant area to identify the priority buildings and subsequently issued tailored letters to the owners of these properties to encourage specific improvements and advising how to apply for the grant.

Grants were available for up to £10,000 or 75% of costs, whichever was the lesser. Although Officers had initially targeted priority buildings, the Scheme was later opened to applications from any buildings within the grant area and flyers were circulated within the area to notify homeowners of the Scheme and what it was intended to achieve.

During this phase, Officers worked with homeowners to assist them through the process, for example by helping them get quotes.

Applications were assessed on whether there would be a positive impact

upon the appearance of the buildings within the wider area. The successful applications were then sent award letters which then allowed them to commence with the works that they had been awarded funding for.

GOALS:

The Macduff Property Grant Scheme is the first of many interventions planned through the Macduff Development Partnership Vision and Action Plan, which focusses on the regeneration of the town centre over the 2016 – 2021 period. The Scheme focussed on the main thoroughfares of Macduff and was designed to identify works which would improve the visual appearance of the town for residents and visitors as part of ongoing efforts to rejuvenate the town and improve the quality of the built environment.

OUTCOMES:

To provide an update - the Scheme was a real success and was oversubscribed in terms of applications for the overall £100k budget. This Scheme is also an excellent example of different Services working together with a positive outcome.

A total of 19 applications were received with 14 grant awards approved (eight of these being from targeted properties). Of the 14 awarded, 12 projects were completed, and funds drawn down by 31 September 2018.

The result of the completed works has been transformational for Macduff Town Centre.

One building owner who benefitted from the Scheme reported agreeing a lease with a new tenant, who has since started a new business on Shore Street. Other building owners have also instigated improvements works without the help from the fund, which could be an indirect consequence of the Scheme.

There are a number of ongoing actions including continuing to provide support for the priority buildings that were not able to be completed within the timescales of the Scheme and considering the use of other planning and enforcement powers to address any buildings that are continuing to impact negatively on the appearance of the town.

The Scheme was highlighted in the first edition of the **Banff and Macduff Regeneration Report** and updates were provided at various intervals including through the 'Banff and Macduff:

Focussing on the Future' **Facebook page** and the **Regeneration Development Partnership**.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER
Delivery Officers - PIDT



GOVERNANCE



FRASERBURGH HARBOUR

CASE STUDY 31 - ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL LEGACY TEAM

LOCATION AND DATES:

Woodhill House Aberdeen – HQ –
Reporting Period – 2018-2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Culture of continuous improvement
- Governance

KEY MARKERS:

6- Continuous improvements – show progress/improvement in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators
14 – Stalled sites/legacy cases: conclusion/withdrawal of planning applications more than one-year old

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement
- Project Management

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff (Legal)

OVERVIEW:

This case study provides an update on case study 49 (pages 67/68) of **PPF 2017-18**.

The Legacy Team, which has been in place since March 2015, continues to focus on existing cases which have been pending for over one year with a view to concluding them as quickly as possible. The overall number of existing legacy applications has decreased due to regular meetings and improved communication between the Legal and Planning Teams which enables a holistic view of all pending legacy applications. A dedicated Solicitor from the Legal Team works with the Legacy Team and this assists greatly in consistency of approach and efficiency. By improving internal communication and knowledge of the unique issues for individual applications, there has been an increase in confidence to liaise with applicants and use the processes and techniques available to conclude legacy cases.

There is also a continued focus in the Planning Teams to minimise future applications becoming 'legacy'. Planners continue to be aware of the issue of

legacy applications and Processing Agreements are sought as a matter of course for more complex applications. Better liaison between Planning and Legal has ascertained where it is appropriate to instruct a S75 Legal Agreement earlier in the process which has reduced overall timescales for some applications.

Within each of the area Planning offices, a Legacy Officer has now been nominated to act as a local advisor to other Planning colleagues in their team and co-ordinate updates to the Legacy Co-ordinator. These representatives attend the regular meetings with the Legal Team which aids communication and further enhances their understanding of legacy issues, enabling them to share this knowledge more directly within their Planning Teams.

The Legacy Co-ordinator continues to issue monthly '**Legacy Monitoring**' emails to Team Leaders, Legacy Officers and Legal colleagues which forecasts the cases that are at risk of becoming legacy within the following two-month period. This prompts Planning and/or Legal colleagues to raise any outstanding issues and a more focussed effort by those involved to allow these to be resolved in time.

GOALS:

The Legacy Team continues to focus on existing cases which have been pending for over one year with a view to concluding them as quickly as possible. Regular meetings, improved communication between the Legal and Planning Teams, and lessons learned have increased the efficiency of concluding applications. By having improved communication and Team members located in each of the Planning offices, it is hoped that sharing information and lessons learned from other cases will prevent as many future applications as possible becoming legacy cases.

OUTCOMES:

It should be noted that in previous years when reporting on the numbers of legacy cases, Aberdeenshire Council has counted the total numbers which have included those which were the subject of Planning Processing Agreements (PPAs). During the period March 2018 – March 2019 a total of 6 legacy applications were decided. The table below shows how many legacy applications are outstanding as at the end of March 2019 compared with the 2018 figures for those not on PPAs.

In summary, there is continued focus on concluding existing legacy cases and last year has seen 4 older applications concluded, a further 2 applications being withdrawn, and a reduction in the overall total of legacy cases that are not the subject of PPAs from 9 to 7 remaining cases. Additionally, there is a reduction in the total number of applications on Processing Agreements which are older than one year indicating that more applications are being decided within a year of submission, regardless of whether a Processing Agreement has been entered. This trend is a result of increased awareness within the Planning Teams and improved communication with other Services involved. For the purposes of the NHI table though, the total number of legacy cases (with and without PPAs) is 35, which continues to indicate an overall drop in the number of legacy cases in place.

The Legacy Team is an excellent example of different Services working together and we will continue to strive to achieve further positive outcomes both in reducing and preventing legacy cases.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Kirsty Black – Senior Project Co-ordinator

	2011	2012	2013	2016	2017	2018	TOTAL
No. of pending legacy cases at 31st March 2018 (not the subject of PPAs)	1	1	1	3	3	0	9
No. of pending legacy cases at 31st March 2019 (not the subject of PPAs)	1	1	0	0	4	1	7

CASE STUDY 32 - ABERDEEN WESTERN PERIPHERAL ROUTE ARCHAEOLOGY

LOCATION AND DATES:

Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City, 2007 – March 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

12 – Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customers benefit

13 – Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between Authorities

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Environment
- Collaborative Working
- Project Management

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Key Agencies
- Authority Other staff
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

Following on from the decision to go-ahead with the £745 million project to build a new bypass around Aberdeen and dual a section of carriageway to the north of Aberdeen, the Council's Archaeology Service provided curatorial advice on mitigation for the route along with Historic Scotland (HS) until HS merged to become Historic Environment Scotland at which point the role fell solely on the Local Authority.

Initially in 2007 a Desk-based Assessment identified 483 known archaeological/historic sites within the route corridor for the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route (AWPR). This was used to develop a Mitigation Strategy between 2008 and 2010 for all identified sites and agreed between Transport Scotland, the lead consultant, the lead archaeological contractor and Aberdeenshire Council's Archaeology Service which also provides services to Aberdeen City via a Shared Service Agreement.

Actual on-site works began in 2012 with a geophysical survey of the route which identifies 118 anomalies, along with palaeoenvironmental, historic building,



topographic and metal-detecting surveys. The following year trial trenching and site-specific sample excavations were undertaken (amounting to 3,000 trenches being dug).

In 2014 the main mitigation excavations were undertaken, identifying evidence ranging from the earliest human activity in Northern Scotland to a snapshot of the Roman Army on campaign. Further mitigation excavations and monitoring of 28 areas during construction works were undertaken between 2015 and 2017, with a parallel programme of works beginning in 2014 for post-excavation analysis. This confirms nine of the excavated sites as contributing significantly to our understanding of the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age periods.

Finally, in 2019, an academic monograph 'The Land Was Forever' and a free **popular booklet** version of the results of the archaeological work were produced and distributed. The booklet was sent to schools, libraries and targeted audiences within the general catchment area of the road scheme, and made available online, as a means of sharing the results with the public.

GOALS:

The principal goals of this project were:

- Establish the archaeological potential of the planned route for the new road, and potential impacts to be mitigated against
- Evaluate, excavate and record all archaeological sites prior to construction works



- Share the results of what was found with the public and interested stakeholders
- Undertake a Lessons Learned Review to help inform future infrastructure projects

OUTCOMES:

Any large-scale infrastructure project (the AWPR extends for 58km) comprises multiple contractors, consultants, organisations and stakeholders, all of whom need to interact in a frictionless manner to achieve the intended construction within a long and complicated timetable. In terms of archaeology and the historic environment, Aberdeenshire Council has been able to act as a central point of quality assurance throughout by having an Archaeology Service that can act on behalf of Aberdeen City as well. Any such large project will produce archaeological discoveries, and testing new ways of sharing - what are internationally important results, has been part of the process. During the summer of 2019 a series of reviews will be held to form a lessons learned report to help inform future projects. The process has already started with the Council involved in a review of Transport Scotland's internal procedures, with the aim of producing new guidance on roles and responsibilities during the lifetime of any given infrastructure project (the first test of which is being applied to the A9 Dualling Project in Perth & Kinross and Highland regions).

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Bruce Mann, Archaeologist

CASE STUDY 33: SERVICE IMPROVEMENT: PRE-APPLICATION AND MAJOR APPLICATION REVIEW- COMMITMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

2017 Ongoing

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

3- Early collaboration with applicants and consultees on planning applications
6- Continuous improvements- show progress/improvements in relation to PPF National Headline indicators.
12- Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit
15 – Developer contributions- clear expectations set out in development plan and in pre-application discussions

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Process Improvement
- Project Management
- Online Systems

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Developers/Agents
- Authority Other Staff
- Key Agencies

OVERVIEW:

The review of the pre-application process has been a committed Service improvement in the last few PPFs. The remit of the review was expanded to include all pre-application work. The review of the pre-application process demonstrates the continuous approach to improvement the Council aims towards and is being **undertaken** in conjunction with the review of the Master Planning process and the Design Review.

Since the 2017-18 PPF, work has continued on the first element to review the current pre-application processes in conjunction with the use of the Uniform system for the recording of pre-application enquiries and sharing of information between Services. Completion of the review of information gathered via benchmarking and surveys undertaken with agents and consultees

has allowed the working group to clarify common issues and experiences with the current pre-application service delivery.

The second element from the earlier stages of the improvement project was to consider the introduction of a charging structure. A decision has been made to postpone pursuing this until the outcome of the Planning (Scotland) Bill is clear. As part of the benchmarking process the working group have reviewed current charging arrangements applied by other Local Authorities, although further work on charging for pre-application services has been put on hold and will be revisited once the Bill becomes law and the necessary secondary legislation has been passed.

GOALS:

The aims of this project are to eliminate the variation that exists between teams in Aberdeenshire in the governance and processing of pre-application enquiries by streamlining the process and providing a clear and concise process map; and in doing so, this will provide an improved service to the customer in terms of efficiency, and achieve better outcomes on the ground. It also demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement of processes and quality of service provided.

It will also address some of the issues highlighted above in relation to the user friendliness of the Action Programme database and help ensure that the Action Programme is used to its full potential within the Council and by the development industry.

OUTCOMES:

Having completed the benchmarking and review process, the group has now agreed on and developed a new **local development pre-application process** in response to the common issues identified. When developing this revised process, the group acknowledged the importance of utilising the Uniform system to record and process pre-app enquiries and the group are currently working with ICT and other Council Services to finalise roll out of the Uniform system.

In conjunction with the Uniform system, the group have been working on staff and customer guidance, including updates to the website. Further outcomes from the feedback received in relation to the current service relate to the development

of a standard enquiry form and final **pre-app enquiry response template form**. The latter will be monitored by Senior Planners to ensure the provision of consistent and clear advice in response to customer pre-app enquiries. The process developed by the group seeks to achieve improved collaborative working and delivering improvements in service delivery to customers. In terms of the latter the process takes cognisance of the Customer Service Excellence service improvement.

Prior to implementation and formal roll out the group are in the process of delivering feedback and update to agents and consultees (including Developer Obligations) in response to the **surveys undertaken**. Furthermore, in technology terms, work continues with ICT in relation to updates to the website and Uniform system to allow pre-app enquiries to be recorded and information shared with other Services.

Work continues with the review of the major application enquiry process and based upon initial discussions it is anticipated that the broad principles agreed for the local development process will be applied to the major application process.

From initial feedback and benchmarking undertaken one of the key elements of the existing process that the group are focussing on relates to the function and format of the current pre-major application meeting. The group are working in conjunction with the Master Planning group to ensure compatibility between the two processes and the meeting formats.

Based upon the stage in the project and the progress that has been made to date in taking forward this Service commitment, it is anticipated that the finalisation of the pre-application enquiry protocol, roll out and training will be completed during this next PPF reporting period. The process will be monitored post roll out and reviewed during the initial 12-month period. As previously reported a decision on potential charging will require to be revisited once the outcome of the Planning (Scotland) Bill is clear.

The complexity of the project as it developed as well as the need for other

work pressures including the need to distribute DM staff resources to other areas of planning work within the Service has meant this project has not achieved implementation as yet.

Developer Obligations – Pre-Application and Information Sharing

Linked to the Pre-application work and following on from the feedback received in relation to PPF 2017-18, there has been progress in addressing concerns relating to the inclusion of Developer Obligations in the pre-application processes for local and major planning applications. Revised processes have been developed to ensure that the Developer Obligations Team are consulted and respond to pre-application enquiries. In addition the [Developer Obligations team website](#) has been updated to include contact details and promote early engagement with developers. The processes in place now will also be developed further and play a part in the overall review of Pre-application work which is the subject of this case study.

These improvements to our practices promote an inclusive and collaborative developer obligations pre-application process where information is shared between Council Services, partner organisations and applicants. This provides applicants with clarity and certainty allowing them to factor infrastructure costs into development viability appraisals as early as possible. Further, engaging with the Developer Obligations Team in a pre-application capacity also creates efficiency in the determination of planning applications whereby the time taken to agree a package of developer obligations contributions is reduced as the costs are already known. This is evidenced by planning application ref: [APP/2017/3188](#) which was the subject of pre-application enquiry ref: ENQ/2017/0017. This development is also the subject of Case Study 8 (Site OP1, Conglass Inverurie).

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Chris Ormiston – Team Manager
Paul Macari – Principal Developer Obligations Officer

CASE STUDY 34 - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND POLICY INTERACTION ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

LOCATION AND DATES:

Woodhill House
2018-19 - Regular meetings at various stages of the development plan process

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

10 - Cross-sector stakeholders engaged early in development plan preparation
11 - Production of regular and proportionate policy advice
12 - Corporate working across Services to improve customer outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Local Develop Plan & Supplementary Guidance
- Development Management Processes
- Collaborative Working
- Placemaking
- Interdisciplinary Working

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

Regular liaison meetings have been held between a Development Management Policy Review Working Group and also with colleagues in the Planning Policy Team to enable Development Management to have important input into the early preparation of the Local Development Plan. This identified any potential issues from a Development Management perspective with specific policy subjects, and provided solutions and suggestions to progress with the next LDP with a sense of ownership for all users.

GOALS:

To help provide appropriate levels of governance on early engagement with users in order to help deliver a robust Local Development Plan which not only embodies Scottish Planning Policy but delivers policies on a local scale that reflect users' requirements. Development Management, through their involvement at each stage of the Plan process, will have a greater sense of ownership.

OUTCOMES:

The ongoing liaison between Development Management and the Planning Policy Team has greatly aided those in Development Management to understand the challenges the Planning Policy Team face in preparing the Plan, both in terms of timescale but also in applying National Policy at a local scale. The Planning Policy Team have benefited from insight from Development Management to assist in the wording of key policies to ensure they work and deliver the outcomes intended.

Moving forward, Development Management continue to be involved in the Local Development Plan process, offering support in reviewing responses to the Main Issues Report, providing input to Supplementary Guidance that will sit alongside key policies, and providing further comment on the final Plan prior to the Policy Team's engagement with Local Councillors.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Neil Mair – Senior Planner

CASE STUDY 35: LAND RESTORATION AND BOND WORKING GROUP: REVIEWING CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES

LOCATION AND DATES:

Across Aberdeenshire – April 2018 (ongoing)

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Governance
- Culture of Continuous Improvement

KEY MARKERS:

12 – Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefits

13 – sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between authorities

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Process Improvement
- Collaborative Working

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Other Staff (Legal)
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

As part of the outcomes highlighted in the [Planning Performance Framework 2017/18](#) in relation to internal liaison and training on Section 75 Agreements (case study 51, Pages 71& 72), Legal and Planning Officers have prepared a [draft guidance note](#) for the Development Management Best Practice Manual on land restoration and bonds for mineral and energy developments. This is an area where Planners requested additional support and guidance from Legal and it was identified as part of the workshop discussions between Legal, Developer Obligations and Development Management Teams. Implementation will foster good governance and demonstrate continuous improvement.

GOALS:

This project allowed Legal and Development Management Planners to review existing practices in Aberdeenshire, learn from best practice guidance developed by Heads of Planning Scotland (HoPS) and other Local Authorities and to work together to prepare a guidance note designed to support Development Management Planners in Aberdeenshire when they are allocated mineral, landfill or energy developments.

OUTCOMES:

Following the workshop discussions, a short life working group consisting of a Solicitor, a Senior Planner and three Planners was established to review the existing practices at Aberdeenshire and review best practice guidance which was available to it. This group was supported by a Principal Solicitor and a Team

Manager from Planning. At its first meeting in October 2018, the group reviewed the HoPS Energy and [Resources Sub-Committee](#) on the Operation of Financial Mechanisms to Secure Decommissioning, Restoration and Aftercare of Development Sites which had recently been updated. It noted areas of best practice, including the proposed model conditions and the models of securing of financial guarantees, which could be incorporated into the Council's existing processes and procedures. Key actions points were allocated to members of the group according to special interest, experience and skills. These action points were:-

- Reviewing and updating the Council's model planning conditions for securing a financial guarantee (including review mechanisms);
- Reviewing and updating the Council's model planning conditions for securing a restoration plan (including review mechanisms);
- Identifying a minimum standard for restoration plans;
- Preparation of an [instruction sheet](#) for Planners to instruct Legal Services to secure financial guarantees;
- Identification of all live quarry sites in Aberdeenshire, the related planning conditions, planning obligations and financial guarantee paperwork; and the creation of a central storage place;
- Identification of a development management administrative process for monitoring timescales within conditions, submission of financial guarantees and restoration works;
- Identification of enforcement procedures and call-in up of financial guarantees in the situation of a breach of planning control.

Between October 2018 and March 2019, work progressed on each of these action points and the group reviewed examples of restoration plans for existing applications, shared best practice with another Local Authority on its model planning conditions and a list of quarry sites was prepared so that the agreed monitoring procedures can be adopted in respect of these sites.

All of this work culminated in a comprehensive guidance note being prepared for the Development Management Best Practice Manual which can be accessed by all Planners.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Arlene Gibbs - Solicitor (Conveyancing Team, Legal & Governance)

CASE STUDY 36: IMPROVING THE SECTION 75 EXPERIENCE FOR DEVELOPERS

LOCATION AND DATES:

Throughout Aberdeenshire during 2018/19.

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

4 – Legal Agreements (or reconsider) applications within 6 months of resolving to grant

12 – Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Process Improvement
- Project Management

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developers
- Authority Other Staff (Legal)
- Developers' solicitors

OVERVIEW:

This case study builds on Case Study 51 (page 71/72) of **PPF 2017-18**. During 2018/19, the Conveyancing Team within the Council's Legal & Governance Service has continued to work alongside the Planning Service to further develop and improve its processes and procedures to make the developer's experience of concluding a Section 75 Legal Agreement as effective and efficient as possible.

In addition to building on the previously reported improvement measures (which all remain in place) and the two specific performance outcomes from 2017/18; namely, internal training and liaison for the instruction of Section 75 Agreements and the development of the master Section 75 spreadsheet, the Conveyancing Team have also concentrated on the following areas which build upon the commitment to avoid delays in the Section 75 process:-

- Identifying and testing change ideas resulting from the Scottish Government pilot project which Aberdeenshire Council is participating in;
- Analysing data from the master

Section 75 spreadsheet to identify and minimise delay;

- Proactively engaging with developers, their planning agents and solicitors to improve efficiencies in the process;
- Internal reporting to senior leaders on process improvements to achieve a Council-wide approach to managing planning obligations; and
- Sharing best practice with solicitors at other Local Authorities.

GOALS:

The Conveyancing Team is committed to continuous improvement and working with others, both internal to the Council and its external stakeholders, to ensure that the preparation and conclusion of Section 75 Agreements is integrated into the planning process and does not impact adversely on the time taken to determine planning applications.

The work that has been undertaken in the last 12 months by the Conveyancing Team builds on this commitment.

OUTCOMES:

One of the Conveyancing Team's outcomes from the Scottish Government pilot project was the development of an improvement aim in relation to its Section 75 process. The aim is to:-

"To maintain high quality Legal Agreements and, where possible, improve the planning authority statistics by better utilising resources (people) and existing planning tools available to the Council."

In working towards meeting that aim, the Conveyancing Team recognised that there were a number of change ideas which could result in an improvement to the Section 75 process. The key areas of focus were: (i) improved Officer training and education around planning obligations and Legal Agreements; and (ii) putting in place better arrangements with external solicitors, planning agents and developers. This required a greater level of engagement and communication with internal and external stakeholders than existed previously, but it was felt that the benefit of this would be improved efficiency in terms of the Section 75 process and in terms of planning performance.

Running concurrently with the Scottish Government pilot project was an internal, strategic review of the Council's

developer obligations and Section 75 process. This review culminated in a joint Legal and Planning Report entitled *"Developer Obligations Practice: Delivering Placemaking and Best Value and S.75 Legal Agreement Process"* being presented to the Council's Senior Leadership Team in July, 2018.

Both the pilot project and the internal review allowed for a holistic assessment and evaluation of existing improvement measures and consideration of how further improvements could be made. An opportunity arose within the review to analyse the data that had been gathered from the master Section 75 spreadsheet and to identify where delays were arising in the process; and, importantly, which delays were within the Council's control and which were not.

The primary internal delay was the timing of the instruction from Planning to Legal; with it generally not being received by Legal until after the planning application had been considered by Committee. Whilst it is recognised by the Conveyancing Team that there may be resource implications for abortive work on Legal Agreements which don't ultimately conclude, the risk is low in comparison to the wider benefits to planning performance and delivery which would be gained from an earlier instruction. To mitigate the risk, the Conveyancing Team seeks to recover its legal costs from the developer arising from any abortive work where the planning application or the Legal Agreement does not progress to conclusion.

The primary external delays were identified as being non-responsive applicant or agents; issues or complexities with title to the development site; and ongoing or unresolved negotiations between the applicant and the landowners. The result of these types of delay was that the Section 75 process was unnecessarily extended (often for significant periods of time). Having identified the internal and external delays and now having the evidence to support these findings, the Conveyancing Team realised that engagement and obtaining feedback and input from the development industry, planning agents and solicitors would be the key to improvement in Aberdeenshire.

In doing so, the Conveyancing Team hosted a **Developers' Legal Agent Forum on 13 June, 2018** and invited those solicitors representing small-medium and major housebuilders and developers in Aberdeenshire to meet with representatives from Legal and Planning to discuss planning performance and the impact of a delayed Section 75 process on the delivery of development in the area. The Forum considered the improvement work the Council had undertaken to date; it discussed the Council's improvement aims and change ideas in terms of the Scottish Government pilot project; and it scrutinised current timescales and statistics identified from the master spreadsheet. Feedback captured during and immediately following the Forum was positive with legal agents noting that they had always benefitted from good engagement with the Conveyancing Team and further commented there had been clear improvements in performance and transparency and an increased mutual understanding of each other's priorities over recent years. The legal agents were also unanimous in rejecting any notion of the Council outsourcing its legal work to the private sector (as had been suggested by developers) as in their experience this would significantly increase the delay to the Section 75 process and the cost to their developer clients. The outcome of the Forum was that it would be beneficial for the group to meet twice every year to discuss matters of mutual interest. It also provided a consensus on how the Council and the developers could work together to conclude Legal Agreements more timeously. This Forum is due to meet again on 17 April, 2019.

Following on from the Developers' Legal Agent Forum, a representative of the Conveyancing Team attended the **Planning Agent Forum on 1 October**. This Forum was hosted by the Council's Development Management Planning Team and it served as an opportunity to highlight the Council's ongoing performance improvement work to planning agents and to discuss how everyone involved in the Section 75 process could work together to reduce timescales but still have a legally robust planning agreement. The Forum discussed how it was important to have meaningful and early engagement at pre-application stage; and how early agreement on the developer obligations package and affordable housing requirements could result in an earlier instruction to legal. The Forum also considered the impact on delay of errors being identified in the proposed red line boundary (where it doesn't accord with the landowner's title); and ensuring that deed plans were registerable in terms

of the guidance issued by the Keeper of the Register of Scotland. The Council's protocol under its Scheme of Governance for delegated refusal of applications for non-completion of Section 75 Agreements after 4 or 6 months (for local and major applications, respectively) was also rolled out to planning agents at the Forum so that they were alert to possible implications of a delayed Section 75 process without reasonable cause.

In further engaging with the development industry, representatives of the Conveyancing Team also attended the **Housebuilders' Forum on 11 January, 2019**. The presentation given at that Forum ensured that a consistent message was received by developers, their solicitors and their planning agents about the Council's Section 75 process and the ongoing improvement work. Positive feedback was received from representatives of national housebuilders on the notable improvement they had witnessed over the last 12 months.

This meeting coincided with the receipt of the Council's Planning Performance Framework feedback 2017/18 which demonstrated that the Council's improvement work had had a positive impact on average time for concluding (or reconsidering) applications subject to Legal Agreement. The feedback concluded that such applications (for both major and local development), were determined faster than the previous year and faster than the Scottish average.

An example of how proactive communication and engagement between the Council, the developer and their agents (planning and legal) and an early instruction to the Conveyancing Team can result in the timeous conclusion of a Section 75 Agreement can be found in application **APP/2017/3188: Residential Development and Associated Infrastructure at Conglass, Crawford Road, Inverurie** (refer to Quality of Outcomes Case Study 8). In this instance, the Council and the developer saw the benefits in preparing the Section 75 Agreement for this major development site ahead of the scheduled Infrastructure Services Committee meeting on 23 August, 2018. The Conveyancing Team's solicitor and the developer's solicitor worked together using the Council's template agreement to formalise and conclude the agreed developer obligations package and affordable housing requirements in the Section 75 Agreement. Work commenced on the drafting of the agreement and the related examination of the site title in late May, 2018 and it was concluded within eleven weeks, ahead of the scheduled

Committee meeting. This meant that immediately following the determination of the application and a grant of permission being delegated to the Head of Planning & Building Standards by the Committee, the Section 75 Agreement could be signed on behalf of the Council and submitted for registration in the Land Register of Scotland the same day. By front-loading the planning application in this way and all parties working together to an agreed deadline, the planning consent was issued to the developer within five working days of the Committee determination.

"As the planning gain package for this development had been agreed in advance of the application being considered at committee, it was felt that this time could be used more effectively by negotiating the detailed terms of the Section 75 Agreement. It was acknowledged that this would involve incurring costs at our risk (in the event that the application was refused at committee) but having the Section 75 Agreement in agreed form and available for signing by the Council immediately after approval at committee meant that we could move quickly to complete the purchase of the site. The Council's adoption of a practical approach in this matter was appreciated and was of assistance in achieving our targeted start date"

Stuart Fraser – Associate – Pinsent Masons

"With early engagement from Aberdeenshire Council Developer Obligations and Legal Team we were able to have developer contributions agreed and the Section 75 in place for signing prior to the application going to committee. Aberdeenshire Council having a template for Section 75 Agreements and swift responses through the process meant we were able to have the Section 75 signed on the day of the committee approval – which is a record for us! This allowed the development to progress on the ground and we appreciate the pragmatic and helpful approach from the Council in achieving this. We would look forward to working with Aberdeenshire Council's legal team on our next project."

Lynn Melvin – Senior Land Manager – CALA (Homes) North

Finally, in sharing some of its best practice suggestions and change ideas identified as part of the Scottish Government pilot project, representatives of the Conveyancing Team made a presentation to Local Authority planning and property solicitors at the **SOLAR Planning & Property Conference on 23 September, 2018**. This presentation

served to highlight how the Conveyancing Team was streamlining and improving its Section 75 process in Aberdeenshire; how it mapped the planning and legal processes to identify where it could be streamlined; how it gathered key data from the master Section 75 spreadsheet and, importantly, how it was leading and implementing change. As a result of that presentation three Local Authorities were in touch following the Conference, with solicitors there all interested in learning further from the improvement work being undertaken by the Conveyancing Team. They recognised the potential benefits of implementing a similar process at their Authority and how that would have a positive effect on planning performance. The Conveyancing Team recognises that improved engagement, sharing of experience and working cooperatively

with stakeholders is the key to making the Section 75 process as streamlined as possible in Aberdeenshire. Utilising new and existing tools at its disposal, for example Planning Processing Agreements to project manage deadlines in the legal process, will enhance the planning decision making process of which the conclusion of Legal Agreements is just one part. The improvement in planning performance in Aberdeenshire, as recognised in the **feedback issued** by the Minister of Local Government, Housing & Planning on 11 January, 2019, this demonstrates the positive impact the Section 75 improvement work has had on the Council's processes and performance.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Legal & Governance – Conveyancing Team



NEW COUNCIL HOUSING – TARVES

CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



BODDAM LIGHTHOUSE

CASE STUDY 37 - DIRECT ACTION UNDER HIGH HEDGES ACT 2014 – PROCESS MAP FOR FUTURE ACTION

LOCATION AND DATES:

Ongoing 2018 - 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Culture of continuous improvement
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

6 - Continuous improvements – show progress, improvements in relation to PPF National Headline Indicators
12 - Corporate working across Services to improve customer outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Enforcement
- Development Management Processes
- Collaborative Working
- Process Improvement
- Project Management
- Interdisciplinary Working

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Key Agencies

OVERVIEW:

In April 2018, Planning Enforcement carried out the successful execution of **Direct Action** to accord with the requirements of a High Hedge Notice which had not been complied with by the hedge owner. This was the first such action to be undertaken by a Local Planning Authority in Scotland for non-compliance with a High hedge Notice since the High Hedges Act 2014 came into force. Considering the complexities encountered during the process leading up to the taking of Direct Action, it was considered that the process would benefit from being mapped out. A **Process Map** has now been produced to instruct future cases. Ongoing monitoring of the high hedge along with consideration of a long-term solution to the maintenance burden is ongoing.

GOALS:

To ensure that processes and procedures for undertaking Direct Action follow a consistent protocol. This in turn provides a quality service and the desired outcome, namely the execution of direct action safely, consistently, efficiently and with least impact. It is important to ensure



HIGH HEDGE PROCESS DIRECT ACTION

that due consideration is given to all matters that may have implications for the taking of Direct Action. This includes physical checks on site covering matters such as ecological considerations, risk assessments for staff, site exit strategy, joint working between Services of the Council and relevant external stakeholders and making best use of the resources available whilst all working to achieve the same goal. Such precautionary measures will ensure all aspects have been considered and risk managed as far as reasonably practical.

The overall aim is to ensure the successful project management of the action and the desired outcome. The protocol is flexible and can be adapted on a case-by-case basis and therefore certain aspects can be added or removed as appropriate, thereby, contributing to a culture of continuous improvement in that the process shall be adapted to suit as new issues arise in future cases. This work complements the **High Hedges Process Guidance** produced for Development Management (referred to in case study 56, Page 77 of the **PPF 2017-2018**).

OUTCOMES:

The case study has demonstrated that through the careful planning of Direct Action situations are mitigated against to ensure that the operation runs as smoothly as possible on the day. The work undertaken thus far on this case is predominantly relating to the initial action required by the High Hedge Notice. Subsequent long-term maintenance of the high hedge is an ongoing matter and the Process Map takes account of follow up action required. The Best Practice Guidance and Process Map will be of value to staff undertaking Direct Action not only for High Hedge Notices but is also relevant to Direct Action associated with Enforcement Notices. The Process Map takes cognisance of the High Hedge case and builds upon the strengths of the action and the lessons learned. The roll out of the Process Map will ensure best practice and a consistency of approach to the benefit of the Planning Service as a whole and its customers.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Lindsey Geddes - Senior Planner (Enforcement)

CASE STUDY 38 - ENFORCEMENT BENCHMARKING / NETWORKING EVENT – SHARING PRACTICE AND LEARNING

LOCATION AND DATES:

28 January 2019, Council Offices, Inverurie

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Culture of continuous improvement
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

13 - Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between Authorities

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Enforcement
- Skills Sharing
- Collaborative Working
- Process Improvement

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Other Council Enforcement Staff

OVERVIEW:

Given the complexities involved with Planning Enforcement legislation and the difficulties associated with subsequent action following non-compliance, it was acknowledged that a benchmarking exercise would be of considerable benefit to inform current practices and procedures. It was further recognised that considerable gains could be made with the establishment of a local support network for Planning Enforcement to complement the existing Scottish Planning Enforcement Forum (SPEF). The Enforcement Team organised a [networking/benchmarking day](#) on Friday 28 January 2019. Officers working in Planning Enforcement within Aberdeen City, Moray and Angus Councils and the Cairngorms National Park Authority attended the event.

GOALS:

To gain an understanding of enforcement practices and procedures in other areas. This included ascertaining the various working methods in practice and the different approaches to subject matter with a view to implementing improved and more streamlined ways of working in Aberdeenshire. The focus was on sharing ideas and experiences and directing lessons learned into day-to-day work.

In terms of the wider goals, it was envisaged that the event would strengthen links with other Local Authorities and create a network for future collaboration and support. It is a flagship event for future partnership working and information sharing with neighbouring Local Authorities. The underlying aim was to improve service delivery and consequentially public perception of Planning Enforcement.

OUTCOMES:

The Planning Enforcement Team in Aberdeenshire undertook presentations on locally topical issues such as interpretation of legislation relating to [agricultural drainage vs land raising](#), [procedural matters on taking Direct Action](#), [liaison and engagement with consultees](#), [reporting to Procurator Fiscal](#) and an [update on enforcement appeals](#). Each presentation was followed with a question and answer session where the views and experiences of neighbouring Local Authorities were sought and noted for further consideration. The practices of other Local Authorities were taken on board and Aberdeenshire are in the process of harmonising some practices in line with others. An example of such harmonisation relates to minor breaches. Previously the Council used discretion and generally did not take formal action where there was a minor breach of planning control. In line with others, the Council are now actively serving Section 33a Notices on the land to regularise the breach. In the longer term, it is anticipated that this practice will act as a deterrent and therefore reduce future incidences involving minor planning breaches.

The event was intentionally small scale and informal which encouraged active participation and discussion. Various Officers in attendance gave advice on how they had handled similar situations and breaches of control and whether the outcome was successful and advising of what measures could have been employed to achieve a better or more favourable outcome highlighting lessons for the future.

The benefits gained as a result of the sharing of experiences will not only feed into the Enforcement practices currently under review (please refer to priorities for Enforcement) but also used to inform Officers' approach to daily matters. Feedback from the event was positive. It is envisaged that the event will run yearly or twice yearly. Moray Council has intimated that they would host a future similar event during the Autumn of 2019.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Lindsey Geddes - Senior Planner (Enforcement)

CASE STUDY 39 - GUIDANCE ON AGRICULTURAL DRAINAGE AND PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

LOCATION AND DATES:

Various throughout 2018 and 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

6 - Continuous improvement
13 - Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between Authorities

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Enforcement
- Development Management Processes
- Staff Training
- Collaborative working
- Process improvement

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General public
- Local developers
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

Historically, there have been a number of sites in Aberdeenshire where medium to large scale infill sites with inert waste have taken place as 'agricultural drainage works under Schedule 1 Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 as amended. These infill sites involved the importation (under appropriate SEPA exemption) of substantial volumes of inert waste material over many months/years resulting in the significant raising of ground levels (landraising). Furthermore, sites of this nature tended to be a regular source of complaint regarding noise, number of vehicle movements, operating hours, damage to the road network etc. The Planning Service had generally taken the view that inert material imported onto agricultural land for drainage works, which the landowners had asserted was requisite for agriculture, was permitted development under Class 18A. Class 18A refers simply to the carrying out of drainage for agriculture. There are no definitions, limitations or exclusions to what this allows. In such cases, all that was previously required was that the Planning Service satisfy themselves that prior to development the land was agricultural, the material was required for drainage purposes, and that after the development/engineering works the land



would return to agricultural use. It was then left to SEPA to control the types of material that were imported onto the land under their regulations.

A better understanding of the relevant legislation aided by case law and SPSO decisions has resulted in a formal review of the previously held Planning Service position regarding agricultural drainage and Permitted Development.

GOALS:

This review of legislation, regulations, case law and SPSO decisions has led to the drafting of a guidance/procedure note. The purpose of this procedure note is to provide guidance to Planning Enforcement and Development Management staff on the planning position and interpretation of Permitted Development Rights relating to drainage and landraising on agricultural land. This guidance will apply to the consideration of, and subsequent response to, all general enquiries and planning enforcement enquiries relating to the subject.

The overarching goal is to provide Planning staff across the Planning Service the tools to make consistent, peer reviewed and management approved decisions on proposals for drainage works/infill/landraising works on agricultural land – how to interpret and apply Permitted Development Rights.

This consistent, transparent and fair approach, operating under a defined

scheme of governance, will allow for better and defensible decision making and improve public confidence in the integrity of the Planning Service's decision making process for cases of this type.

OUTCOMES:

A detailed interrogation of relevant legislation, regulations, case law and SPSO cases triggered a review of the previously held position regarding the importation of material on to agricultural land for drainage purposes under the auspices of Part 6 of the GPDO. The Enforcement Team presented the results of this investigatory work and details of several agricultural drainage case studies to the Planning Enforcement Benchmarking Group on 28 January 2019 at Gordon House, Inverurie. The purpose being to gather considered peer views from as wide a data set as possible thereby allowing for a more consistent approach not only in Aberdeenshire but for neighbouring Local Authorities as well, particularly as some developer's areas of operation span across several Local Authority areas.

A guidance and procedure note titled "[GUIDANCE ON TREATMENT OF ENQUIRIES CONCERNING THE IMPORTATION OF MATERIALS ONTO AGRICULTURAL LAND](#)" has been **drafted** and submitted for stakeholder consultation, internal peer review and senior management approval before being disseminated to Planning staff as a working document.

The Enforcement Team attended Development Management Team meetings in 2018 and early 2019 to discuss the draft guidance and its intended purpose and to have open table discussions about improvements/ amendments.

The finalised guidance note will shortly be uploaded to an internal online platform for staff use as part of a suite of best practice documents in the Best Practice Manual (reported in the 2017/18 PPF). A guidance note for public use and landowners/developers will be uploaded to the Council website in the summer and

will be the subject of engagement with the NFU.

As of early 2019 Planning Enforcement has begun implementing the new approach to assessing drainage and importation of material proposals in accordance with the guidance. In all new cases to date operations have either ceased on site or retrospective planning approval is being sought by developers/ landowners.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Robin Currie - Planning Enforcement Officer



EXAMPLE OF LANDRAISING

CASE STUDY 40 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING HUB

LOCATION AND DATES:

Various Sites: January 2018 - Ongoing

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

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

KEY MARKERS:

- 12 - Corporate working across Services to improve customer outputs and services for customer benefit
- 13 - Sharing good practice, skills and knowledge between Authorities
- 14 - Stalled site/legacy cases
- 15 - Developer contributions

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Housing Supply
- Affordable Housing
- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Process Improvement
- Project Management
- Skills Sharing

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developers
- Key Agencies
- Authority Planning Staff
- Authority Other Staff
- Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)



AFFORDABLE HOUSING

OVERVIEW:

This case study updates progress on success of the Affordable Housing Hub which was case study 45 (Page 64) of [PPF 2017-18](#). The delivery of affordable housing continues to be a challenge and a key priority in Aberdeenshire, the affordable housing target set in the [Aberdeenshire Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023](#) are rightly ambitious with 2,500 units programmed for the next 2 years. However, with 70% of the sites in the [Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2019-2024](#) forming part of section 75 Agreements and an economic backdrop of a less buoyant oil and gas sector and the housing market having lost considerable pace; delivery is difficult and the viability of sites coming forward finely balanced.

The Planning Information and Delivery Team continues to support colleagues in the Housing Service with the Affordable Housing Hub with an interdisciplinary approach, in line with the 'One Aberdeenshire Principles'. Meetings are held fortnightly and the Hub operates both physically and virtually using the available technology to allow attendees to attend remotely and to invite particular Officers and organisations when their time and expertise is required.

The Hub monitors housing need, opportunities as well as investigating and finding solutions for issues causing delay and legacy cases. The Hub also looks forward to anticipate potential threats and act to mitigate these where possible. The Hub agenda is kept agile and adapts as required. The meeting can focus on one site or one issue or may investigate a particular emerging trend.

Recent meetings have been used to review the 2019-20 programme and agree key milestones for effective progress monitoring.

GOALS:

Through utilising the Hub as a platform and continuing to work collaboratively, openly and developing good working relationships and networks, it is hoped that affordable sites will keep coming forward and delivery will meet the levels that are required.

It is also anticipated that through shared best practice unnecessary delays and expense will be avoided.

OUTCOMES:

Over the last year there have been clear improvements in cross Service and stakeholder communication, joint and partnership working. This model of streamlined working supports the 'One Aberdeenshire Principles' being promoted by the Council.

Furthermore, through the Hub, training needs have been identified and actioned, and other collaborative projects have been instigated. Currently a subgroup of the Hub is planning an 'Affordable Housing Conference' for the Aberdeenshire region, with a focus on the specific rural issues facing the area later in the year.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

David MacLennan - Team Leader Planning Information and Delivery/Ally MacLeod - Housing Manager/Lucy Styles - Project Officer/Elaine Reid - Team Leader Housing

CASE STUDY 41 - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT ENGAGEMENT; CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT, SURVEYS, FEEDBACK AND RESPONDING TO CUSTOMERS

LOCATION AND DATES:

March 2019-April 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Culture of continuous improvement
- Quality of service and engagement

KEY MARKERS:

12 - Corporate working across Services to improve customer outputs and services for customer benefits

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Interdisciplinary Working
- Collaborative Working
- Community Engagement
- Skills Sharing
- Staff Training

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- General Public
- Local Developers
- Agents
- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

Following on from **PPF 2017-18** and case study 36, Page 55, as part of the Planning Service's commitment to communication and engagement with customers, the Service carried out a further **Customer Survey** at the end of the 2018/19 reporting period. The Survey was adapted this period to seek further feedback in relation to pre-application enquiries and applications and was developed with a view to reflect the Customer Service Excellence project that the Service are currently working towards.

The measurements of outputs and measurable targets for Customer Surveys were applied. In line with previous PPF reports, the annual Survey is used by the Service to measure improvements in the level of service experienced by customers; to monitor whether improvements implemented during the previous PPF reporting period in line with the Development Management Section Action plans have resulted in a higher level of customer satisfaction; and to identify specific process matters which are considered to require review.

Overall, improvements have been achieved in most areas as noted below and the Service are encouraged that the overall level of customer satisfaction continues to remain positive and has improved when compared with previous years.

2019:

Overall Satisfaction with the service received- 92%
Satisfaction with the timeliness of the service- 92%

2018:

Overall satisfaction with the service received- 89.6%
Satisfaction with the timeliness of the service- 84.9%

It is equally important to note that measures introduced in the previous PPF reporting period in relation to levels of communication by Planning Officers in terms of the updates on the progress of applications and the response times for information requests appear to be continuing to work and the level of satisfaction at 88% remains above the 80% satisfaction level bracket.

In terms of outcomes from the previous Customer Survey, the Service identified that there was scope to undertake further improvements to the pre-application advice service and as noted in Case Study 33 work is underway on the review of the local and major development pre-application enquiry process with the expectation that this Service Improvement will be completed and rolled out later this year.

As part of this recent survey the Service asked specific questions about the pre-application advice service experienced by customers. The responses received demonstrate that the Service are correct to continue with the review of the pre-application service. While there has been a slight uptake on pre-application advice sought there has been a slight dip in the consideration of the helpfulness of the advice received.

2019:

63% sought pre-application advice
63% were satisfied with the quality and helpfulness of the pre-application advice received.

2018:

53% sought pre-application advice
66% were satisfied with the quality and helpfulness of the pre-application advice received.

GOALS:

The main goal of the annual Survey is to measure improvements in the level of service experienced by customers; to monitor whether improvements implemented during the previous PPF reporting period in line with the Development Management Section Action plans have resulted in a higher level of customer satisfaction; and to identify specific process matters which are considered require to be reviewed.

OUTCOMES:

The DM Customer Survey results for this reporting period demonstrate that the measures introduced by the Planning Service in the previous year are allowing the Service to deliver a determination process which meets the requirements of the customer and satisfaction levels with the level and delivery of service remain above 80%.

The ongoing Service Improvement work involving a review of the pre-application service remains relevant and as noted under **case study 33** the working group are nearing completion of a revised enquiry process which seeks to tackle concerns raised by customers in relation to the quality and helpfulness of the pre-application advice received, along with timescales.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Chris Ormiston - Team Manager

CASE STUDY 42 - ONGOING REVIEW OF PRACTICES FOR THE APPLICATION OF BOTH PLANNING PROCESSING AGREEMENTS

LOCATION AND DATES:

Autumn 2018 / Spring 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Culture of continuous improvement
- Governance

KEY MARKERS:

2 - Project management: offer of processing agreements etc.
6 - Continuous improvements - progress relevant service improvement commitments identified through PPF report

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Development Management Processes
- Planning Applications
- Staff Training
- Performance Monitoring
- Process Improvement

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Authority Planning Staff

OVERVIEW:

Following on from previous work undertaken and exhibited within previous Planning Performance Frameworks relating to data from 2017 into 2018 (case study 53, Page 74 of [PPF 2017-18](#)), the internal working group, having developed initial guidance, were asked to continue to monitor and record PPAs during the 2018-2019 to allow a comparison to the previous reporting period. The information gathered from this additional monitoring period is currently being reviewed by the working group and will be used to inform staff feedback on PPA usage and the production of updated internal guidance for all staff.

The ongoing review and monitoring process have been split into 3 main categories:

1. Applications which were determined beyond the statutory determination date and had neither a PPA or STC in place
2. Applications which had a PPA but were still determined beyond the agreed date of a related PPA
3. Applications which were determined in accordance with the terms of a related PPA

Furthermore, these applications were broken down on a per team basis and the Scottish Government development type codes to demonstrate the correlation between different types of development the Planning Service deal with and the reliance of the Service to use the applicable project management tools to aid in their respective determination.

Having provided the initial breakdown of the data, the working group are reviewing potential patterns or attributes of the applications falling within the data set, including those which were determined at Committee and/or required a Section 75 Legal Agreement. In addition, they are reviewing cases where agents declined to enter into a PPA or extend the time period of a PPA to identify and determine reasons and to ensure that working practices are updated accordingly.

Work will be completed during the summer of 2019 on the final version of the draft guidance. This guidance will contain recommendations on the future use of both PPA's and STC. The information will be the subject of discussions with agents prior to finalisation and roll out to staff.

GOALS:

It is anticipated that by finalising and categorising the data set from the last few reporting periods that the working group will be able to clearly establish and confirm the correlations in the use of the applicable project management tools and provide corrective and proactive measures which will be applied Service wide to deliver certainty and consistency across the entire Planning Service. This in turn will ensure that agents and developers have a better understanding of how the Service can apply PPAs as a project management tool to assist with the determination of applications.

OUTCOMES:

The information gathered to date has proven useful in providing the working group with a better understanding of how these project management tools are being applied by the Service and clarifying any issues that have been encountered. This in turn will raise staff and agent awareness in terms of the application of PPAs and STCs with a view to developing a better understanding of the purpose and management of these measures. The work undertaken to date by the group will inform the formulation of final guidance providing clarity for staff, agents and developers which in turn will assist with Service delivery, performance management and better quality outcomes. The final guidance and information will be provided on the Council's website.

Following the feedback received on Planning Processing Agreements in PPF 2017-18, the availability and advertisement of current information on [PPAs is available on the Council's website](#). This will be updated when the final guidance as described in this case study is available.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Stuart Newlands - Planner

CASE STUDY 43 - REVIEW OF MASTERPLAN PROCESS

LOCATION AND DATES:

Various workshops throughout 2018 and early 2019

ELEMENTS OF A HIGH-QUALITY PLANNING SERVICE THIS STUDY RELATES TO:

- Culture of continuous improvement

KEY MARKERS:

6 - Continuous improvement
12 - Corporate working across Services to improve outputs and services for customer benefit

KEY AREAS OF WORK:

- Masterplanning
- Skills Sharing
- Project Management
- Placemaking
- Process Improvement
- Collaborative Working

STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED:

- Local Developers
- Authority Planning Staff
- Planning Committee
- Authority other staff

OVERVIEW:

Previous PPF have outlined a commitment to review the Council Masterplan process to ensure that it is fit for purpose, responsive to the needs of customers and communities as well as consistent for Elected Members to fairly consider Masterplans. Moreover, there is an overarching aspiration to support the development and creation of high quality and successful places within Aberdeenshire.



FASQUE, FETTERCAIRN

A small cross section of Planning Service staff have been reviewing the current Masterplan guidance, a range of agreed Masterplans from within Aberdeenshire Council and also peer reviewing neighbouring Authorities and beyond. Initial research on the current process and Masterplanning more generally was sought through **questionnaires** to agents, **172 questionnaires** were issued although disappointingly only 14 returned. Due consideration will be given to engaging with agents in the future to ensure an improved response rate and more feedback. The application of the Place Standard Tool as part of the Masterplanning process has also been explored, in what ways this tool has been used by Community Planning and LDP Teams to inform Local Community Plans and LDP if it could be used as a bridging device between communities, developers and Officers.

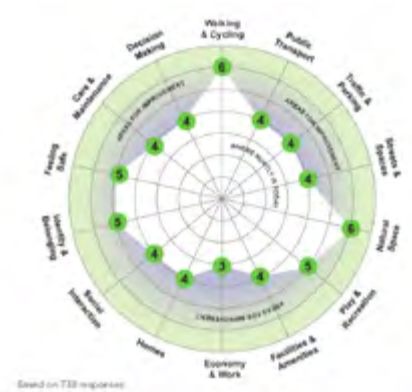


HUNTLY COMMUNITY MASTERPLAN AND PLACE STANDARD TOOL

Aberdeenshire Council are now developing a model format for how a Masterplan could be evolved. When finalised, this **guidance** is aimed at supporting those preparing Masterplans away from detailed and prescriptive 'standard' Masterplans. Throughout this process endeavours have been made to ensure that the language, terminology, key messages and aims are consistent with other guidance and Planning tools; such as the Design Quality Audit, Place Standard Tool, Major Application Review and the ongoing drafting of the 2021 LDP Design Guidance.

GOALS:

Aberdeenshire Council has 70 sites allocated in the LDP requiring a Masterplan of which 35 sites remain to be progressed to a Masterplan stage. Aberdeenshire Council, through this review, aims to simplify the Masterplan process to hopefully assist delivery of these key sites and to ensure that the Masterplan process



is not a barrier to delivery. Furthermore, the goal is to ensure that Masterplans, which are ultimately agreed, contain the appropriate level of detail.

OUTCOMES:

A concise, transparent and robust process with a greater onus on successful placemaking which is easy for all to understand and engage with is considered to be the key outcome. This will ensure effective delivery of sites and give certainty to developers and communities alike.

Through this process training needs have been identified and some workshops on design, Masterplanning and place making skills for Officers are proposed for later in the year. Additional outcomes have included a dialogue with other Services around community input and closer sharing of information such as Community Action Plans and Place Standard Tool outputs.

Having undertaken stakeholder engagement a series of sessions to seek engagement with Elected Members is required in order to ensure that all parties are striving towards common aims and objectives.

It is noted that this review of the Masterplan process continues. This is due to the complexity of the project, the need to engage with stakeholders, and link with other processes such as the Pre-application process, along with other work pressures and the need to distribute DM staff resources to other Planning Service work over the reporting period.

NAME OF KEY OFFICER

Darren Ross -Team Manager, Jim Martin - Senior Planner and Lucy Styles - Project Officer

PART 2: SUPPORTING EVIDENCE



CHECKLIST FOR PART 2: QUALITATIVE NARRATIVE AND CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY TOPICS	ISSUE COVERED IN PPF CASE NUMBERS	CASE STUDY TOPICS	ISSUE COVERED IN PPF7 CASE NUMBERS
Design	3, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 26, 30	Interdisciplinary Working	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 40, 41
Conservation	4, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 25, 26	Collaborative Working	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 43
Regeneration	11, 15, 16, 17, 27, 30	Community Engagement	4, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 41
Environment	3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 26, 27, 30, 32	Placemaking	3, 8, 17, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 43
Greenspace	3,8,15,17,27	Charrettes	
Town Centres	5, 16, 17, 30	Place Standard	3, 43
Masterplanning	3, 8, 15, 17, 28, 29, 43	Performance Monitoring	1, 2, 21, 31, 42
LDP & Supplementary Guidance	4, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, 34	Process Improvement	1, 2, 3, 4, 15, 20, 21, 23, 24, 28, 29, 31, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43
Housing Supply	29, 40	Project Management	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28,29, 31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 40, 43
Affordable Housing	8, 29, 40	Skills Sharing	3, 4, 10, 15, 21, 25, 26, 30, 38, 40, 41, 43
Economic Development	4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 14, 16, 18, 25, 26, 30	Staff Training	21,39,41,42
Enforcement	13, 27, 30, 37, 38, 39	Online Systems	33
Development Management Processes	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 29, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42	Transport	6, 9, 19
Planning Applications	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21, 29, 31, 33, 36, 40, 42	Active Travel	6, 9

PART 3: SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS 2018-19



CASTLETON HOUSING, ELLON

PART 3A: DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT PLANNING / SPECIALIST SERVICES, DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS 2019 – 2020 (LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN TEAM)

In the coming year we will:

- Complete full assessment of comments made to the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 Main Issues Report.
- Review comments made on the interim SEA Environmental Report which informed the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan to produce a revised Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- Review comments made on the Assessment undertaken under the Habitats Regulations which informed the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan to produce a revised Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- Undertake formal meetings with Elected Members (Area/Ward level) to evaluate the Local Development Plan MIR submissions received.
- Prepare the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2021 and associated documents for consideration by Members of Aberdeenshire Council.
- Publish the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan for public comment.
- Start to Review comments made to the Proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan in the form of “Schedule 4” statements.
- Prepare a revised Development Plan Scheme in November 2019 for discussion with local Area Committee Members and approval by Infrastructure Services Committee in January 2020.
- Complete meetings as required with key stakeholders.

ENVIRONMENT PLANNING/SPECIALIST SERVICES SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS 2019 – 2020

In the coming year we will:

- Review of Tree Preservation Orders: Progress Phase 5, involving surveying and assessing of TPOs. Final completion and review of project.
- Complete Natural Heritage Strategy for 2019-2022 and prepare annual Action Plan.
- Review and improve process for management of access cases.
- Implement use of CONFIRM asset management software to improve management and monitoring of Council owned/managed paths, bridges and associated infrastructure.
- Deliver at least 2 specialist training sessions to Development Management staff to help raise awareness of natural and built heritage and access considerations and improve decision making.
- Engage Development Management staff in the preparation of Conservation Area Management Plans.
- Review and monitor Development Management surgery and consultation process.
- Develop and implement a consultation protocol between the Archaeology Team and Development Management Teams to improve response times, quality of the final decision in relation to archaeology and, communication between the Teams.
- Implement use of an online booking system by the Countryside Ranger Service for the publication, booking and collection of feedback on public events to make it more efficient for the Ranger organising the event, and a more customer friendly and efficient system for booking a place on an event.



TIN COO BANCHORY - DEVENICK

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

In the Coming Year we will:

CONTINUING (FURTHER IMPROVEMENT) / CONTINUED (NOT COMPLETE) / NEW

QUALITY OF OUTCOMES	QUALITY OF SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Site Visit technology
GOVERNANCE	CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued Commitment - Pre-application and Major Application Review – completion/roll out and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued Commitment-Masterplan process/conclusion/implementation Roll out finalised guidance on use of Planning Processing Agreements.
PLANNING PERFORMANCE TARGETS *	PLANNING PERFORMANCE TARGETS *
<p>Average Timescales:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Applications – Achieve an average of 35 weeks Local Applications – Achieve an average of 11 weeks Household Applications – Achieve an average of 6 weeks Other Applications – Achieve an average of 8 weeks Measurement of outputs and measurable targets for Customer Surveys to be applied*** E Planning Online Submission – Achieve 90% of customers submitting on line applications. 	<p>% Within 2 Months:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Planning Applications – Determine 70% within 2 months Non-Householder Applications – Determine 65% within 2 months Householder Applications – Determine 95% within 2 months Processing Agreements – 100% major applications subject to a Processing Agreement **Legal Agreements – Achieve an average of 32 weeks Legacy Applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce pre 2009 to 0 Reduce Overall (post 2009) by 50%

*Subject to Target

**Based on Benchmarking Performance

*** Measurable Targets and Outputs

PART 3B: DELIVERY OF OUR SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS IN 2018-19:



BENNACHIE VISITOR CENTRE

DELIVERY OF OUR IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS COMMITTED IN 2017-2018 & DELIVERED IN 2018-19

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Development Planning 2018-2019

COMMITTED IMPROVEMENTS AND ACTIONS	COMPLETE?
Undertake workshops and seminars with Elected Members and Community Councils (Area/Ward level to evaluate the Local Development Plan Bids received)	Six workshops undertaken of up to 2 days each with each of 6 Area Committees and various Community Council representatives
Complete meetings as required with key stakeholders	Meetings conducted with internal Future Infrastructure for Services Group. Liaison meetings undertaken with Aberdeen City Council and Cairngorms National Park. Performance with external key stakeholders was not as could have been expected due to the lack of time within the team to engage in such activities. Written correspondence with SNH and SEPA
Complete and consult on the SEA scoping and the interim SEA Environmental Report which inform the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan	Documents completed and published with the Main Issues Report. Feedback received from Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Environment Scotland and Scottish Environmental Protection Agency within the timeframe for consultation on the MIR
Complete the Flood Risk Assessment as background information for the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan	Document completed and published with the Main Issues Report
Review vision, Policy content and proposed local development sites for inclusion in the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan	All policies and site proposals reviewed and amended for inclusion in the consultation process for the Main Issues Report and the Draft Proposed Local Development Plan
Present the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan to Area Committees for consideration	Six Area Committees held in October 2018
Present the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan to Infrastructure Services Committee for the Authority to publish	Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan were presented to Infrastructure Services Committee on 29 November 2019
Publish the Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan for public consultation with associated publicity	Main Issues Report and Draft Proposed Local Development Plan was published on 8 January 2019
Log public responses to the Main Issues Report First responses to the MIR database were entered on 14 February 2019	First responses to the MIR database were entered on 14 February 2019

DELIVERY OF OUR IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS COMMITTED IN 2017-2018 & DELIVERED IN 2018-19

ENVIRONMENT PLANNING/SPECIALIST SERVICES DELIVERY OF SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

COMMITTED IMPROVEMENTS AND ACTIONS	COMPLETE?
<p>Historic Assets Management Project: continue agreed programme of maintenance and repair of Council owned structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair work carried out to a number of historic kirks, kirk boundary walls and memorial stones • £160k of budget spent 	Yes
<p>Complete at least 2 further Conservation Area Reviews / appraisals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portsoy • Crovie 	Yes
<p>Fraserburgh CARS/THI: Continue implementation of the agreed project plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good progress with priority projects • Small grant schemes underway • Training courses delivered for contractors & owners of traditional buildings 	Yes
<p>Banff CARS: Complete the CARS project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All but one committed project completed • All available funding allocated to projects 	Yes
<p>Review of Tree Preservation Orders:</p> <p>Undertake Phase 4: involving surveying and assessing existing TPOs and proposing revocations and re-serving of TPOs as appropriate</p> <p>Identify and select TPOs for inclusion in Phase 5</p>	Yes Yes
<p>Access:</p> <p>Deliver access/non-motorised bridge improvements across Aberdeenshire in accordance with agreed programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% of allocated budget spent • Work with community groups to take forward volunteering initiatives, "Run a number of workshops to support community led path developments" • Worked with number of groups including Torphins & Mearns Coastal Path 	Yes Yes
<p>Improve average response times from Archaeology to planning consultations by 10%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average response times reduced by 54% from 8.14 days to 4.39 days. 	Yes
<p>Development of a Management Plan template for Council owned Scheduled Assets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Management Plan template created and rollout across first five owned Scheduled assets implemented. 	Yes
<p>Increase number of opportunities for communities to become involved in Archaeology through implementing ongoing projects and seeking opportunities to develop new ones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing support for projects such as Mesolithic Deeside, Aden Country Park HLF Project, and Druminnor Castle Project. The development of new ones such as Tullich Pictish Stones Outreach and Code the City Hack Weekend, all of which significantly increased the numbers of opportunities for volunteers to learn new skills and contribute meaningfully to archaeological projects. 	Yes

COMMITTED IMPROVEMENTS AND ACTIONS	COMPLETE?
<p>Further develop partnership working between the Ranger Service and other local community groups to reach vulnerable and disadvantaged groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership working established with Social Work Youth Services, Social Work Shared Lives, Social Work Community Mental Health, Sheltered Housing and respite centres, Aberdeen Foyer, and Backbone CIC (New Scot and Refugee groups) at locations across Aberdeenshire. 63 sessions with 377 attendees were held with disadvantaged groups in 2018/19. This was an increase from 57 sessions with 267 attendees in 2017/18. 	Yes
<p>Develop volunteer policy and procedures to increase volunteering opportunities within the ranger service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two volunteer job profiles created. Ranger Service volunteer web page created for the Council's website promoting the Service and the opportunities available. 	Yes
<p>Complete review of key strategies for Historic and Natural Environments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built Heritage Strategy and Action Plan approved Natural Heritage Strategy drafted for consultation 	Yes No



LONGSIDE

DELIVERY OF OUR IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS COMMITTED IN 2017-2018 & DELIVERED IN 2018-19

GREEN - COMPLETE

AMBER - PARTIAL COMPLETION

RED - NOT COMPLETE

BLUE - CONTINUED

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

QUALITY OF OUTCOMES	COMPLETE	QUALITY OF SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT	COMPLETE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued Commitment - Roll out and implement Design Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue annual Customer Surveys Achieve Service Excellence status for Development Management Implement Site Visit technology Continue Community Council Focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes First stage done. Next stage the CSE Audit - in December 2019 - arranged by external auditor thus dates outwith Service control. Not completed - ICT issues continue with regards to secure software outwith the Planning Service's control. Yes - on going throughout reporting period, LDP engagement and DM attendance at various Community Council Forums within the reporting period (see previous PPF Case Studies)



AD-HOUSE - ABERDEENSHIRE ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN AWARDS 2018

GOVERNANCE	COMPLETE	CULTURE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	COMPLETE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-application and Major Application Review – completion/roll out and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partial completion Although the aim was to complete this review in the 2018/19 reporting period. The complexity of the project as it developed as well as the need for other work pressures including the need to distribute DM staff resources to other areas of planning work within the Service has meant this project has not achieved implementation yet. Based upon the stage in the project and the progress that has been made to date in taking forward this Service commitment, it is anticipated that the finalisation of the pre-application enquiry protocol, roll out and training will be completed during this next PPF reporting period with a target end date of December 2019. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 75 Legal/Planning improvement project New Commitment - Produce High Hedges process map for direct action Continued Commitment – STC review Continued Commitment- Masterplan process/ conclusion/ implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes Yes Yes Partial completion Although the aim was to complete this review in the 2018/19 reporting period due to the complexity of the project, the need to engage with stakeholders, and link with other processes such as the Pre-application process (under review), along with other work pressures and the need to distribute DM staff resources to other planning service work over the reporting period the review has continued with a target of completion by end of 2019.

PLANNING PERFORMANCE TARGETS *	ACHIEVED	PLANNING PERFORMANCE TARGETS *	ACHIEVED
Average Timescales:		% Within 2 Months:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Applications – Achieve an average of 35 weeks Local Applications – Achieve an average of 11 weeks Household Applications – Achieve an average of 6 weeks Other Applications – Achieve an average of 8 weeks Measurement of outputs and measurable targets for Customer Surveys to be applied*** E Planning Online Submission – Achieve 90% of customers submitting online applications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35.3 9.2 7.1 7.2 Yes 87% (up 3%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Planning Applications – Determine 70% within 2 months Non-Householder Applications – Determine 65% within 2 months Householder Applications – Determine 95% within 2 months Processing Agreements – 100% major applications subject to a Processing Agreement **Legal Agreements – Achieve an average of 32 weeks Legacy Applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce pre 2009 to 0 Reduce Overall (post 2009) by 50% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 88.5%/8.15 82%/7.3 95%/6.8 78% Major – 57.8 Local – 15.7 Cleared - 47 Remaining - 35

*Subject to Target

**Based on Benchmarking Performance

*** Measurable Targets and Outputs



ENFORCEMENT SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS - COMPLETED, COMMITTED & NEW

TASK	UPDATE
Completed Commitment - Develop the Planning Enforcement Content on Councils Website	This commitment was completed in September 2018 and there is now a dedicated section on the Planning Pages for Planning Enforcement. This provides information to member of the public as to what could be a breach of Planning Control. There is also a link on the "Report it" Tab. This links to an interactive form which is emailed directly to the Team and has resulted in a reduction in non-planning related complaints being received.
Completed Commitment - Prepare a Member and Area Committee Protocol for Enforcement	<p>The Planning Enforcement Team have improved engagement with Local Members in line with our Planning Performance Framework commitments. A training session on Enforcement took place in May 2018 to which all Members were invited. Local Members were previously advised when any formal Enforcement Notices were issued and of any subsequent appeal or compliance with a notice.</p> <p>The Enforcement Team report any Enforcement Appeal decisions to the Local Area Committee in the same format as Planning Appeals are reported for information. This protocol has been in place since January 2019.</p> <p>Some unauthorised developments can affect the wider community and constituents may contact their Local Councillors for assistance and advice. To improve communication with Members, the Enforcement Team now notify Ward Members of issues that are being investigated by the Team that have attracted complaints from more than 3 complainants.</p> <p>If Members are approached by a constituent wishing to report an alleged breach they can now direct them to the website "Report it" Tab and information pages.</p>
Completed Commitment - Produce High Hedges process map for direct action	High Hedges Process Map complete which identifies the internal procedures for Officers to follow if a High Hedge Notice has not been complied with within the specified time limit. This includes the process for undertaking direct action
Completed Commitment - Enforcement Policy	The Enforcement Charter was reviewed in April 2019 and is now updated to include a Policy statement and identify Enforcement Priorities.
Continued Commitment - Develop Relations with the Procurator Fiscal Office - Collaboration and Liaison	Officers have registered to become users of the COPFS reporting system. It is intended to progress through the Trainee application stage. Once the appointed Officers are familiar with the system, a process map, example application and checklist for enclosures shall be produced. Training event scheduled for June 2019.
Continued Commitment - Enhance tools for gathering evidence	A list of documents and tools required has been formulated and these are being sourced with new procedures to be produced for their use to ensure cases can be reported timeously and ensure consistency in evidence gathering by Officers. This will be further developed in the next reporting period.
Continued Commitment - Review of Procedure Notes and Decision Report	The Enforcement Decision Report has been reviewed and updated to ensure consistent and accurate reporting of all aspects of the investigation. Other procedure notes being reviewed to reflect current practice and will be updated during the next reporting period.
Completed Commitment - Enhance engagement and liaison between Enforcement and Development Management.	In early 2019 a new procedure note was created to ensure consistent planning advice is given following consultation with Development Management Teams. A formal consultation process with Development Management is now operational. Development Management is also advised of cases where more than 3 complaints are received. The Enforcement Team now undertake, bi-annual attendance at local Development Management Team meetings to maintain positive and effective communication.

**Continued Commitment
– Develop use of Uniform
System for
Enforcement Team**

A Test Case is now created for training purposes. An Interactive Enforcement Decision Report is being developed with IT for Uniform and a draft format has been created. Standard Letters and tasks for logging cases is to be established in the coming months.

**New Commitment –
Benchmarking with adjacent
Enforcement Teams**

Benchmarking Training Day was held on 28 January 2019 with 4 adjacent Local Authorities to discuss current practice and experiences on key issues. Following the success of this event this is scheduled to be a bi-annual training event discussing best practice, complex cases and sharing of protocols and ideas. Host Council is to be rotated.

**New Commitment – Identify
measurable targets for
performance management**

In line with increasing the use of Uniform, the Enforcement Team aim to identify methods of recording timescales for the closure of non-breach cases. All complainants are responded to with an initial letter within a 6-week time period. The Enforcement Team aim to close investigations where no breach of Planning Control is identified within an 8-week period and be able to record this easily. The number of breaches identified are now being logged at an early stage in investigation to allow for accurate reporting of these.



STRICHEN TOWN HALL

PART 4: NATIONAL HEADLINE INDICATORS (NHIS)



CLYDESDALE HORSE SCULPTURE, DUFF HOUSE

4A: NHI KEY OUTCOMES – DEVELOPMENT PLANNING



COLLIESTON

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING	2018-19	2017-18
LOCAL AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING:		
Age of local/strategic development plan(s) at end of reporting period <i>Requirement: less than 5 years</i>	23 months	11 months
Will the local/strategic development plan(s) be replaced by their 5th anniversary according to the current development plan scheme?	Yes	Yes
Has the expected date of submission of the plan to Scottish Ministers in the development plan scheme changed over the past year?	No	No The Development Plan scheme in force was January 2018. The programme of pre-engagement on 2021 LDP was already well underway by then, with adoption of the next LDP programmed for late 2020
Were development plan scheme engagement/consultation commitments met during the year?	Yes. All commitments made were met.	Yes Recognition was made of the need for early and broad engagement on the plan making process, and the work that had already started on the development of “Place Standard” assessments of the issues governing different areas. Based on the findings of a “how was it for you” survey exercise engagement with key stakeholders and Community Councils has continued to 31 March 2018. Development “bids” were requested from the development industry.

4A: NHI KEY OUTCOMES – DEVELOPMENT PLANNING - CONTINUED

KEY OUTCOMES	2017-18		2018-19		
EFFECTIVE LAND SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF OUTPUTS	AHMA	RHMA	AHMA	RHMA	NOTES
Established Housing Land Supply	33,004 units	13,135 units	33,789 units	12,845 units	Note 1
5 Year Effective Housing Land Supply (units)	10,753 units	3,605 units	12,142 units	3,597 units	Note 1
5 Year Effective Land Supply Total Capacity	29,069 units	7,072 units	30,737 units	6,705 units	Note 1
5 Year Housing Supply Target	7,509 units	3,206 units	7,509 units	3,206 units	Note 1
5 Year Effective Land Supply	7.2 years	5.6 years	8.1 years	5.6 years	Note 1
Housing Approvals	2,943 units		2,309 units		Note 2
Housing Completions over last 5 years (Aberdeenshire)	5,903 units		5,695 units		Note 3
Marketable Employment Land Supply	298 ha		307 ha		Note 4
Employment take-up during reporting year	14.2 ha		15.1 ha		Note 4

NOTE 1

Housing land supply figures are not available for Aberdeenshire, only for Housing Market Areas (HMAs) as required by the Strategic Development Plan. The Aberdeen HMA includes Aberdeen City. There is currently 8.1 years' worth of effective housing land in the Aberdeen HMA, demonstrating the generous supply provided by allocations in the Strategic Development Plan and Local Development Plan. Despite the more challenging market situation resulting from difficulties in the oil and gas sector, sites in Aberdeenshire are continuing to progress, albeit at a slower rate.

In the Rural HMA there is 5.6 years' worth of effective housing land. The extent of the effective supply in the Rural HMA is primarily limited by low demand in parts of the area which affects the number of units that can reasonably be expected to come forward within 5 years. As a result, only a limited amount of the total land available appears in the five year supply.

Source: Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2018. Figures correct as at 1 January 2018.

NOTE 2

The number of housing approvals in Aberdeenshire has decreased by 22% since 2017/18. In part this difference is because the 2017/18 total was actually higher than usual but it is also likely to be a reflection of slower market conditions which has meant fewer planning applications being submitted in recent years.

Source: Uniform Housing Approvals April 2018 – March 2019

NOTE 3

There were 889 housing completions in Aberdeenshire in 2017. This is significantly lower than in previous years where completions had been averaging around 1,200 per year. This reflects current difficulties in the local market. Over the last 5 years 57% of units built in Aberdeenshire were in the Aberdeen HMA, 42% in the Rural HMA and 1% in the Aberdeenshire part of the Cairngorms National Park.

Source: Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Housing Land Audit 2018. Figures correct as at 1 January 2018.

NOTE 4

The marketable employment land supply in Aberdeenshire has increased by 3% since last year and remains well in excess of Strategic Development Plan targets. Of this marketable land, 68 ha is classed as being immediately available, a small increase of 3 ha since last year.

Take-up of employment land over the year was 15.1 ha, a slight increase from the previous year and in line with the average in recent years. A further 2.7 ha was under construction at 1 April 2018.

Source: Employment Land Audit 2017/18. Figures correct as at 1 April 2018.

4B: NHI KEY OUTCOMES – DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT



DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT	2018-19	2017-18
PROJECT PLANNING		
Percentage and number of applications subject to pre-application advice	339 – 14%	391 - 15%
Percentage and number of major applications subject to processing agreement	14 – 78%	12 - 80%
DECISION MAKING		
Application approval rate	94%	93%
Delegation rate	91%	92%
Validation	24%	24%
DECISION-MAKING TIMESCALES		
Major Developments	35.3 weeks	29.5 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	9.2 weeks	9.1 weeks
Householder developments	7.1 weeks	6.8 weeks
LEGACY CASES		
Number cleared during reporting period	47	64
Number remaining	35	49

4C: ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

	2018-19	2017-18
Time since enforcement charter published/reviewed - requirement: review every 2 years	Jun 2019	Mar 2017
Complaints lodged	467	398
Breaches identified - no further action taken	* (see below)	* (see below)
Cases closed	462	327
Notices served	13	33
Direct Action	0	0
Reports to Procurator Fiscal	0	0
Prosecutions	0	0

4D: NHI KEY OUTCOMES - COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY

Short contextual statement

Reasons/factors which have influenced performance and any increase/decrease.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

In relation to performance, the reasons, factors and influences for any increase or decrease are embodied and are identified throughout this PPF 2018-19.

ENFORCEMENT

Notwithstanding all complaints in Planning Enforcement being subject of a rigorous screening process to ensure that only suspected planning enforcement breaches are investigated, the volume of complaints taken up has increased during the period from 398 reported in 2017-18 to 467. This increase diverges from the decline in planning application activity. The number of Enforcement cases resolved has increased from 327 to 462 whilst the number of formal Notices served has decreased significantly to 13 over the period which suggests that

many breaches continue to be resolved effectively through compliance rather than formal enforcement action. No cases have been reported to the Procurator Fiscal nor prosecutions pursued. As per the Service Improvement Plan, steps are underway to address the barriers of reporting cases to the Procurator Fiscal.

* at the time of reporting the number of breaches is not available. Breaches are currently logged once cases are closed and therefore any figures provided would not be an accurate reflection of breaches identified within the period.

PART 5: OFFICIAL STATISTICS

FRASERBURGH CONSERVATION AREA REGENERATION SCHEME



PART 5A: SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL STATISTICS

A: DECISION-MAKING TIMESCALES

TIMESCALES	2017-18	2017-18	2017-18
OVERALL			
Major developments	4	35.3 weeks	29.5 weeks
Local developments (non-householder)	1011	9.2 weeks	9.1 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	82%	7.3 weeks	7.4 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	18%	17.8 weeks	16.8 weeks
Householder developments	723	7.1 weeks	6.8 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	95%	6.8 weeks	6.5 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	5%	12.9 weeks	11.9 weeks
Housing Developments			
Major Local housing developments	2	57.8 weeks	35.7 weeks
• Local: less than 2 months	451	10.4 weeks	10 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	74%	7.5 weeks	7.6 weeks
	26%	18.8 weeks	17.2 weeks
Business and Industry			
Major Local business and industry developments	1	16.7 weeks	-
• Local: less than 2 months	117	7.9 weeks	9.7 weeks
• Local: more than 2 months	88%	7.2 weeks	7.5 weeks
	12%	13.3 weeks	17.5 weeks
EIA Developments	0	-	-
Other Consents	241	7.2 weeks	7.5 weeks
• Listed Building/Conservation Area Consents	105	8.3 weeks	7.9 weeks
• Advertisements	67	6.7 weeks	6.5 weeks
• Hazardous Substances Consents	2	11 weeks	19.3 weeks
• Other Consents and Certificates	67	6.1 weeks	8.0 weeks
Planning/Legal Agreements	2	57.8 weeks	35.7 weeks
• Major: average time	65	15.7 weeks	14.4 weeks
• Local: average time			

PART 5B: DECISION-MAKING: LOCAL REVIEWS AND APPEALS

TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER OF DECISIONS	ORIGINAL DECISIONS UPHELD			
		2018-2019		2017-2018	
		NO. %	2016-2017	No.	%
Local reviews	29	25	86%	28	72%
Appeals to Scottish Ministers	24	16	67%	12	57%

PART 5C: CONTEXT

In relation to performance, the reasons, factors and influences for any increase or decrease are embodied and are identified throughout this PPF 2018-19.



FORDYCE CASTLE

PART 6: WORKFORCE INFORMATION

MURALS SCOTT SKINNER SQUARE



	TIER 1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE	TIER 2 DIRECTOR	TIER 3 HEAD OF SERVICE	TIER 4 MANAGER
Head of Planning Service	1	1	1	2.8 + 9

STAFF AGE PROFILE	HEADCOUNT
Under 30	21
30-39	33
40-49	43
50 and over	61

RTPI CHARTERED STAFF	HEADCOUNT
Chartered staff	52

ORGANOGRAM

The staffing structure is as per the Organogram below. This covers the Planning Service and all its constituent parts under the Director of Infrastructure Services and the Head of Planning & Building Standards:

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

E PLANNING

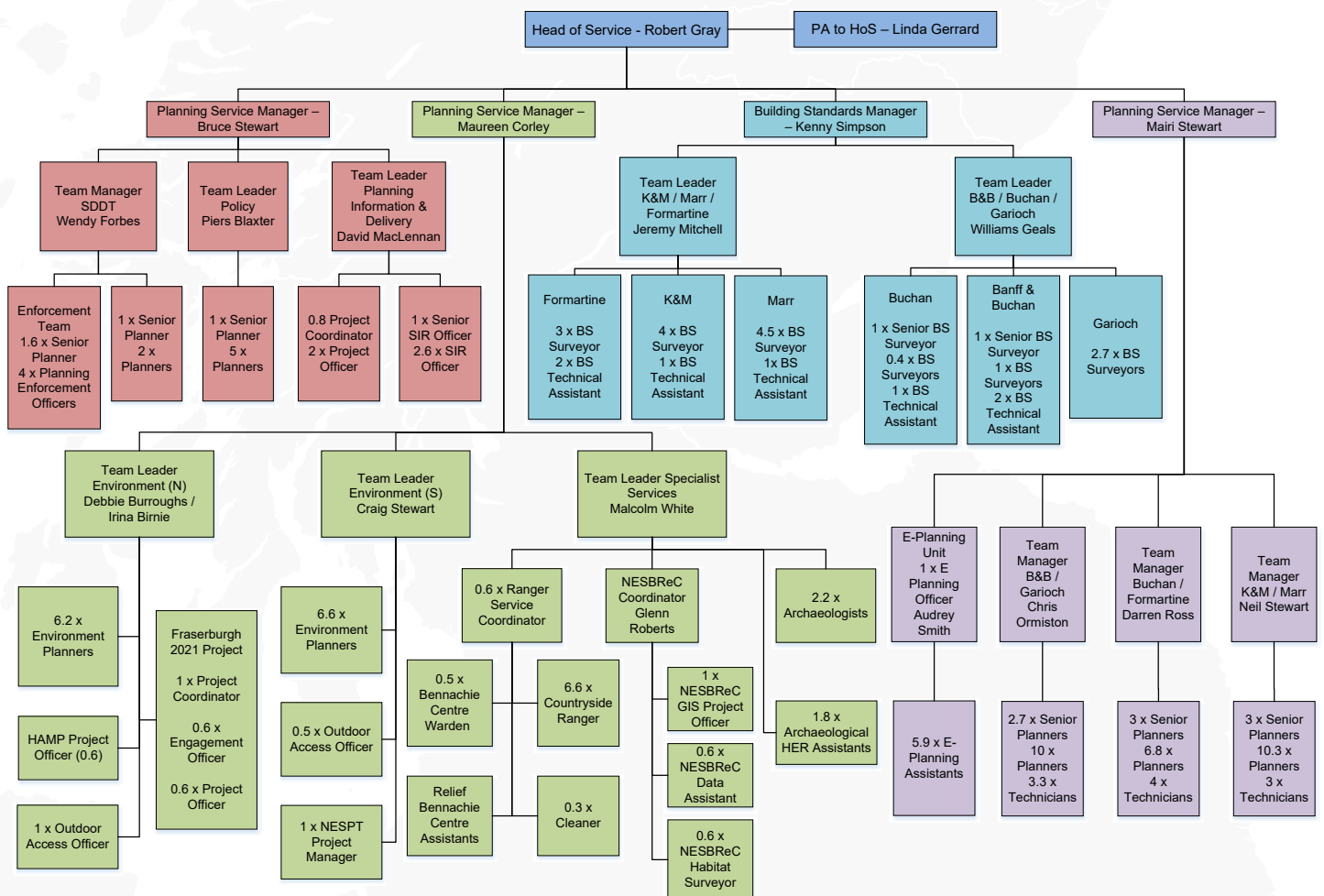
ENFORCEMENT

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT DELIVERY TEAM

POLICY

PLANNING INFORMATION & DELIVERY

ENVIRONMENT



PART 7: PLANNING COMMITTEE INFORMATION



COMMITTEE & SITE VISITS	NUMBER PER YEAR
Full council meetings	7
Infrastructure Services Committees*	7
Area Committees**	82
Committee site visits***	34 + 3 (PDH)
Local Review Body****	10
Pre-Determination Hearings (PDH)	3
LRB site visits	2

NOTES:

*Aberdeenshire Council have an Infrastructure Services Committee which deals with matters of policy. Some planning applications (significant departures from policy) are considered at that Committee.

**Aberdeenshire Council has 6 Area Committees. These deal with area business, including planning matters.

***Site visits include visits associated with Committee planning applications and Pre-Determination Hearing site visits by Area Committees.

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

PART 8: FEEDBACK FROM CUSTOMERS (COMPLAINTS, SERVICE REQUESTS AND COMPLIMENTS)



This additional section provides information about the number and type of feedback requests the Planning Service has received over the reporting year. It also provides information about timescales for responding with the majority responded to within prescribed periods. While the number of frontline complaints (66) has slightly increased from 2017-18 (48), the number of Service Requests has decreased (290) from 2017-18 (344). It is also the case that the number of recorded compliments has increased to 99 from 41.

It is considered that on the basis of the number of a planning applications dealt with and the number of workstreams and projects delivered by the Planning Service, the information provided demonstrates a high level of service to our customers.

	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Complaints	66	48	73	109
Service Requests	290	344	352	305
Compliments	99	41	52	66

COMPLAINT RESPONSE TIMES	RESPONDED TO WITHIN 20 DAYS	RESPONDED TO OUTWITH 20 DAYS
2018/19	56 (88%)	8 (12%)
2017/18	37 (77%)	11 (23%)
2016/17	58 (79.5%)	15 (20/5%)
2015/16	85 (78%)	24 (22%)

Frontline Complaints

Complaints directly about the Service, its processes, procedures, how it has handled an application for example.

Service Requests – are not complaints as such but often requests for information / progress / action. These can be as resource intensive as some frontline complaints.

Good News

It is gratifying that customers take the time to respond with thanks or compliments regarding the service that they have received.

The Planning Service received 99 emails / letters of compliments from our customers, during the period of this Report. A selection of quotes from these compliments are shown below:

"Thank you for your assistance in solving this matter. I am amazed how effective and productive you have been in such a short time. Well done and thank again."

"On behalf of everyone at the Community Council I would like to thank you and your team for the presentation and discussions on the next Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan. The evening was very informative and has certainly engaged members. Once again many thanks and we look forward to working with you on the LDP."

"Many thanks for the swift and comprehensive response. The maps will be particularly helpful when we are evaluating planning applications under this policy."

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your colleagues for the manner in which you have dealt with my various enquiries over the last few months, your efforts are much appreciated."



ELLON



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